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with kindest regards.
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THE METHODIST COMMENTARY

ON THE

New Testament

MORRISON AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

THE

METHODIST COMMENTARY

ON THE

New Testament

ADAPTED FOR

LOCAL PREACHERS, LAY WORKERS, AND GENERAL READERS

WITH A PREFACE

BY

WILLIAM F. MOULTON, D.D.

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PREFACE

THE general nature and design of the present work are sufficiently indicated by the title, which represents the Commentary as "Methodist" in character, and as specially designed to meet the practical requirements of "local preachers and lay workers" in our Church. A Commentary which we receive from the hands of well-known Wesleyan ministers, in which is included nearly the whole of John Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament*, one of our recognised standards of doctrine, and which, in the way of direct citation, presents to the reader the best portions of such Commentaries as those of Joseph Benson, Adam Clarke, and Joseph Sutcliffe, may, without risk of challenge, claim the name of "Methodist." The doctrinal exposition, devotional comment, and practical teaching which Methodists from one generation to another have so highly prized will, as here given,—selected from bulky volumes and gathered together in small compass,—be welcomed by many readers to-day. Strong practical sense, true learning, and deep piety are apparent in the notes which have been brought out of the treasury of early Methodist literature.

If, however, the authors of the present Commentary had contented themselves with drawing thus upon the wisdom of the past, they would have failed to produce a volume suited to the requirements of the great body of Christian men and women who are working in our Church to-day. No student can be unaware of the great advance in many departments of Biblical scholarship which has been made during the last fifty or sixty years. While therefore the writers have selected from earlier works what has best stood the test of time, they have felt it their duty to add a large number of supplementary notes, drawn from various sources, giving the results of more recent study and investigation. As the names of the authorities are given, the reader is enabled to a large extent to judge for himself of the trustworthiness of the information supplied. A glance at the following pages will detect not a few references to older writers, such as Luther, Calvin, and Bengel (so

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deservedly esteemed by John Wesley), and to the rich devotional comments of Matthew Henry. Of the many works of our own time which are repeatedly cited may be mentioned—the *Speaker's Commentary*, Bishop Ellicott's *New Testament for English Readers*, the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*, the *Expositor's Bible*, Lange's *Commentaries*, and the well-known exegetical works which bear the names of Meyer, Delitzsch, Godet, Lightfoot, Alford, Westcott, Beet, Findlay, Edersheim, Morison, Trench, Webster and Wilkinson, Conybeare and Howson, Farrar, Reynolds, and Dale.

If I may in this brief Introduction give any opinion of my own, I would gladly express my conviction that the writers will be found to have done their work faithfully and well, with great diligence and no small ability. The plan of the work may involve certain disadvantages—some amount of repetition, and here and there a want of harmony between comments on the same verse; but a candid reader will find great compensating advantages in the interesting character of the varied notes and in the breadth of treatment which the sacred text receives. The writers have deserved well of our Church by their successful work.

WILLIAM F. MOULTON.

CAMBRIDGE, *May* 22, 1893.

THE COMMENTARY has been prepared, at the suggestion of W. W. POCOCK, Esq., B.A., Treasurer of the Local Preachers' Book Supply Association, by—

The late Rev. F. W. BRIGGS (S. Matthew).
The Rev. JOHN H. GOODMAN (S. Mark, S. Luke, S. John).
The Rev. FRANCIS W. GREEVES (Acts, the Seven General Epistles, Revelation).
The Rev. GEORGE KENYON (Romans, I. and II. Corinthians, I. and II. Thessalonians, I. and II. Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews).
The Rev. E. J. OLDMEADOW (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians).

ABBREVIATIONS

A.	ALFORD.
B.	BENGEL.
J. B.	BENSON.
C. or C. B.	CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.
ED.	EDERSHEIM.
E.	ELLICOTT.
F.	FARRAR.
H.	MATTHEW HENRY.
L.	LANGE.
M.	MORISON.
T.	TRENCH.
S. or S. C.	SCOTT'S COMMENTARY.
,,	SUTCLIFFE'S COMMENTARY.
,,	SPEAKER'S COMMENTARY.
R. W.	RICHARD WATSON.
W.	WESLEY.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

S. MATTHEW.

THE BOOK AND ITS AUTHOR.

THE AUTHOR.

S. MATTHEW, who has the distinction of standing at the head of all the New Testament writers, was one of the Twelve. He was apparently the last of the Twelve whom Jesus called. He had a second name, Levi, and under that name we meet with him as a prosperous publican, or collector of customs. Compare ch. 9. 9–13 with S. Luke 5. 27–32. As an apostle he did not take a prominent position. His characteristics of quietness and love of retirement qualified him all the more for the preparation of the life of Christ, the questions bearing upon the fulfilment of prophecy, and the reproduction of our Lord's elaborate discourses. That the First Gospel was written by this apostle is the testimony of all antiquity. That he died a natural death may be concluded from the belief of the best informed of the Fathers—that of the apostles only three, James the greater, Peter, and Paul, suffered martyrdom.

THE BOOK.

For the *date* of this Gospel we have only internal evidence, and that far from decisive. Accordingly, opinion is much divided. That it was the first issued of all the Gospels was generally believed. It bears the most evident marks of having been prepared and constructed with a special view to the Jews. That it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem is equally certain. The dates assigned for the composition of this Gospel vary from A.D. 41 to A.D. 70. It has been said the true gem of S. Matthew's Gospel is the Sermon on the Mount. The language in which the Gospel of Matthew was written has always been a disputed point. The only form in which it has come down to us is in the same language as the other books of the New Testament, viz. Greek. But from the very earliest times there has been a tradition that Matthew wrote his Gospel first of all in the language of Palestine, and that it was afterwards translated into Greek. No truth or doctrine depends on this. "The Gospel of S. Matthew," as ALFORD has eloquently written, "is that one to which we owe, more than to any other, our complete idea of our blessed Lord as the promised Messiah, the Holy One of God, the King and Head over all to His Church. In the vivid depictions of S. Mark, we have ever His personal image before us, and the very sound of His voice. In the careful and precious collections of S. Luke we see Him as the Saviour of our race, the Head and Root of our humanity; while it is from this first and best known of the Gospels that that image of Him especially arises, which is so much in the thoughts and hearts of all of us who believe—that chosen One in whom centre all the ways and works of God: perfect in majesty, perfect in mercy; the King's Son, for whom is made the great marriage of heaven and earth; the Bridegroom into whose feast the wise and virgin souls shall enter; the King Himself, who shall come to take account of His own servants—nay, who shall come, and all the holy angels with Him, and sit on the throne of His glory, with all the nations before Him, and allot to every one his eternal doom."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. MATTHEW CONTAINS:

I. The birth of Christ, and what presently followed it—
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  b. His birth, ... ,, ,, 18-25.
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    4. Sermon on the Mount, ... ,, v.-vii.
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    6. ,, the Centurion's servant, . . . ,, ,, 5-13.
    7. ,, Peter's Mother-in-law, . . . ,, ,, 14-15.
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    4. Raises Jairus' daughter (after curing the issue of blood), ... ,, ,, 18-26.
    5. Gives sight to two blind men, . . . ,, ,, 27-31.
    6. Dispossesses the Demoniac, . . . ,, ,, 32-34.
    7. Goes through the cities, and directs to pray for labourers, ... ,, ,, 35-38.
    8. Sends and instructs labourers, and preaches Himself, ... ,, x. 1-xi. 1.
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    11. Defends the disciples plucking the corn, . ,, xii. 1-8.
    12. Heals the withered hand, . . . ,, ,, 9-13.
    13. Retires from the Pharisees lying in wait, . ,, ,, 14-21.
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    15. Reproves them that require a sign, . . ,, ,, 38-45.
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4. Unwashen hands, ... ,, xv. 1-20.
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The Lord's Supper, ... ,, ,, 26–30.
On the Mount of Olives, . . . ,, ,, 31–32.
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(2) Is in an agony, ... ,, ,, 36–46.
(3) Is apprehended; reproves Peter and the multitude; is forsaken of all, . . ,, ,, 47–56.
(4) Is led to Caiaphas; falsely accused; owns Himself the Son of God; is condemned, derided, ... ,, ,, 57–68.
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In the morning—
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(5) He is mocked and led forth, . . ,, ,, 27–32.
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WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1-17. OUR LORD'S GENEALOGY. (Luke 3. 23-38.)—1. **The book of the generation.** This is a purely Hebrew expression. (Gen. 2. 4; 5. 1.) It is probably used here as the title of the genealogy which follows, and may have been the actual title of the document which the Evangelist copied. "If there were any difficulties in this genealogy, or that given by S. Luke, which could not easily be removed, they would rather affect the Jewish Tables than the credit of the Evangelists; for they act only as historians, setting down these genealogies, as they stood in those public and allowed records. Therefore they were to take them as they found them. Nor was it needful they should correct the mistakes, if there were any. For these accounts sufficiently answer the end for which they are recited. They unquestionably prove the grand point in view that Jesus was of the family from which the promised Seed was to come. And they had more weight with the Jews for this purpose, than if alterations had been made by inspiration itself. For such alterations would have occasioned endless disputes between them and the disciples of our Lord." **Of Jesus Christ.** Here used as a proper name, as also Mark 1. 1; John 1. 17; 17. 3, but nowhere else in the Gospels, though frequently in the Acts and Epistles. "Jesus" (see note on ver 21). "Christ," from the Greek, answering to the Hebrew *Messiah*—the Anointed (Acts 10. 38). This title was occasionally used in Old Testament times to designate a prophet (1 Chron. 16. 22; 1 Kings 19. 16); more frequently to denote a priest (Lev. 4. 3; 6. 22; Num. 3. 3); and at a later period was applied generally to kings (1 Sam. 12. 3; 16. 6; 2 Sam. 19. 21; Isa. 45. 1). Finally it became the special title of the promised Redeemer, who was to be pre-eminently Messiah the Prince (Dan. 9. 25). In Him the three offices were combined. He is, in the highest sense, Prophet, Priest, and King. "And if we look into ourselves, we shall find a want of Christ in all these respects. We are by nature at a distance from God, alienated from Him, and incapable of a free access to Him. Hence we want a Mediator, an Intercessor; in a word, a Christ in His priestly office. This regards our state with respect to God. And with respect to ourselves, we find a total darkness, blindness, ignorance of God, and the things of God. Now here we want Christ in His prophetic office, to enlighten our minds, and teach us the whole will of God. We find also within us a strange misrule of appetites and passions. For these we want Christ in His royal character, to reign in our hearts, and subdue all things to Himself"—WESLEY.

The Son of David (Ps. 132. 11; Isa. 11. 1), **the Son of Abraham** (Gen. 12. 3). The Evangelist thus clearly states his purpose to show that He whom he had just designated by the compound appellative, then beginning to be used as a proper name, "Jesus Christ," was He "of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write" (John 1. 45); in whom more especially the promises made to David (Ps. 89. 36; Acts 2. 30; 13. 23; Rom. 1. 3) and to Abraham (Gen. 22. 18; Gal. 3. 16) were fulfilled. This is to be taken as the keynote of this Gospel. The mysterious Person of whose great and peculiar sayings, acts, sufferings, and death, the Evangelist is about to write, was, he here affirms at the outset, of lineal descent from David and Abraham, in accordance with the revealed purposes of God and with the general expectation of the Jews respecting the Messiah (John 7. 42).

2. **Judas.** (Gen. 29. 35.) In the Revised Version, "Judah," the Hebrew form of the name; which, "in the case of persons and places mentioned in the Old Testament," the Revisers have uniformly followed.

3-6. **Thamar, Rahab, Ruth.** (Gen. 38. 27, 28; Ruth 4. 18, 22; 1 Chron. 2. 3-15.) Also, referred to, but not by name, *Bathsheba* (2 Sam. 12. 24). Three of these women were not of the Jewish race, and three also, *Thamar*, *Rahab*, and *Bathsheba*, were of seriously blemished reputation. Thus is the descent of Him who was "made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin," and in whom "there is neither Jew nor Greek," traced through Gentiles as well as Jews, and through some of the

most sinful as well as the most saintly of mankind.

6. **David the king.** "Particularly mentioned under this character, because his throne is given to the Messiah"—WESLEY.

8. **Joram begat Ozias** (Uzziah). (1 Chron. 3. 11.) Here three generations, represented by the names of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah (1 Chron. 3. 11, 12), are omitted; it may be in order to reduce the number to fourteen, the first of the three equal divisions enumerated in ver. 17; probably also they were omitted in the document from which this table was taken.

16. **Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary.** Yet, according to Luke, Joseph was the son of Heli. "This discrepancy on a point which must have been easily ascertainable at the time when these Gospels were written, can hardly be explained except on the supposition that it is intentional. The most probable explanation is that Joseph was the son of Heli by birth, but the heir and adopted son of Jacob. If, moreover, we suppose Jacob and Heli to have been brothers, it is almost certain, according to the Jewish custom in such cases, that if Jacob had a daughter, she would become the wife of his nephew Joseph. (See Num. 36. 11; 1 Chron. 23. 22.) Thus there is at least a high probability that the Gospel genealogies contain not merely the nominal lineage of our Lord, through His reputed father, but also His actual lineage through His virgin mother as the daughter of Jacob, though neither genealogy is expressly constructed for the latter purpose. That Mary as well as Joseph was descended from David seems implied in Luke 1. 32"—S. C. (Also in Acts 2. 30; 13. 23; Rom 1. 3; 2 Tim. 2. 8.) This seems to be the most probable solution of the difficulty, but it should be accepted as *probable* only.

17. **So all the generations.** "Observe, in order to complete the three fourteens, David ends the first fourteen, and begins the second (which reaches the Captivity); and Jesus ends the third fourteen"—WESLEY.

"The first and the second fourteen contain the promise, the third its fulfilment"—B.

Nothing more need be said, it may be, respecting the peculiar value of these genealogical records—obviously independent as they are of each other—in relation to the special end for which they are given. But how full of instruction are they when taken as an example of God's silent and untraceable but unfailing guidance of the events of human history for the accomplishment of His gracious purposes. "Verily He is a God that hideth Himself; His ways are past finding out." Yet is He infallibly, and often by means of what may appear to us most unlikely agencies, "working all things after the counsel of His own will." So also, "when we survey such a series of generations, it is a natural and obvious reflection, How like the leaves of a tree one passeth away, and another cometh! Yet the earth still abideth. And with it the goodness of the Lord, which runs on from generation to generation, the common hope of parents and children.

"Of those who formerly lived upon earth, and perhaps made the most conspicuous figure, how many are there whose names are perished with them! how many, of whom only the names are remaining! Thus are we likewise passing away! And thus shall we shortly be forgotten! Happy are we, if, while we are forgotten by men, we are remembered by God! if our names, lost on earth, are at length found written in the book of life!"—WESLEY.

Vers. 18–25. BIRTH OF CHRIST.—18. **Mary was espoused** (R.V. "had been betrothed") (Luke 1. 27.) From the day of betrothal the relationship between them was as sacred as if they had been already married (Deut. 22. 23). Hence Joseph is called *husband* (19) and Mary *wife* (20). **She was found.** She may have revealed the fact herself, but not immediately; for after the angelic annunciation she went "with haste" to visit Elizabeth, and tarried with her three months (Luke 1. 41, 55). It must have been after her return to Nazareth, with her own hopes fully confirmed by the fulfilment of the angelic prediction to her kinswoman, that she first spoke of it to Joseph. And the intelligence naturally startled and perplexed him.

19. **Being a just man**—a strict observer of the Law (Luke 1. 6)—"therefore feeling bound to divorce Mary. But two courses were open to him. He could either summon her before the law-courts to be judicially condemned and punished, or he could put her away by a bill of divorcement before witnesses, but without assigning cause (Deut. 24. 1). This is meant by 'putting her away privately,' the more merciful course which Joseph resolved to adopt"—C. S.

20. **Joseph, thou son of David.** "These words would recall Joseph's mind to the promised Seed, the expectation of the families of the lineage of David, and at once stamp the message as the announcement of the birth of the Messiah"—A.

21. **JESUS.** In form, the Greek for the Hebrew name Joshua; in meaning, the sum of the whole Gospel, **Thou shalt call His name Jesus,** "Saviour," or more fully, "Jehovah the Saviour." (Isa. 12. 2.) **For He shall save** (R.V. "For it is He that shall save"). He Himself, or He alone,—He personally shall save **His people from their sins.** "He does not say, according to the expectation of the Jews, He shall save His people Israel from their Gentile enemies; but indefinitely *His people*, all who believe on Him, whether Jew or Gentile; and that not from temporal calamity or degradation, but *from their sins:* thus, from the beginning, was

the notion of a political Messiah excluded from the minds of Joseph and Mary. The very name of our Lord, given by Divine command, lays a firm foundation for the trust of the guilty; and opens the most glorious hope to man, even that of salvation from the guilt and penalty, from the power and pollution, of sin in this life, and beyond it a resurrection from the dead, immortality, and eternal felicity"—R. W. "It is remarkable that in the early part of the evangelic history, in the midst of pedigrees and the disturbances of thrones by the supposed temporal king of the Jews, we have so clear an indication of the *spiritual nature* of the office of Christ"—A.

22. **All this was done** (R.V. "All this is come to pass"). The Evangelist is speaking of what has taken place in his own day. It is important to note this as one of many incidental indications of the early date of this Gospel. **That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet.** Not in order that the prophet's words might be verified, but in order that the supernatural birth which the prophet foretold might take place. The point of view intended by the Evangelist is the incarnation of the Son of God in the fulness of time, as an event divinely predestinated and pre-intimated by the words of the prophet.

23. **Behold a virgin.**—*The* Virgin. (Isa. 7. 14.) —**They shall call His name Emmanuel.** The meaning is not that He should be known by this as His proper name, but that He should be confessed and adored in the grateful recognition of what the great designation implies. "The Child thus marvellously born, who Himself by His own power shall save His people from their sins, is, as the prophet foretold, God with us"—S. C. "To be called only means, according to the Hebrew manner of speaking, that the person spoken of shall really and effectually be what He is called, and actually fulfil that title. Thus, 'Unto us a Child is born—and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace';—that is, He shall be all these, though not so much nominally, as really, and in effect. And thus was He called Emmanuel; which was no common name of Christ, but points out His nature and office: as He is God incarnate, and dwells, by His Spirit, in the hearts of His people"—WESLEY.

25. **Her firstborn Son.** Nothing can be justly inferred from these words on the question of the perpetual virginity of Mary. This the Evangelist neither affirms nor denies. Nor is the question important.

CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1-12. VISIT OF THE MAGI.—1. **When Jesus was born.** As now ascertained, about four years before the common era. **In Bethlehem**—the House of Bread—**of Judea,** to distinguish it from another Bethlehem near the Sea of Galilee (Judg. 17. 7-9; 1 Sam. 17. 12). This village was originally called *Ephrath,* or *Ephratha,* "Fruitful" (Gen. 35. 16, 19; 48. 7). In Micah 5. 2 the two names are combined. In Luke 2. 4, it is called "The City of David," and in John 7. 42, "The town where David was," and out of which the Christ was to come. How it came to pass that Jesus was born there, and not in Nazareth, where Mary and Joseph had resided, is fully explained by S. Luke (2. 1-7), but is passed over in silence by S. Matthew, the Evangelist of Messiah's kingship, as unnecessary to his special plan and purpose. **In the days of Herod the king.** He was the second son of Antipater, an Idumæan or Edomite, by an Arabian mother. In the year 47 B.C. Antipater was appointed procurator of Judea, and Herod, who was then only fifteen years of age, was made governor of Galilee. After his father's death, Herod became, chiefly through the influence of Marc Antony, king of Judea. He died miserably at Jericho, a few months after the birth of Christ, in the seventy-first year of his age, and the thirty-first of his reign.—**Behold, there came wise men**—Magi, or Magians. This was originally the name of a sect of Persian or Median philosophers, devout observers and students of natural phenomena. Nothing definite can be rightly inferred from the statement that these Magi came **from the East,** for this might mean Arabia, Persia, Chaldæa, or even Egypt. But wherever they came from they were evidently sincere, religious inquirers and worshippers of the true God. "Probably they were Gentile philosophers who, through the Divine assistance, had improved their knowledge of nature, as a means of leading to the knowledge of the one true God. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that God had favoured them with some extraordinary revelations of Himself, as He did Melchisedec, Job, and several others, who were not of the family of Abraham; to which He never intended absolutely to confine His favours. The title given them in the original was anciently given to all philosophers, or men of learning; those particularly who were curious in examining the works of nature, and observing the motions of the heavenly bodies"—WESLEY.

2. **King of the Jews.** Not *our* king; and not "King of Israel" (John 1. 49), which would have implied a knowledge of Jewish expectancy, but simply "King of the Jews," using the term in a political sense. **For we have seen His star in the East.** (Num. 24. 17; Isa. 60. 3.) This must have been a meteor, bearing "the appearance of a bright star, and was manifestly supernatural, and connected as to its import with some revelation made to them of the birth of the Messiah. How otherwise should it have guided them to the very house where 'the young Child was'? and how, without a revelation, should they have

known its significancy as indicating the birth of 'the King of the Jews'? The sign was, however, appropriate, as among the ancients the appearance of a star was considered the forerunner of the birth of great princes"—R. W. Moreover, the belief prevailed at the time everywhere in the East that a great Deliverer and King was about to appear in Judea. **To worship Him**—to do Him kingly homage. "To pay Him that honour, by bowing to the earth before Him, which the Eastern natives used to pay to their monarchs"—WESLEY. (Comp. ver. 8.)

The visit of the Magi must be supposed to have taken place after the presentation in the Temple (Luke 2. 22–24); consequently, when the holy Babe was more than forty days old, and when Mary was no longer lodged in a stable, but was entertained in ■ *house.*

3. **He was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.** He, under the accusations of a guilty conscience, and anxiety for the safety of his throne; and they in dread of some fresh outbreak of his rage, and some renewed acts of cruelty.

4. **All the chief priests and scribes of the people.** Probably a designation of the Sanhedrim, or Council, as hastily summoned in the emergency. (See ch. 16. 21; 21. 23; 26. 47; 27. 1, where, however, *elders* are included in the description.) This council consisted of seventy-one members, and was composed of "the high-priest and his deputy, with those who formerly had borne that office; the chief man in each of those twenty-four courses into which the body of the priests were divided (1 Chron. 24. 4–19) and representative elders of the people. The scribes were those whose peculiar business it was to explain the Scriptures to the people. They were the public preachers, or expounders of the Law of Moses: whence the chief of them were called doctors of the Law"—WESLEY.

He demanded of them where Christ (*the* Christ) **should be born**—according to the preintimations of the prophets. The Magi had inquired for "the King of the Jews," which Herod rightly understood to be a true title of the expected Messiah. He "believed the Jewish Scriptures, and that the birth of the Messiah was foretold in them. And yet, which discovered the height of madness as well as of impiety and cruelty, he was contriving to destroy Him! to destroy Him whose birth and reign and glory God, in His word, he believed, had infallibly foretold!"—J. B.

5, 6. **(It is written by,** by means of (R.V. "through") **the prophet.** (Micah 5. 2.) **Among the princes of Juda**—"that is, among the cities belonging to the princes or heads of thousands in Judah. When this and several other quotations from the Old Testament are compared with the original, it plainly appears the apostles did not always think it necessary exactly to transcribe the passages they cited, but contented themselves with giving the general sense, though with some diversity of language. The words of Micah, which we render, 'Though thou be little,' may be rendered, 'Art thou little?' And then the difference which seems to be here between the prophet and the evangelist vanishes away"—WESLEY.

8. **That I may come and worship Him also.** How striking the contrast between the deceitful and crafty king, and these simple-minded Magi!

9. **And, lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them.** It is perfectly evident, therefore, that it was something miraculous. It had happened after indicating Jerusalem as the fit place for the inquiry where the royal Babe should be born, and now, on their departure for Bethlehem, the star reappeared near enough to the earth to guide them, not only to the town, but to the particular house **where the young child was.**

10. **They rejoiced with exceeding great joy**—the joy of success, and also a natural reaction from the state of anxiety and disappointment in which they had lived ever since they entered the capital.

11. **Fell down and worshipped Him.** Prostrated themselves before Him in humble acknowledgment of His kingly dignity. "We may well imagine their expectations were raised to find this royal Babe, though slighted by the nation, yet honourably attended at home, and what a disappointment it was to them when they found a cottage was His palace, and His own poor mother all the retinue He had! 'Is this the King of the Jews?' Yes; this is He who, 'though He was rich, for our sakes became poor.' They did not think themselves balked or baffled in their inquiry; but, as having found the King they sought, they presented **themselves** first, and then their **gifts,** to Him"—H. **And when they had opened their treasures**—the chests or packages in which their treasures had been brought—**they presented unto Him gifts,** as was usual when visits were paid to monarchs. (1 Kings 10. 2; Ps. 68. 29; 72. 10, 11, 15.) "This was a most seasonable, providential assistance for a long and expensive journey into Egypt, a country where they were entirely strangers"—WESLEY.

"The whole history is beautifully instructive, as one of those numerous instances with which the Scriptures abound of the manner in which an unseen but ever-watchful, ever-active power overrules the purposes of men, even when they are opposed to that issue which is evoked by unanticipated circumstances, and frustrates equally their subtlety and their power. Herod, in his own true character of malignant cunning, wishes to make the Magi the instruments of conveying to him the intelligence of this new-born heir of the throne of David, and affects to partake of their joy, and to be ready to do Him homage; but, warned of God, they

depart home by another route, and thus their safety is provided for, which might have been compromised by an act of constructive treason, in acknowledging another king beside him; whilst his sanguinary purpose was delayed, to give the holy family time to hasten down to Egypt, beyond the reach of his power; for which journey the gifts of the Wise Men afforded a seasonable and, as it appears, an abundant, supply. 'There is no counsel against the Lord'"—R. W.

Vers. 13-23. FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—13. **Flee into Egypt.** This, "as near, as a Roman province, and independent of Herod, and much inhabited by Jews, was an easy and convenient refuge"—A.

15. **That it might be fulfilled,** see on 1. 22—**Out of Egypt have I called** (R.V. "did I call") **My Son** (Hosea 11. 1; comp. Ex. 4. 22, 23). The Evangelist intimates that there was an analogy between the condition of the Israelites in Egypt in the infancy of their nation, and the condition of the infant Jesus in His enforced exile in that country, and that as this coincidence was divinely ordained, the words spoken by the prophet with reference to Israel were fulfilled in their higher meaning as applied to Christ. "It seems to have been a received axiom of interpretation, which has, by its adoption in the New Testament, received the sanction of the Holy Spirit Himself, and now stands for our guidance, that the subject of all allusions, the represented in all parables and dark sayings, was He who was to come, or the circumstances attendant on His advent and reign"—A.

16. **When he saw that he was mocked**—trifled with, treated contemptuously by **the Wise Men,** as his own wrathful feelings interpreted their omission to obey his command—**sent forth** a band of soldiers, **and slew all the children** (R.V. "the male children") **that were in Bethlehem and** (to prevent escape) **in all the coasts,** or surrounding parts **thereof, from two years old and under,** which may mean from their entering upon their second year. "In so small a place as Bethlehem, the number of male children of that age was probably not large, and the deed may well have been passed over in comparison with the greater atrocities of Herod's latter days"—S. C. As, for example, the murder of his own wife, Mariamne, and of his two sons.

17. **Then was fulfilled.** Not as before (ver. 15) "that it might be fulfilled," implying Divine agency—**that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet** (Jer. 31. 15) with reference to the taking of the Israelites to Babylon.

18. **Rachel weeping for her children.** The Benjamites, who inhabited Rama, sprang from her. She was buried near this place; and is here beautifully represented risen, as it were, out of her grave, and bewailing her lost children. **Because they are not**—that is, are dead. The preservation of Jesus from this destruction may be considered as a figure of God's care over His children in their greatest danger. God does not often, as He easily could, cut off their persecutors at a stroke: but He provides a hiding-place for His people; and by methods not less effectual, though less pompous, preserves them from being swept away, even when the enemy comes in like a flood.

19. **But when Herod was dead.** His own death must have taken place almost immediately after the massacre of the infants. "On his bed of intolerable anguish, in that splendid and luxurious palace which he had built for himself under the palms of Jericho . . . longing for death as a release from his tortures, yet dreading it as the beginning of worse terrors—stung by remorse, yet still unslaked with murder—a horror to all around him, yet in his guilty conscience a worse terror to himself . . . as though visibly smitten with the finger of God's wrath, after seventy years of successful villainy—the wretched old man, whom men called the Great," passed away—F.

22. **Archelaus.** The dominions of Herod were divided at his death among three of his sons—Antipas, Archelaus, and Philip. Archelaus inherited *Idumea, Judea,* and *Samaria,* and forthwith assumed the title of king; but this the emperor refused to sanction, allowing him only that of *Ethnarch,* ruler of the people. After a tyrannous reign of nine years he was dethroned, and his dominions came into the direct government of Rome, under a procurator. Joseph was returning into the land of Israel with his holy charge, as instructed; but hearing that it had come under the rule of this tyrant, **he was afraid to go thither.** This seems to intimate that his desire was to return to Bethlehem, the city of David, and to settle there; but being again **warned of God in a dream, he turned aside**—or "withdrew" (R.V.)—**into the parts of Galilee** now under the dominion of Antipas, an elder brother of Archelaus, "equally unscrupulous, but more indolent and indifferent" than he. Galilee, the most northern of the three provinces of Palestine, included the territory formerly occupied by the tribes of Issachar, Zebulon, Asher, and Naphtali, and was peopled at this time with a large admixture of Gentiles. It was bounded on the west by Phœnicia; on the east by the Lake of Gennesaret, called also the Sea of Galilee (ch. 4. 18; Mark 7. 31) and the Sea of Tiberias (John 6. 1; 21. 1), and the river Jordan; on the south by Samaria; and on the north by the mountains of Lebanon.

23. **A city called Nazareth.** Up to this point S. Matthew makes no reference to the fact that this was the previous residence of Joseph and Mary, though he afterwards recognised it distinctly (ch. 13. 54-57). Beginning his narrative with the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem, as divinely foretold, he leaves the original residence in Nazareth to be alluded to when

occasion called for it. Nazareth was a quiet and beautifully situated little town of central Galilee. It is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament and seldom in the New, except as connected with the history of Christ. It was a secluded spot on a hillside, surrounded by heights varying in altitude from 400 to 500 feet, not thickly wooded, yet picturesque and pleasing. Immediately around it the soil was well cultivated, and abounded with trees bearing pomegranates, olives, and figs. **Spoken by the prophets**, not by any individual prophet, but by the prophets generally, in many places, in idea, though not in words. **He shall be called a Nazarene**, not a *Nazarite*, as suggested by the original references; for that name has a totally different meaning. (Num. 6. 1-22; Judg. 13. 5; 1 Sam. 1. 11.) Nazarene is not a by-name of scorn or contempt, as is sometimes avowed, and certainly nothing of this kind was in the mind of the Evangelist when he said that to call our Lord a Nazarene would be to fulfil that which was spoken of Him by the prophets. The name of Nazareth was in its original form *Netzer*, which means a *branch* or *shoot;* and this word, taken as an image of revived life, growth, and prosperity, springing out of a state of decay, is used by the prophet Isaiah in application to the Messiah to represent His connection with the fallen house of David and the greater glory of His reign: "There shall come a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch (*Netzer*) shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. 11. 1). This, however, is only one of many names and forms of expression having the same meaning, by which the prophets designated the Messiah. (See Isa. 53. 2; Ezek. 17. 22; Jer. 23. 5; 33. 15; Zech. 3. 8; 6. 12; and compare Rev. 5. 5; 22. 16.) What the Evangelist here points out is, therefore, that our Lord, by His residence in Nazareth, "verbally as well as really, fulfilled the prediction of the prophet; not only growing up in obscurity from the family of Jesse, reduced to a low estate, but bearing a name derived from the place in which He grew up, which by its derivation expressed this circumstance"—S. C. To call Him the Nazarene was in reality to confess His claim to be recognised as the true Messiah.

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1-11. PREPARATORY MINISTRY OF JOHN. (Mark 1. 2-8; Luke 3. 2-18; John 1. 6-31.)—**1. In those days**—that is, towards the end of the long period of nearly thirty years during which our Lord dwelt at Nazareth—**came John the Baptist**, who is thus like Elijah, his type (Mal. 4. 5; Matt. 11. 14), introduced abruptly into the narrative (1 Kings 17. 1) as a person already known. The Baptist, or Baptizer, was probably the name which the people gave him. **Preaching**—heralding or proclaiming with authority, the coming of the King, the Heir to the throne of David—**in the wilderness of Judea**—a comparatively uncultivated district near the Dead Sea.

2. **Repent ye.** Literally, change your minds, with all that this implies, namely, conviction of error and sin, contrition, a sense of danger, the solemn purpose to amend, and the power to do so. **For the kingdom of heaven.** S. Matthew alone uses this phrase, occasionally substituting for it its synonym, "the kingdom of God," as used by all the other Evangelists. Its meaning is the reign of the promised Messiah, or the rule of God through the Messiah. (Ps. 2. 6; 110. 2; Dan. 2. 44; 7. 13, 14.) The Jews were necessarily familiar with the term, but "they understood it of a temporal kingdom, the seat of which they supposed would be Jerusalem; and the expected sovereign of this kingdom they learned from Daniel to call the 'Son of Man.' Both John the Baptist and Christ took up that phrase, 'the kingdom of heaven,' as they found it, and gradually taught the Jews, though greatly unwilling to learn, to understand it right. The very demand of repentance, as previous to it, showed it was a spiritual kingdom; and that no wicked man, how politic, brave, or learned soever, could possibly be a subject of it"—WESLEY.

3. **For this is He.** Here, as in Mark and Luke, the words of the prophet are cited by the writer; in John they are spoken by the Baptist himself. **Saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness** (Isa. 40. 3). The Baptist, like the prophet, does not name the herald. He is content to speak of himself as *a voice.* "The whole man was a sermon; he might well call himself a voice." **Prepare ye the way of the Lord**—that is, Jehovah. "The idea is taken from the practice of Eastern monarchs, who sent harbingers before them to prepare all things for their passage, and pioneers to open the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments"—E.

4. **And the same John** (R.V. "Now John himself"), like the prophet Elijah, in whose *spirit and power* he came. (2 Kings 1. 8.) **And his raiment of camel's hair**—rough, cheap, and warm; the clothing characteristic of the prophetic office (Zech. 13. 4). **And his meat** (food) **was locusts**—which the Israelites were allowed by the Law to eat (Lev. 11. 22), and are eaten by poor Arabs to this day, fried in butter or oil. **And wild honey.** Found in rocks and trunks of trees. (1 Sam. 14. 25; Ps. 81. 16.)

6. **And were baptized of him in Jordan.** This river, taking its rise in the mountains of Lebanon in the north, flows into and passes through the Lake of Gennesaret, and continues its course to the head of the Dead Sea in the south. John baptized during his ministry in different parts of this river, probably near its fords. **Confessing their sins**—to God, but

also openly before John and one another. Baptism, as a rite administered to Jesus, was wholly new; but John told his hearers that he had instituted it by the express command of God (John 1. 33); that he administered it only to the humble and penitent (ver. 7), and that it was their duty to receive it as a sign of the spiritual cleansing to be experienced through faith in Him *who should come after him* (Acts 19. 4). This meaning of the rite they would easily understand from their knowledge of the symbolical workings required by the Law before offering sacrifice in cases of ceremonial defilement. (Lev. 14. 19; Num. 19. 7.)

7. Pharisees and Sadducees. These opposing sects arose in the times of the Maccabees, probably about B.C. 150. The name Pharisee signifies *Separatist.* It was probably adopted in the first instance to distinguish the party who, after the return of the Jews from Babylon, were the most jealous in maintaining a complete separation between them and the heathen. "The re-establishment of the Jews in Palestine naturally gave rise to two courses of policy; one which sought to continue, and even to increase, the ancient separation between the Jews and the heathen kingdoms with which they came in contact; the other which sought to facilitate intercourse by partial assimilation. From the former gradually arose the Pharisees, from the other the Sadducees"—S. C. In the time of Christ, however, the name did not imply separation from other nations so much as the separation of this party from their countrymen. "They were outwardly strict observers of the Law, fasted often, made long prayers, rigorously kept the Sabbath, and paid all tithe, even of mint, anise, and cummin. Hence they were of high esteem among the people. But, inwardly, they were full of pride and hypocrisy"—WESLEY.

The Sadducees were the rationalists of that period. It is uncertain whether the name they bore is derived from Zadok (supposed to be their founder), or from the Hebrew word for righteousness. But in opposition to the Pharisees they denied the authority of tradition, and probably also of all the books of the Old Testament, except the books of the Law. They openly professed their disbelief in the resurrection, and the existence of angels or spirits (Acts 23. 8), and did not shrink from conformity to many Gentile customs. They were the courtly and aristocratic party. The coming of these men of distinction, not as penitents but as scornful observers, moved the indignation of John, and **He said unto them, O generation of vipers** (Isa. 59. 5; ch. 12. 34; 23. 33), **who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?** Possibly alluding to Mal. 4. 5, 6, but with more direct reference to judgment of the ungodly in the future life. What motive and purpose have you for coming to my baptism? To have administered the rite to them would have been a mockery. They are simply repelled as self-deceived men of malignant and deadly social influence. "'Ye brood of vipers.' —In like manner the crafty Herod is styled 'a fox'; and persons of insidious, ravenous, profane, or sensual dispositions are named respectively by Him who saw their hearts, 'serpents, dogs, wolves, and swine'; terms which are not the random language of passion, but a judicious designation of the persons meant by them. For it was fitting such men should be marked out, either for a caution to others, or a warning to themselves"—WESLEY.

8. Fruits meet for (R.V. "worthy of") **repentance.** "Wherever this is, there will, of course, be an entire reformation of life, a 'ceasing to do evil,' in all respects, according to the knowledge and ability of the penitent, and a 'learning to do well.' Hence it is styled, 'repentance from dead works' (Heb. 6. 1); and 'repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of' (2 Cor. 7. 10); that is, such as is not reversed by any voluntary returning, or relapsing into our former sins"—J. B.

9. We have Abraham to our father. (John 8. 33, 39; Acts 13. 29.) "A relation which was the theme of their constant boastings, and from which they expected salvation, merely by virtue of their fleshly descent, though both the faith and the works of Abraham were wanting among them. There is no imputation of the holiness of pious ancestors to their children, and personal regeneration can alone qualify men for the kingdom of God. **For God is able of these stones,** etc. Perhaps John pointed to the rocks and stones in the bed of the Jordan"—R. W. Perhaps also he had in his mind such words as those of Isa. 51. 1, 2, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn," with a tacit allusion to the call of the Gentiles —children of Abraham because inheritors of his faith (Rom. 4. 16; Gal. 3. 29; 6. 15).

10. And now also (R.V. "And even more"). At this moment **the axe is laid unto the root of the** fruitless **trees** (ver. 8). "That is, there is no room for such idle pretences. Speedy execution is determined against all that do not repent. The comparison is taken from a woodman that has laid down his axe to put off his coat, and then immediately goes to work to cut down the tree. This refers to 'the wrath to come' in the seventh verse. 'Is hewn down,' instantly, without further delay"—WESLEY.

11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. That being the necessary condition of its administration, and baptism itself a symbol of consequent *newness of life.* **But He that cometh after me is mightier than I.** These words are given in Luke as spoken in answer to the musings in the public mind whether John "were the Christ or not" (3. 15), and in John (1. 25, 27), as said in reply to inquiries from the Pharisees. Probably they were uttered on several occasions. **Whose shoes** (sandals) **I am not worthy to bear.** In

Luke, "the latchet (thong) of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." The meaning of both expressions is the same. So great is the superiority to myself of Him, whose way it is my vocation to prepare, that I am not worthy to do for Him the service of a slave. **He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.** "He shall fill you with the Holy Ghost, inflaming your hearts with that fire of love which many waters cannot quench. And this was done, even with a visible appearance as of fire, on the day of Pentecost"—WESLEY. (Acts 1. 5; comp. Acts 19. 2–6.)

12. **Whose fan is in His hand.** "The metaphors in this verse are taken from the process of threshing among the Jews. The sheaves of corn were trodden by oxen upon a 'threshing-floor,' or prepared plain area, formed upon some elevated place, so as to force out the grain; then the winnowing fan, which was often a portable instrument used by the hand, and here not inaptly rendered by some 'a winnowing shovel,' was applied to throw up the grain to the wind, that the *chaff* might be separated from it, whilst the *straw*, being crushed beneath the feet of the oxen, and rendered worthless, was reserved with the separated chaff, to be burned with other fuel"—R. W.

Vers. 13–17. BAPTISM OF CHRIST. (Mark 1. 9; Luke 3. 21, 22.)—13. **Then**—S. Luke says, "When all the people were baptized," which seems to intimate that our Lord's baptism was private—**cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John**, apparently after He had withdrawn from the wilderness of Judea to a locality "beyond Jordan" called "Bethabara," or the "House of a Passage"; a ford about thirty miles below Nazareth (John 1. 28). **To be baptized of him.** The fact so quietly stated is full of instruction. For thirty years Jesus had lived in the secluded rural town of Nazareth, undistinguished from His fellow-townspeople, except by His perfect rectitude of conduct and His meek subjection to His "parents" (Luke 2. 41); increasing in favour with all who knew Him, yet not known in His true character, perhaps not even in person to His distinguished kinsman John (John 1. 31). And now the first thing recorded of Him is that He comes to submit to an institution which represented the putting away of sin; not confessing sin, however, like all others, but indirectly affirming His righteousness (ver. 15). "He who knew no sin was made sin for us. The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." And, as the Representative of the sinful race with whom He so mysteriously allied Himself, His first act, on emerging into His public life and ministry, is to present Himself for baptism.

14. **And John forbad Him** (R.V. "would have hindered Him"). The sign by which John was to know Him to be the Messiah had not yet been given (John 1. 33), and it is not certain that they had ever previously met. But the sight of Him was enough. In a moment John recognised His transcendent greatness, and said, with involuntary shrinking, **I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?** As John beholds Him, he sees shining through His deep humility the high majesty of the Holy One; and that he had an inward token thereof, constitutes his own dignity. He has baptized many, has seen, and in some sense seen through, men of all kinds; but no one like this had as yet come before him. "Who am I in Thy presence, that I in the office and ministry of baptism should be placed over Thee?"—S.

15. **Suffer it to be so now**—as yet. "*Now* for a time thou seemest to be the greater, who consecrates the less—soon, as is fit, will our relative position be reversed"—S. **For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness**—that is, to conform to the whole will of God, whether revealed in His word or in His ordinances. "It was sufficient for our Lord that such was the Divine will that He should be baptized of John, and John, though overwhelmed with a just sense of his inferiority, should baptize Him; and it was the righteousness of both to obey"—R. W. "It becometh every messenger of God to observe all His righteous ordinances. But the particular meaning of our Lord seems to be, that it becometh us to do (me to receive baptism, and you to administer it) in order to fulfil, that is, that I may fully perform, every part of the righteous law of God, and the commission He hath given Me"—WESLEY.

That was the single principle which governed His whole life. (Ps. 40. 7, 8.)

16. **When He was baptized**—(S. Luke adds, "and praying")—**He went up straightway out of the water.** "It is manifest that the descent of the Holy Spirit did not take place during the administration of the rite to Him, which is a clear proof that it was a distinct act of God wholly unconnected with the baptism of John; so that this baptism was not a means of communicating this grace; for John baptized not with the Holy Ghost; and it was no doubt to mark this circumstance that His departing from the water immediately after His baptism is noticed." **Lo, the heavens were opened.** S. Mark, R.V. "The heavens were rent asunder." (Comp. Isa. 64. 1.) **Unto Him, and He saw.** This seems to mean Jesus saw, but the Baptist "bare record" that he also "saw the Spirit descending from heaven," and that he had been divinely instructed to take this as a sign of His dignity as the Messiah (John 1. 32, 33). **Like a dove.** "This may mean no more than a defined visible appearance; and the comparison may be between the motion of this appearance in its descent, and the motion of a dove when alighting. But whether this view be taken, or, which is at least equally probable, that the effulgence which broke from the heavens had the similitude of a dove, the

conclusion is the same; for, whether by the shape or the peculiarity of the motion, the idea of a dove was strongly and intentionally excited in the mind of John; the reason of which is justly and beautifully conceived by Archbishop Leighton: 'The Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles in the shape of fire; there was something to be purged in them; but on Christ as a dove, because there was no need of cleansing or purging anything. That, therefore, was a symbol of the spotless purity of His nature'"—R. W.

17. **Lo a voice from heaven.** As on two other occasions (ch. 17. 5; John 12. 28). **This is** (Mark and Luke, "Thou art") **My beloved Son.** In a sense peculiar to Him (Ps. 2. 7). **In whom I am well pleased.** This term denotes perfect and eternal complacency. (Comp. Isa. 42. 1.) "We have here a glorious manifestation of the ever-blessed Trinity: the Father speaking from heaven, the Son spoken to, the Holy Ghost descending upon Him. *In whom I delight*—What an encomium is this! How poor to this are all other kinds of praise! To be the pleasure, the delight of God, this is praise indeed! This is true glory; this is the highest, the brightest light that virtue can appear in"—WESLEY.

"This was not a sudden and temporary descent of the Spirit, but a *permanent*, though special, anointing of the Saviour for His holy office. 'It abode upon Him.' And, from this moment His ministry and mediatorial work (in the active official sense) began. But we must not imagine any *change* in the nature or person of our Lord to have taken place at His baptism. The anointing and crowning are but *signs* of the official assumption of the power which the King has, by a right, independent of, and higher than, these"—A. "At the same time we cannot but believe (so far as we realise the perfect humanity of Christ) that Christ at this crisis first became conscious, as man, of the power of a Spirit within Him corresponding to the new form of His work"—S. C.

CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1–11. THE TEMPTATION. (Mark 1.12, 13; Luke 4. 1–13.)—1. **Then**—that is, as S. Mark states, *immediately* after the baptism—**was Jesus led up of the Spirit**—(S. Mark, "The Spirit driveth Him"). Evidently meaning urged Him by a peculiarly powerful impulse, as implied also in the statement of S. Luke, that He was "full of the Holy Ghost." Yet He willingly yielded to the constraint, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ Himself (Rom. 8. 9). **Into the wilderness.** What wilderness is unknown, and is of no importance. **To be tempted of the devil.** "Before proceeding to the details of this narrative, it should be remarked at the outset that there is only one way of understanding it as a whole, namely, as the history of a real occurrence, of an actual temptation of our Lord by the devil as a person"—S. C. The Greek word *devil* has the same meaning as the Hebrew word *Satan*, which is used by S. Mark, namely, *accuser*, *slanderer* (Rev. 2. 10). This name itself suggests the nature of the conflict through which our Lord passed. He is no sooner consecrated to the work of establishing the kingdom of heaven upon earth, as the great end of His mission, than that work is made to appear unreasonable, hopeless, impossible. His absolute submission to the Divine will and purpose is thus awfully tried, tested, put to the proof.

2. **And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights.** "As did Moses, the giver of the Law, and Elijah, the great restorer of it"—WESLEY. (Ex. 34. 28; 1 Kings 19. 8.) **He was afterward**—not during the forty days, so all-absorbing was the conflict—**an hungered.** Here we are called to recognise the perfect humanity of Christ. His oneness with us as *the Man*, and the intense reality of His temptations.

3. **When the tempter came to Him**—exhausted, faint, alone, with everything around Him to depress—**he said**—referring to the recent testimony out of the open heavens—**If Thou be the Son of God**—appealing to His physical wants and weakness under the semblance of sympathy with Him, and putting Him in remembrance of His might as a divine person—**command that these stones be made bread.** Since Thou art the Son of God, possessed of unlimited power, provide for Thine own bodily needs. A most subtle temptation to distrust of God.

4. **It is written** (Deut. 8. 3), **Man shall not live by bread alone.** "The Israelites had been suffered to hunger, and had been fed with manna that they might learn to depend on God, who could support life by any means He pleased. And this had been *written*, and stood as a lesson for the guidance of this people in all ages. He, the Son of God, did not require to be taught that lesson, for it was impossible that His will should diverge from the will of the Father, as the severe testing He was then undergoing abundantly proved. But He 'foils the tempter *as* man for man.' Thus Christ answered, and thus we may answer, all the suggestions of the devil. **By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God**—that is, by whatever God commands to sustain Him. Therefore, it is not needful I should work a miracle to procure bread, without any intimation of My Father's will"—WESLEY.

5. **Taketh Him.** S. Luke, "brought, or led, Him." How, is not stated, but there is nothing to indicate supernatural means. **The holy city.** "So Jerusalem was commonly called, being the place God had peculiarly chosen for Himself. **On the battlement of the temple**—probably over the king's gallery, which was of such a prodigious height, that no one could look down from the top of it without making himself giddy"—WESLEY.

6. Cast Thyself down. This is a temptation to presumption, as the former was to distrust. This unfaltering trust of Thine is right. Here then is another opportunity of showing it; and since Thou appealest to Scripture for Thy guidance, take this promise for Thy encouragement—**He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee** (Ps. 91. 11). The suggestion is to put the promise of God to the proof, and to pervert trust into reckless confidence and pride. Possibly also the thought was suggested that He might at once convince the worshippers below that He was "the Lord whom they sought, and who should come suddenly to His temple" (Mal. 3. 1). "In the priests' courts below Him the morning sacrifice has been offered. The massive temple gates are slowly opening, and the blast of the priests' silver trumpets is summoning Israel to begin a new day by appearing before their Lord. Now then let Him descend, heaven-borne, into the midst of priests and people. What shouts of acclamation would greet His appearance! What homage of worship would be His! The goal can at once be reached, and that at the head of believing Israel"—E.

7. It is written again—"in another place" (Deut. 6. 16). Scripture is consistent with itself, and one saying must be explained by another. **Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.** Thou shalt not put the faithfulness of God to the test by a rash demand for the exercise of His power. "And thus once more Jesus not only is not overcome, but He overcomes by absolute submission to the will of God."

8. All the kingdoms of the world—(S. Luke adds, "in a moment of time"). A kind of instantaneous vision, clearly with allusion to the prophetic descriptions of the universal reign of the Messiah, as they were understood by the Jews of that period.

9. All these things will I give Thee. "For they are in my power" (Luke). In a true sense, alas! (John 12. 31; Eph. 2. 2; 6. 12). **If Thou wilt fall down and worship me.** One act of homage, and Thy aspirations as the heir to David's throne, and the fulfilment of all those promises of unlimited dominion which belong to Thee, shall be fully realised.

10. Get thee hence, Satan. For the first time calling him by his true name, the adversary of God and truth and righteousness. "By this temptation Satan, like Simon afterwards, stood between the Lord and His Cross; hence the unspeakable majesty of this first word of authority, which for once sought its answer deeper than Scripture, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan!' (ch. 16. 23). But the tempter had aimed to pervert His pure humanity from the supreme worship of God; hence the other words which he heard as he retreated, and which told him that man had vanquished him again, **For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve**"—POPE. (Deut. 6. 16.)

11. Behold, angels came and ministered to Him. "He who would not turn stones into bread was now fed; He who would not call upon angels to uphold Him in rash confidence was now sustained by them; He who demanded worship for God alone, received homage from those servants of God"—S.

"Subjoined observations: 1. This account must have been given to the apostles by our Lord Himself, which is a sufficient declaration of its deep and solemn importance. 2. It demonstrates the absolute sinlessness of Christ; therefore the impossibility of the suggestions to sin having originated in His own mind; therefore the existence and personality of the devil. 3. It teaches us that no follower of Christ, however spiritual and holy, is beyond the assaults of the tempter, and also that temptation is not sin. 4. It shows that temptation to sin may be a form of spiritual discipline, that we may therefore be divinely led *unto* it, though not *into* it. 5. It exhibits to us the special forms which temptation may be expected to take in the experience of Christ's followers, namely, self-dependence and distrust of God; self-complacent confidence in the unauthorised expectation of Divine favour; and self-gratification in 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.' 6. It teaches us to repel temptation by the wise use of 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' (Eph. 6. 17). 'It is *written*.' Thus Christ answered, and thus we may answer all the suggestions of the devil"—WESLEY.

Vers. 12–25. BEGINNING OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY IN GALILEE. (Mark 1. 14–20; Luke 4. 14, 15.)—**12. He departed** (R.V. "withdrew") **into Galilee.** "This journey was not immediately after His temptation. He first went from Judea into Galilee (John 1. 43; 2. 1); then into Judea again, and celebrated the Passover at Jerusalem (John 2. 13). He baptized in Judea while John was baptizing at Ænon (John 3. 22, 23). All this time John was at liberty (ver. 24). But the Pharisees being offended (John 4. 1) and John put in prison, He then took this journey into Galilee"—WESLEY.

13. Capernaum. The village of **Nahum**, supposed to have taken its name from the prophet Nahum, who probably resided there. Its exact site is uncertain, but the majority of recent explorers identify it with that of *Tell Hûm*, on the north-west coast of the Lake of Gennesaret. "Henceforth Capernaum is to be considered as Christ's place of residence. Hence it is called 'His own city.' It was upon 'the coast' of 'the sea' of Galilee, and gave Him easy access by water to many very populous districts, where He delivered many of His discourses, and wrought His astonishing miracles; but from this country He went up

thrice in the year, at the great feasts, to Jerusalem"—R. W.

14. **That it might be fulfilled.** (Isa. 9. 1.) This prophecy now began to be fulfilled in its original messianic and evangelical meaning.

15. **Galilee of the Gentiles.** So called because colonised by a mixed heathen population when the Israelites were in captivity in Babylon.

16. **The people which sat in darkness.** (Isa. 42. 6, 7; Luke 2. 32.) "Here is a beautiful gradation: first they 'walked,' then they 'sat in darkness,' and lastly **in the region of the shadow of death**"—WESLEY.

The whole passage (Isa. 8. 11 to 9. 7) has direct reference to the Messiah, "the Light of the world."

17. **From that time Jesus began to preach.** "He had preached before, both to Jews and Samaritans (John 4. 41, 45). But from this time began His solemn, stated preaching. **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** Although it is the peculiar business of Christ to establish the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men, yet it is observable He begins His preaching in the same words with John the Baptist; because the repentance which John taught still was, and ever will be, the necessary preparation for that inward kingdom"—WESLEY.

18. **The sea of Galilee.** "This was otherwise called the Sea or Lake of Tiberias, from the city of that name which was built on its western shore by Herod the Tetrarch, and so named in honour of Tiberius Cæsar. This inland sea had also the appellation of the Lake of Gennesaret; and in the Old Testament is called 'the Sea of Cinnereth.' It is between seventeen and eighteen miles in length, and near six in breadth. It is surrounded with a varied scenery of mountains and valleys, is generally smooth and tranquil, but subject to storms of wind suddenly beating down upon it from the mountains"—R. W. **Saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother.** "In John 1. 35–40 we have furnished to us the reason why these two brethren were so ready to arise and follow one whom, if we had this account only, we should infer they had never before seen"—A.

19. **Follow Me.** They first became disciples of Christ on the occasion described by John (ch. 1), but had returned to their occupation as fishermen; from this time they followed Him constantly.

23. **Jesus went about all Galilee.** (Mark 1. 38, 39; Luke 4. 14–44.) All the Evangelists, however, may not refer to the same journey. Our Lord probably made many tours of Galilee. **Teaching in their synagogues.** (Ch. 9. 35; Luke 4. 15–44.) Synagogues or meeting-houses owe their origin to the long captivity of the Jews in Babylon. They were places of assembly where all the regular forms of Jewish worship were observed, except the offering of sacrifices, which could take place only in Jerusalem. In structure they were made to resemble, as nearly as possible, the Tabernacle and the Temple. At the end pointing towards Jerusalem, which was called the Sanctuary, was an ark which contained a copy of the Law and rolls of the Prophets; the lid of this ark or chest was called a mercy-seat, and usually a vail hung before it. In the centre was a raised platform, which had seats (*the chief seats*) for the ruler and elders, who formed a kind of council (ch. 23. 6; Mark 12. 39), and also a pulpit, in which the officer who conducted the service stood to read, and sat to teach and exhort. Each synagogue had its almoner or deacon, and its *minister* or servant (Luke 4. 20). The officers of the synagogue had also certain judicial functions, and it was often itself a place of trial (Luke 12. 11; 21. 12), and even of the punishment of scourging (ch. 10. 17; Mark 13. 9). After the return of the Jews at the end of the Exile they built synagogues in every part of Palestine, and afterwards wherever colonies of Jews resided in Syria, Asia Minor, and throughout the Roman Empire. "These important institutions, where a congregation was always to be met with on the Sabbath, and often at other times, and where liberty of exhortation and of interpretation was allowed to qualified persons, our Lord availed Himself of to teach His heavenly doctrine; and itinerated through all Galilee, 'preaching the gospel of the kingdom.' It was also by ministering in synagogues that the apostles gathered churches in different parts of the world; and when Christian congregations were formed, they followed, during the first ages, nearly the same mode of worship as that of the synagogues, with the addition of the Lord's Supper"—R. W. **Preaching**—heralding or proclaiming publicly—**the gospel of the kingdom.** The good tidings respecting the kingdom of heaven. (Mark 1. 4; ch. 24. 14.) "The gospel, that is, the joyous message, is the proper name of our religion; as will be amply verified in all who earnestly and perseveringly embrace it"—WESLEY.

24. **All Syria.** "The whole province, of which the Jewish country was only a small part"—WESLEY. Here probably the large district on the north and east of Palestine. **Possessed with devils.** These are distinguished from persons suffering from natural maladies. Yet in some cases the symptoms appear to have been the same. "Thus we find violent madness (Mark 5. 4; Luke 8. 29), epilepsy (Mark 9. 18; Luke 9. 39), dumbness (ch. 9. 32; Luke 11. 14), blindness (ch. 12. 22), ascribed in different persons to the same cause. This variety of phenomena is entirely opposed to the view of those critics who maintained that the belief in demoniacal possession was merely a vulgar error concerning a particular class of diseases. In the scriptural account these visitations are distinguished from other diseases, not

by their symptoms but by their cause. They are represented as a power exercised by the evil spirit on the lower vital functions, the nerves and bodily organs, producing results varying in different cases, sometimes peculiar, sometimes similar to those arising from natural causes"—S. C.

25. **There followed Him great multitudes.** (Luke 6. 17–19.) **Decapolis.** "A tract of land on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, in which were ten cities near each other"—WESLEY.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THE SUBJECTS, LAWS, AND PRIVILEGES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

CHAPTER V.

Vers. 1–16. THE CHARACTERS OF THE SUBJECTS OF THE KINGDOM AND THEIR BLESSEDNESS. (Luke 6. 20–23.)—1. **In a** (R. V. "the") **mountain.** The mountainous country—the high land bordering on the Lake. **His disciples came unto Him.** Probably they "sat in a semicircle at His feet as was customary with the disciples of Jewish doctors," the multitude standing behind them. That the great sermon which follows is "one continued discourse, and not, as some have supposed, a collection of fragments, delivered at different times, is manifest both from the introductory and the concluding remarks of the Evangelist: 'Multitudes' follow Him to the mountain; they listen and express their astonishment when He had 'ended these sayings'; and when He was 'come down from the mountain, great multitudes' still follow Him. We must therefore conclude that all which S. Matthew has inserted between these historical remarks as 'the sayings' of our Lord, were at that time delivered consecutively"—R. W.

2. **And He opened His mouth.** A phrase which always denotes a set and solemn discourse. **And taught them.** To bless men, to make men happy, was the great business for which our Lord came into the world. And accordingly He here pronounces eight blessings together, annexing them to so many steps in Christianity. Knowing that happiness is our common aim, and that an innate instinct continually urges us to the pursuit of it, He in the kindest manner applies to that instinct, and directs it to its proper object. Though all men desire, yet few attain, happiness, because they seek it where it is not to be found. Our Lord therefore begins His divine institution, which is the complete art of happiness, by laying down, before all that have ears to hear, the true, and only true, method of acquiring it. Observe the benevolent condescension of our Lord. He seems, as it were, to lay aside His supreme authority as our Legislator, that He may the better act the part of our Friend and Saviour. Instead of using the lofty style, in positive commands, He, in a more gentle and engaging way, insinuates His will and our duty, by pronouncing those happy who comply with it.

3. **Blessed.** Our Lord is describing the characters of His real followers, the citizens of His heavenly kingdom; and so He designates successively their characters, beginning with that which first manifests itself, and going from stage to stage of spiritual progress, He pronounces each to be blessed—deeply, truly happy—an element of blessedness in itself, and blessed for a reason which He assigns. **The poor in spirit.** The humble (Isa. 57. 15; 66. 2). "Poverty of spirit implies a penitential sense of our guilt as sinners, and a deep conviction of our unworthiness and natural imbecility in all things relating to our salvation, accompanied by an entire dependence upon God for counsel, strength, and grace. It is the root of all true faith or trust in God"—R. W. There is an evident allusion here, and throughout the description, to the false notions of the Jews respecting Messiah's kingdom and its subjects. **For theirs is,** by a peculiar right, **the kingdom of heaven.** S. Luke says simply, "Blessed be ye poor," a contradiction of all Jewish conceptions, "for yours is the kingdom of God." (Jas. 2. 5.)

4. **They that mourn.** (Isa. 61. 3; Ezek. 7. 16.) Clearly the penitent on account of sin are specially intended, but also those who sorrow under the pressure of testing affliction, and who *mourn* in sympathy *with them that mourn.* **For they shall be comforted.** "More solidly and deeply even in this world, and eternally in heaven"—WESLEY.

In Luke, "Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh." (John 16. 20; 2 Cor. 1. 7.)

5. **The meek.** The resigned under suffering, and the unruffled under provocation. (Ch. 11. 29; 2 Cor. 10. 1; 1 Pet. 3. 4.) **For they**—not the ambitious and restless—**shall inherit the earth.** (Ps. 37. 11.) "The usual dividers and allotters of the earth being mighty and proud conquerors, and the Messiah being expected as such a conqueror, this announcement, that the meek should inherit the earth, struck at the root of the temporal expectations of power and wealth in the Messiah's kingdom"—A. (Dan. 7. 27.)

6. **Hunger and thirst after righteousness.** (Ps. 107. 9; Isa. 41. 17.) "Out of humility, sorrow, weakness, grows finally greatness of soul, the sanctified and true loftiness of desire which aspires earnestly towards that which alone is right"—S. "Here the strong desires of the mind are represented by the appetites of the body, a metaphor common in all languages. *Righteousness* is to be taken in the sense of holiness; which consists in the entire renewal of the soul after the image of God; which cannot be attained without vehement desires, prayers, and efforts, and with which all those shall be abundantly satisfied who thus seek it. In them there shall be no lack of any virtue to

complete the full and mature character of a true Christian"—R. W. **They shall be filled.** (Ps. 17. 15; 145. 7; Isa. 64. 5; 65. 13; comp. Rom. 1. 17; 10. 4-10; 1 Cor. 1. 20.)

7. **The merciful.** "To be merciful implies a sympathising regard to the miseries of others; liberality in relieving their distresses according to our utmost power; the ready forgiveness of offences, and the remission of obligations due to ourselves, when the parties are unable to discharge them"—R. W. This element of character presupposes the attainment of those already described. The man whose longings after righteousness are satisfied in his renewal in righteousness, after the image of Him who created him, is supposed to show that he dwells in God, therefore in love. **For they shall obtain mercy.** (Ps. 18. 25; 41. 1, 2.) "Whatever mercy therefore we desire from God, the same let us show to our brethren. He will repay us a thousandfold the love we bear to any for His sake"—WESLEY. (Luke 6. 37.)

8. **Pure in heart.** (Ps. 24. 3, 4; Heb. 12. 14; 1 John 3. 2.) "The sanctified; they who love God with all their hearts. **They shall see God**—in all things here; hereafter in glory"—WESLEY. (Comp. 1 John 1. 6, 7; 3. 6; 3 John 11; Rev. 22. 4.)

9. **The peacemakers.** (Ps. 34. 14.) "They that, out of love to God and man, do all possible good to all men. Peace, in the Scripture sense, implies all blessings, temporal and eternal. **They shall be called the children of God**—shall be acknowledged such by God and men"—WESLEY.

"God is the God of peace"; *peacemakers* shall therefore be recognised as His sons. (Rom. 15. 33; 2 Cor. 13. 11; Eph. 5. 1, 2.) This sevenfold delineation of the distinctive characters of the subjects of the kingdom of heaven is complete in itself. The other benedictions which follow are confirmatory of it. "Through this whole discourse we cannot but observe the most exact method which can possibly be conceived. Every paragraph, every sentence, is closely connected both with that which precedes and that which follows it. And is not this the pattern for every Christian preacher? If any then are able to follow it without any premeditation, well; if not, let them not dare to preach without it. No rhapsody, no incoherency, whether the things spoken be true or false, comes of the Spirit of Christ"—WESLEY.

10. **For righteousness' sake.** (1 Pet. 3. 13, 14.) "That is, because they have, or follow after, the righteousness here described. He that is truly a righteous man, he that mourns, and he that is 'pure in heart,' yea, all 'that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution'"—WESLEY. (2 Tim. 3. 12.)

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The same promise as that given to the "poor in spirit" (ver. 3), and to be understood in the same sense. "Theirs is"—not merely shall be hereafter—"the kingdom" which our Lord was then establishing on earth. They are already within that kingdom, and "their immediate reward is a more intimate fellowship with God, and richer internal consolations. 'As our afflictions abound, our consolations abound.' In this sense the kingdom of heaven may be truly said to be *theirs*, who are 'persecuted for righteousness' sake'; though our Lord ultimately refers, as in the twelfth verse, to the rewards of another life"—R. W.

11. **Blessed are ye.** Our Lord here assumes the form of direct address to His disciples, identifying His cause and theirs with the cause of righteousness, *the righteousness* which is His. (John 15. 19.) "**Revile** when present, **say all evil** when you are absent"—WESLEY.

For My sake—because for "righteousness' sake."

12. **Your reward in heaven.** "Even over and above the happiness which naturally results from holiness." "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." The righteousness which believers have and manifest in Christ, and which constitutes them citizens of His kingdom, may expose them to persecution, but its attainment is their title and personal meetness for the City wherein "dwelleth righteousness." (2 Cor. 4. 17.) **For so persecuted they**—the rebellious Jews—**the prophets.** "For instance, Jeremiah was scourged (Jer. 20. 2), Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, was stoned (2 Chron. 24. 21), Isaiah, according to Jewish tradition, was sawn asunder by Manasseh"—A.

13. **Ye** whose characters I have described—"not apostles or ministers and teachers only, but all who are truly righteous—**are the salt of the earth,** and are to season others"—WESLEY. (Mark 9. 50; Luke 14. 34, 35.) As the special use of salt is to preserve from corruption, so the faithful followers of Christ check, by their example and influence, the spread of moral corruption in human society, and exert upon it a purifying reactive power. For this end it is their duty to mingle with men in daily life; not to "go out of the world," but to be "a holy nation, a peculiar people" in it. **But if the salt have lost its savour**—its taste and pungency, which was quite possible in the case of the salt to which our Lord would be understood to refer—**it is thenceforth good for nothing,** etc. "The savourless salt represents those who have lost the vital influence of piety. Neither does their conversation savour of the things of God; nor do their conduct and spirit exert a sanctifying influence upon others. Their profession may remain; the doctrines of Christ may still generally be held; all the external signs of piety may be exhibited by them—but the spirit, the pungency, is gone. The dry and sapless branch, and the tasteless and unsavoury salt, are their proper emblems. The expression 'wherewith shall it be salted,' appears not to have been rightly understood by

those interpreters who think that it imports that the savour of grace can never be regained, and that therefore the case of hopeless apostates is represented under this figure. It was rather the intention of our Lord to impress His disciples with the sin and danger of being useless to mankind, through the neglect of personal and influential piety. 'Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it,' that is, *the earth*, 'be salted?' or purified. To be useless, is, in fact, to be injurious; and he who neglects his own salvation is a hindrance to many others"—R. W.

14. **The light of the world.** "Yet only in a lower and derivative sense; Christ Himself being 'the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' (John 1. 9; 8. 12)"—A. Light is an emblem of truth, purity, benevolence, and activity. In all these senses Christ is the Light of men (John 1. 4). His true followers are said to be "children of light," to be "light in the Lord," and are therefore charged to "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2. 15, 16). **A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid**—"probably pointing to that on the brow of the opposite hill." "Love cannot be hid any more than light; and, least of all, when it shines forth in action, when ye exercise yourselves in the labour of love, in beneficence of every kind. As well may men think to hide a city as to hide a Christian; yea, as well may they conceal a city set upon a hill, as a holy, zealous, active lover of God and man"—WESLEY.

15. **Light a candle** (lamp), etc. "The family lamp, placed upon its stand, and giving light to the family, seems to indicate the duty of domestic piety and zeal. Their houses were illuminated all night long by lamps placed upon a large 'stand,' or, as our translation calls it, *a candlestick*, fixed in the ground, from which the smaller lamps were lighted, which were to be used in the other apartments. Such is the office of the head of every Christian family, to *give light to all that are in the house*, by his instructions and example"—R. W.

16. **Let your light so shine.** Even so, in like manner, this refers to each of the emblems used. Like the Law, like the city on a hill, like the lamp on a stand, so let your light shine. "It is important to observe that it is not said, we must wish ourselves to shine; but as the translation well expresses it, that we should 'let' freely, without covering or hindrance, 'our light,' that which has by grace been given to us and exists within us, shine before men, according to its own nature and the will of Him who kindled it"—S. **And glorify your Father which is in heaven.** (1 Pet. 2. 12.) "'Your Father,' not yourselves. 'To glorify God' here does not merely signify to give praise to Him, but along with that to confess the truth and divine origin of a religion teaching such truths, and raising men to so high characters of holiness, and under these views and impressions to embrace it"—R. W.

So shine before men, that—in order that—without any thought of self, ye may glorify God; guiding others to the knowledge and experience of the power of the gospel quietly, it may be "like a fair taper, illuminating everything near it, but casting a comely shadow around itself."

Vers. 17–48. THE RELATION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO THE MOSAIC ECONOMY: THE KINGDOM THE FULFILMENT OF THE LAW.—17. **That I am come to destroy**—to invalidate or do away with—**the Law, or the Prophets.** (Isa. 42. 21; Rom. 5. 21; 10. 4; Gal. 3. 24.) The Moral Law most clearly, as in ch. 7. 12: "The Law whose substance is found in the ten commandments 'written and engraven in stones,' and enforced in the writings of the Prophets"—R. W. (Ch. 22. 40; Luke 16. 16.) **But to fulfil**—to complete and make perfect. "To establish, illustrate, and explain its highest meaning both by my life and doctrine"—WESLEY.

18. **For verily I say unto you**—a strong affirmation of something about to be spoken, which our Lord alone ever used—**till heaven and earth pass** (away)—till the end of the world (Jer. 33. 20, 21)—**one jot or one tittle**—the smallest characters in the Hebrew alphabet—**shall in no wise pass** (away) **from the Law, till all be fulfilled** (R.V. "till all things be accomplished"). The word translated "fulfilled" is not the same as that in ver. 17. The meaning is till the whole purpose of the Law shall be effected. "For the Law has its effect when the rewards are given, and the punishments annexed to it inflicted, as well as when its precepts are obeyed"—WESLEY.

19. **Whosoever therefore shall break**—that is, annul or relax the obligation of—**one of these least commandments**—"so accounted by men—**and shall teach**—either by word or example—**shall be the least**—that is, shall have no part therein"—WESLEY. **The kingdom of heaven,** in its present relation to the Law, and to the heavenly kingdom hereafter. (Jas. 2. 10.)

20. **Exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.** "Described in the sequel of this discourse"—WESLEY. (See ch. 23. 23–36; Phil. 3. 9; Heb. 10. 16.)

21. **Ye have heard**—from the scribes reciting the Law—**that it was said by** (R.V. "to") **them of old time, Thou shalt not kill.** (Ex. 20. 13; Deut 5. 17.) "And they interpreted this, as all the other commandments, barely of the outward act. **The judgment.** The Jews had in every city a court of twenty-three men, who could sentence a criminal to be strangled. But the Sanhedrim only (the great Council which sat at Jerusalem, consisting of seventy-two men) could sentence to the more terrible death of stoning. That was called 'the judgment'; this, 'the council'"—WESLEY. (Deut. 19. 12; Ezra 7. 26.)

22. "**But I say unto you.** Which of the prophets ever spake thus? Their language is, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Who hath authority to use this language, but the one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy? **Whosoever is angry with his brother.** Some copies add, 'without a cause'; but this is utterly foreign to the whole scope and tenor of our Lord's discourse [omitted from the R.V.]. If He had only forbidden the being angry without a cause, there was no manner of need of that solemn declaration, 'I say unto you'; for the scribes and Pharisees themselves said as much as this. Even they taught, men ought not to be angry 'without a cause.' So that this righteousness does not 'exceed' theirs. But Christ teaches that we ought not for any cause to be so angry as to call any man **Raca,** or 'fool.' We ought not for any cause to be angry at the person of the sinner, but at his sin only. Happy world, were this plain and necessary distinction thoroughly understood, remembered, practised! 'Raca' means a silly man, a trifler. **Whosoever shall say, Thou fool**—shall revile or seriously reproach any man. (Ps. 14. 1.) Our Lord specifies three degrees of murder, each liable to a sorer punishment than the other; not indeed from men, but from God. **Hell fire.** In the valley of Hinnom (whence the word in the original is taken) the children were used to be burned alive to Moloch. It was afterwards made a receptacle for the filth of the city, where continual fires were kept to consume it. And it is probable, if any criminal were burned alive, it was in this accursed and horrible place. Therefore, both as to its former and latter state, it was a fit emblem of hell. It must here signify a degree of future punishment, as much more dreadful than those incurred in the two former cases, as burning alive is more dreadful than either strangling, death by the sword, or stoning"—WESLEY.

23, 24. **Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar** (R.V. "if thou art offering thy gift at the altar")—if even thou art already engaged in the most solemn act of religious worship,—"**and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee.** On any of the preceding accounts, for any unkind thought or word; any that did not spring from love"—WESLEY.

Leave there thy gift. "For neither thy gift nor thy prayer will atone for thy want of love: but this will make them both an abomination before God"—WESLEY. (Hosea 6. 6; Prov. 15. 8; 21. 3.)

25. **Agree with thine adversary** (at law) **quickly.** (Luke 12. 58.) "The whole of this verse is the earthly example of a spiritual duty which is understood and runs parallel with it. The sense may be given. As in worldly affairs, it is prudent to make up a matter with an adversary before judgment is passed, which may deliver a man to a vain and rigorous imprisonment, so reconciliation with an offended brother in this life is absolutely necessary before his wrong cry against us to the great Judge, and we be cast into eternal condemnation"—A.

26. **Verily I say unto thee,** etc. "These words, as in the earthly example, they imply future liberation, because an earthly debt can be paid in most cases, so in the spiritual counterpart they amount to a negation of it, because the debt can never be discharged"—A.

27, 28. **Ye have heard,** etc. (Job. 31. 1; Prov. 6. 25.) "That the guilt of secret inclinations to sin was concluded from the letter of the Law, by the ancient Jews, appears from many passages in the Old Testament, and from the manifest strugglings and prayers of the pious against all 'secret sins.' The law prohibiting adultery would therefore be understood to prohibit also all impure desires; but it was now explicitly enacted, so to speak, by the great Lawgiver Himself, that the desire of sin is sin; and that he who indulges that desire comes under the penalty of the Law as certainly as he who commits an outward violation of it"—R. W.

"Our Lord, making perfect the Law, gives the full import of the commandment as condemning the beginning no less than the completion of the sin"—S. C.

29, 30. **If thy right eye offend thee** (R.V. "causeth thee to stumble") **pluck it out.** (Ch. 18. 8, 9; Mark 9. 43–48.) "Whatever, therefore, becomes an occasion of our falling from a state of purity into sin; whatever would lead us into criminal entanglements of our consciences and affections, must be resolutely renounced, at the expense of every sacrifice, however painful or costly"—R. W.

31, 32. **A writing of divorcement.** (Deut. 24. 1; Luke 16. 18; 1 Cor. 7. 10.) "Divorces had been long frequent among the Jews, and that for trivial causes; and the general interpretation of the Law had introduced a laxity far beyond its intention. Here then our Lord, in His capacity of the Lawgiver of His own dispensation, settles this question also—a question of the highest importance to the institution of marriage, which is the source of all the domestic virtues, and the fountain of public morals. He allows the bill of divorce, but restrains it absolutely to cases which directly and essentially violate the marriage covenant"—R. W.

33–36. **Thou shalt not forswear thyself**—that is, swear falsely or commit perjury. (Lev. 19. 12; Num. 30. 2; Deut. 23. 21–23.) **But I say unto you, Swear not at all,** etc. "Our Lord here refers to the promise made to the 'pure in heart,' of seeing God in all things; and points out a false doctrine of the scribes, which arose from their not thus seeing God. What He forbids is, the swearing at all (1) by any creature; (2) in our ordinary conversation, both of which the scribes and Pharisees taught to be perfectly innocent"—WESLEY.

"He teaches, that to swear by any of the creatures is, in fact, to swear by God who made and preserves them; and that the violation of such oaths was as truly an act of perjury as when the name of God was directly appealed to. It is a beautiful observation of Law, in reference to this passage: 'How sacred the whole frame of the world is, how all things are to be considered as God's, and referred to Him, is fully taught by our Lord in the case of oaths. Here you see all things in the whole order of nature, from the highest heaven to the smallest hair, are always to be considered, not separately as they are in themselves, but as in some relation to God'"—R. W.

37. **Yea, yea; Nay, nay**—simply affirm or deny—**cometh of evil**—"the evil or the evil one." (Jas. 5. 12.) All oaths come of evil. Even judicial oaths, though not evil in themselves, come of the evil of distrust in human society; and the use of oaths in ordinary discourse is essential evil.

38. **An eye for an eye**, etc. (Ex. 21. 24; Lev. 24. 20; Deut. 19. 18–20.) This principle of retaliation, so seemingly equitable and so generally acted upon in early times, among all nations, Moses adopted for the administration of justice by the courts of law, but the Jews perverted it into a sanction of private revenge. It is against this that our Lord's teaching is here especially directed.

39. **Resist not evil** (R.V. "him that is evil"), retaliate not. (Rom. 12. 17.) "The Greek word translated 'resist' signifies 'standing in battle array,' 'striving for victory.' **If a man strike thee on the right cheek**—return not evil for evil; yea, **turn to him the other**—rather than revenge thyself"—WESLEY.

"It is quite beside the purpose to say that these precepts of our Lord's are too highly pitched for humanity, and so to find an excuse for violating them. If we were disciples of His in the true sense, these precepts would, in their 'spirit,' as indicative of frames of mind, be strictly observed"—A.

40, 41. **Take away thy coat**—thy tunic, or inner garment—**let him have thy cloke also**—thy more costly garment. This was frequently used by the poor as a coverlet by night, and the Law therefore forbade to retain it in pledge (Ex. 22. 26; comp. 1 Cor. 6. 7). The injunction is: "Where the damage is not great, choose rather to suffer it, though possibly it may on that account be repeated, than to demand 'an eye for an eye,' to enter into a rigorous prosecution of the offender. The meaning of the whole passage seems to be, rather than return evil for evil, when the wrong is purely personal, submit to one bodily wrong after another; give up one part of your goods after another; submit to one instance of compulsion after another. That the words are not literally to be understood appears from the behaviour of our Lord Himself (John 18. 22, 23)"—WESLEY. (See Prov. 3. 27; Gal. 6. 10; Phil. 2. 4; Heb. 13. 16; 1 Tim. 6. 18.)

42. **Give to him that asketh thee**, etc. (Deut. 15. 8.) This precept must be taken in its principle, not in its bare literal meaning. To give indiscriminately to every one that asks, and to lend to every one who desires to borrow, would be to do evil rather than good. Regard must be had also to our means. "Give and lend to any so far (but no farther, for God never contradicts Himself) as is consistent with thy engagements to thy creditors, thy family, and the household of faith"—WESLEY.

43. **Thou shalt love thy neighbour** (Lev. 19. 18; Deut. 23. 6), **and hate thine enemy.** "God spake the former **part**; the scribes added the latter"—WESLEY.

And how contrary this rabbinical gloss is to the principle and spirit of the Law appears from Ex. 23. 4, 5; Prov. 24. 17, 18; 25. 21; Job 31. 29.

44. **Love your enemies.** (Rom. 12. 14, 20.) **Bless them that curse you.** "Speak all the good you can to and of them who speak all evil to and of you. Repay love in thought, word, and deed, to those who hate you, and show it both in word and deed"—WESLEY.

Pray for them, etc. (Luke 23. 34; Acts 7. 60.)

45. **That ye may be the children of your Father**—"that is, that ye may continue and appear such before men and angels"—WESLEY.

That ye may show resemblance to Him. (Eph. 5. 1; comp. John 8. 39, 44, 46.)

46. **The publicans** "were officers of the revenue, farmers, or receivers of the public money; men employed by the Romans to gather the taxes and customs which they exacted of the nations they had conquered. These were generally odious for their extortion and oppression, and were reckoned by the Jews as the very scum of the earth"—WESLEY.

The men here and so frequently mentioned in the Gospels as the objects of scorn and odium were not the farmers of the customs, but the actual collectors—degraded Jews or heathen, who carried on their occupation with recklessness and cruelty. Even these men loved those who loved them. The love by which His followers, the subjects of the kingdom of heaven, were to be distinguished, was to be something very different from that.

47. **Do not even the publicans so?** (R.V. "Do not even the Gentiles so?"). "If not to *salute* be a heathen indifference, to hide hatred under *outward civilities* is a diabolical treachery. To pretend much love and affection for those for whom we have neither—to use toward them complimentary phrases, to which we affix no meaning but that they mean nothing, is highly offensive in the sight of that God by whom actions are weighed and words judged"—C. "Our Lord probably glances at those prejudices which different sects had against each

other; and intimates, that He would not have His followers imbibe that narrow spirit. Would to God this had been more attended to among the unhappy divisions and subdivisions into which His Church has been crumbled; and that we might at least advance so far as cordially to embrace our brethren in Christ, of whatever party or denomination they are!

48. **"Therefore ye shall be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.** So the original runs, referring to all that holiness which is described in the foregoing verses, which our Lord in the beginning of the chapter recommends as happiness, and in the close of it as perfection. And how wise and gracious is this, to sum up, and as it were seal, all His commandments with a promise; even the proper promise of the gospel, that He will 'put those laws in our minds, and write them in our hearts'! He well knew how ready our unbelief would be to cry out, This is impossible! and therefore stakes upon it all the power, truth, and faithfulness of Him to whom all things are possible"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER VI.

Vers. 1–34. SPIRITUAL DUTIES IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, MANIFESTING ITS RIGHTEOUSNESS.—1. **Take heed that ye do not your alms** (R.V. "that ye do not your righteousness") **before men, to be seen of them.** (Ps. 112. 9.) *Righteousness*, not *alms*, is the true teaching. "Barely the being seen, while we are doing any of these things, is a circumstance purely indifferent. But the doing them with this view, to be seen and admired, this is what our Lord condemns"—WESLEY.

This general charge to take heed that our motives and ends are right our Lord goes on to illustrate by examples.

2. **Therefore**—accepting this as a general rule—**when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee.** (Rom. 12. 8.) Do not make self-consciously a display of thy benevolence. It is not likely that the trumpet was literally used on these occasions, but the meaning is obvious. Avoid ostentation. **The hypocrites.** Men who pretend to be what they are not. The Pharisees are no doubt intended though not named. **They have their reward**—in full, "all they will have; for they shall have none from God"—WESLEY.

3. **Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.** "A proverbial expression for doing a thing secretly. Do it as secretly as is consistent—(1) With doing it at all; (2) with doing it in the most effectual manner"—WESLEY.

"Observe that the singular number is used throughout these instructions on the subject of almsgiving and prayer, and in these only these duties are essentially personal and individual"—C. S.

5. **The synagogues.** (See ch. 4. 23.) Which were houses of prayer, but the word may mean any place of assembly. **And in the corners of the streets.** There were fixed hours of prayer, and these hypocrites arranged their business so as to be at these appointed hours in the most public situations, as if by accident, and stood to repeat forms of prayer in the presence of the admiring crowd.

6. **Enter into thy closet.** (Ch. 24. 26.) A small room, usually in the upper part of the house—meaning, however, any place where secrecy can be secured.

7. **Vain repetitions.** (Eccles. 5. 2, 7.) **As the heathen do.** (1 Kings 18. 26; Acts 19. 34.) This caution is not directed against spending much time in private prayer, or the fervent repetition of the same words, for our Lord Himself did both (Luke 5. 12; ch. 26. 36–46); but against the rabbinical teaching that he who multiplies his prayers will be certainly heard. "To repeat any words without meaning them is certainly a vain repetition. Therefore we should be extremely careful, in all our prayers, to mean what we say; and to say only what we mean from the bottom of our hearts. The vain and heathenish repetitions which we are here warned against are most dangerous, and yet very common; which is a principal cause why so many who still profess religion are a disgrace to it. Indeed, all the words in the world are not equivalent to one holy desire. And the very best prayers are but vain repetitions, if they are not the language of the heart"—WESLEY.

8. **Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of.** (Luke 12. 30; John 16. 23–27.) "We do not pray to inform God of our wants. Omniscient as He is, He cannot be informed of anything which He knew not before: and He is always willing to relieve them. The chief thing wanting is, a fit disposition on our part to receive His grace and blessing. Consequently, one great office of prayer is, to produce such a disposition in us; to exercise our dependence on God; to increase our desire of the things we ask for; to make us so sensible of our wants, that we may never cease wrestling till we have prevailed for the blessing"—WESLEY.

9. **After this manner.** "He who best knew what we ought to pray for, and how we ought to pray; what matter of desire, what manner of address, would most please Himself, would best become us, has here dictated to us a most perfect and universal form of prayer, comprehending all our real wants, expressing all our lawful desires; a complete directory and full exercise of all our devotions"—WESLEY.

"This prayer consists of three parts—the preface, the petitions, and the conclusion. The preface, 'Our Father who art in heaven,' lays a general foundation for prayer; comprising what we must first know of God, before we can pray in confidence of being heard. It

likewise points out to us that faith, humility, love of God and man, with which we are to approach God in prayer."

I. 9. **Our Father.** (Rom. 8. 15.) "A form of address almost unknown to the Old Covenant; now and then hinted at (Isa. 1. 2; Mal. 1. 6), but never brought out in its fulness, as indeed it could not be, till He was come by whom we have received the adoption of sons"—A.

"Our Father"—"Who art good and gracious to all, our Creator, our Preserver; the Father of our Lord, and of us in Him; Thy children by adoption and grace; not *my* Father only, who now cry unto Thee, but the Father of the universe, of angels and men. **Who art in heaven**—beholding all things, both in heaven and earth; knowing every creature, and all the works of every creature, and every possible event from everlasting to everlasting; the Almighty Lord and Ruler of all, superintending and disposing all things. 'In heaven.' Eminently there, but not there alone, seeing Thou fillest heaven and earth"—WESLEY.

II. (1) **Hallowed be Thy name.** (Deut. 28. 58; Ps. 111. 9; 139. 20.) The name of God is His character, as revealed and made known to men. May Thy character be revered and glorified! "Mayest Thou, O Father, be truly known by all intelligent beings, and with affections suitable to that knowledge! Mayest Thou be duly honoured, loved, feared, by all in heaven and in earth, by all angels and all men!"—WESLEY.

10. (2) **Thy kingdom come.** (Ch. 16. 19; Rev. 11. 15; 22. 17, 20.) "May Thy kingdom of grace come quickly, and swallow up all the kingdoms of the earth! May all mankind, receiving Thee, O Christ, for their King, truly believing in Thy name, be filled with righteousness, and peace, and joy; with holiness and happiness, till they are removed hence into Thy kingdom of glory, to reign with Thee for ever and ever"—WESLEY.

(3) **Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.** (Ps. 103. 19, 20; Isa. 11. 9; 40. 9–31; Rev. 21. 3, 22–27; 22. 3.) "May all the inhabitants of the earth do Thy will as willingly as the holy angels! May these do it continually even as they, without any interruption of their willing service; yea, and perfectly, as they! Mayest Thou, O Spirit of grace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make them perfect in every good work to do Thy will, and work in them all that is well-pleasing in Thy sight"—WESLEY.

11. (4) **Give us this day our daily bread.** (Prov. 30. 8; Isa. 33. 16.) "Give us"—"O Father (for we claim nothing of right, but only of Thy free mercy)—'this day'—(for we take no thought for the morrow)—'our daily bread'—all things needful for our souls and bodies; not only the meat that perisheth, but the sacramental bread, and Thy grace, the food which endureth to everlasting life"—WESLEY.

12. (5) **And forgive us our debts.** (Ch. 18. 21–35; Luke 7. 40–48.) Our unfulfilled obligations, our failures in duty, and also, as explained in ver. 14, "our trespasses." This is to be the daily prayer of the true subjects of Christ's kingdom. "God forgives once as a Judge, but daily as a Father. (See 1 John 1. 8, 9.) **As we forgive** (R.V. 'as we have forgiven') **our debtors**—those who have failed in their duty to us. The form of the petition implies that we have already forgiven them. It can never be used sincerely by any who cherish resentment. Give us, O Lord, redemption in Thy blood, even the forgiveness of sins, as Thou enablest us freely and fully to forgive every man, so do Thou forgive all our trespasses"—WESLEY.

13. (6) **And lead us not into temptation.** (Ch. 26. 41; Luke 22. 40, 46.) Suffer us not to be led into circumstances which may become to us an occasion of sin. **But deliver us from evil.** (John 17. 15; 2 Thess. 3. 3; 2 Tim. 4. 18.) "Whenever we are tempted, O Thou that helpest our infirmities, suffer us not to enter into temptation; to be overcome or suffer loss thereby; but make a way for us to escape, so that we may be more than conquerors, through Thy love, over sin and all the consequences of it. Now, the principal desire of a Christian's heart being the glory of God (vers. 9, 10); and all he wants for himself or his brethren being the daily bread of soul and body (or the support of life, animal and spiritual), pardon of sin, and deliverance from the power of it and of the devil (vers. 11–13), there is nothing besides that a Christian can wish for: therefore this prayer comprehends all his desires. Eternal life is the certain consequence, or rather completion, of holiness"—WESLEY.

III. **For Thine is the kingdom.** (Rev. 5. 12, 13; 1 Chron. 29. 11; Ps. 72. 18, 19; 2 Tim. 4. 18.) "The sovereign right of all things that are or ever were created. **The power**—the executive power, whereby Thou governest all things in Thy everlasting kingdom. **And the glory**—the praise due from every creature, for Thy power, and all Thy wondrous works, and the mightiness of Thy kingdom, which endureth through all ages, even **for ever and ever.** It is observable, that though the doxology, as well as the petitions, of this prayer, is threefold, and is directed to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost distinctly; yet is the whole fully applicable both to every Person, and to the ever-blessed and undivided Trinity"—WESLEY.

14, 15. **For if ye forgive, etc.** Essentially and peculiarly the teaching of the gospel, and made emphatic here by being singled out from the other petitions for special comment. (Mark 11. 25, 26; Eph. 4. 31; Jas. 2. 13.)

16. **Moreover, when ye fast.** A third example of what our Lord meant by the caution (ver. 1), "Do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them." In fasting, as in

almsgiving and prayer, do not put on appearances to gain the admiration of men. Be real and absolutely sincere (Isa. 58. 3-5). "Our Lord does not enjoin either fasting, alms-deeds, or prayer; all these being duties which were before fully established in the Church of God. **Disfigure**—by the dust and ashes which they put upon their heads, as was usual at the times of solemn humiliation"—WESLEY.

17. **Anoint thine head**, etc. "Conduct thyself in thy usual manner."

19. **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.** (Prov. 23. 4; Luke 18. 25; 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10; Heb. 13. 5.) The principle of the injunction is the same as that of the foregoing examples. Our Lord is continuing to show and enforce the righteousness inseparable from the kingdom of heaven. As His true followers, the subjects of the kingdom would not think of man, but of God, in the discharge of religious duties, so they would be governed by a regard to His will in all their worldly pursuits. To lay up treasure upon earth is to make gain, honour, or worldly distinction the chief end of life. "The accumulation of property is not here absolutely forbidden. In most cases the business of life cannot be carried on without it, in some degree; and large commercial and manufacturing concerns can only be conducted by a large capital, and if successfully managed must rapidly increase wealth. But the precept forbids—(1) The hoarding up of useless wealth which is not made beneficial to society; (2) All anxiety to acquire wealth, so that we may be cheerfully content with the portion which Providence assigns us; (3) All greediness of gain, whether to keep or to spend, whether to gratify the mean passion of avarice, or to be used for vain ostentation or personal indulgence"—R. W. **Where moth and rust doth corrupt** (R.V. "consume," Jas. 5. 2, 3). "Where all things are perishable and transient"—WESLEY.

The treasures of the East consisted in great part of costly garments which moths and other insects might render worthless in a night, and which rust, representing the wear and tear of time, must sooner or later destroy.

20, 21. **But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.** (Ch. 19. 21; Luke 12. 23; Col. 3. 1-8; 1 Pet. 1. 4; Heb. 10. 34.) Let God be supreme in your thoughts and affections. This is the principle of all these precepts. "If God be the treasure of our souls, our hearts, *i.e.* our affections and desires, will be placed on things above. An earthly-minded man proves that his treasure is below; a heavenly-minded man shows that his treasure is above"—C. "The antithesis contained in these verses will not pass unnoticed by the attentive reader. Treasures on *earth*, and treasures in *heaven;* the latter, therefore, are all spiritual, suited to the enjoyment and capacity of a perfectly purified and glorified nature; they are also inalienable and imperishable, in contrast with the corruptible and uncertain enjoyments of time; and so it is a joyful consideration that in proportion to the value of the treasures of heaven is their security; we can never outlive them, never forfeit them, they shall never be taken away from us"—R. W.

22. **The light** (R.V. "lamp," Luke 11. 34) **of the body is the eye.** The eye is man's natural guide when he walks or acts. **If therefore the eye be single**—presenting a single and clear image of objects to the brain—**thy whole body shall be full of light.** "Thou shalt walk and act in full light; in the knowledge of what thou art doing."

23. **But if thine eye be evil**—distempered, and so conveys to the brain a distorted image of objects, in contrast with that of the single eye—**thy whole body shall be full of darkness.** And "he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." "And what the eye is to the body, the intention is to the soul. We may observe with what exact propriety our Lord places purity of intention between worldly desires and worldly cares, either of which directly tend to destroy it. **If thine eye be single**—singly fixed on God and heaven, thy whole soul will be full of holiness and happiness"—WESLEY.

24. **No man can serve two masters.** (Luke 16. 9, 13.) That is, in the sense of being wholly at the command of both, not as a hired servant, but as a slave. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon**—that is, "riches, money, anything loved or sought without reference to God"—WESLEY.

Our Lord had just spoken of the devotion of the heart to God as required by the righteousness of His kingdom. But the heart cannot be devoted to God, and at the same time be set upon the acquisition and possession of this world's wealth. "For to serve God acceptably is to serve Him absolutely, to confide in Him alone, to love Him supremely, and to submit to all those laws of generous liberality in the use of money which necessarily imply that we make riches our servants, not our masters; and are to be ready to sacrifice wealth, and all the distinctions and pleasures which it can purchase, when called to it for Christ's sake, and the preservation of a good conscience"—R. W.

25. **Therefore**—since devotion to God and slavery at the same time to mammon is an impossibility—**Take no thought** (R.V. "be not anxious"). Let not your mind be drawn in opposite directions. (Luke 12. 29; 1 Cor. 7. 32; Phil. 4. 6, 7.) "Beware of worldly cares; for these are as inconsistent with the true service of God as worldly desires"—WESLEY.

"Let not even the necessary things of this life so distract the mind as to turn it from the service of God; but let your labour (see vers. 26-28) for these things be undertaken in the trust that God will provide them"—S. C.

Is not the life more than meat? "And if God gives the greater gift, will He deny the smaller?"—WESLEY.

26. **Behold the fowls of the air.** Look attentively at the birds of the heaven. "Not fowls of the barn door, of which man takes care for his own profit, but birds of the air. Yet even these, for whom none cares but God, find their food provided by a hand they cannot recognise; so that He who hath given them life, and assigned them their place in the rank of created beings, and appointed their uses, fails not to supply them with subsistence. The fowls here are only considered as the representatives of all the inferior creatures, of the different orders of which the Psalmist says, 'All these wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season'; and so accurately is this furnished, that none of their species perish for want of sustenance, but continue from age to age, a standing monument of the care of God. **Are ye not much better than they?** as being spiritual, rational, immortal, and redeemed creatures"—R. W. (Job 38. 41.)

27. **Can add one cubit unto his stature?** This word had also the meaning of age. "If you are ever so careful, can even add a moment to your own life thereby? This seems by far the most easy and natural sense of the words"—WESLEY.

28. **Consider**—observe carefully—**the lilies of the field**—then probably displaying their beautiful expanded petals in full sight—**how they grow**—without man's anxiety or care.

30. **If God so clothe the grass of the field.** "The wild flowers which form part of the meadow growth are counted as belonging to the grass, and are cut down with it. Cut grass which soon withers from the heat is still used in the East for firing"—A. **Cast into the oven.** "The Jewish oven was a vessel narrower at the top than at the bottom, made of baked clay. Sometimes the fuel was placed within and the cakes laid against the sides. Sometimes the oven was heated by a fire kindled beneath or around it. Eastern travellers state that wood being rare in most parts of the East, grass, twigs, and straw are commonly used for fuel"—C. B. **O ye of little faith.** The faith of our Lord's most advanced disciples was necessarily little at that time, yet even they were expected to reason from the greater gift of life to the lesser gift of food and raiment. With how much firmer faith should we reason from the *unspeakable gift* of God's own Son? (Rom. 8. 32.)

32. **For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.** Their notions of God and of His providential government of the world are necessarily defective and misleading. They can have no such calm and intelligent trust in God as your knowledge of Him should command; they therefore seek eagerly and with anxiety the possessions in which they expect to find happiness. "How kind are these precepts, the substance of which is only this, Do thyself no harm! Let us not be so ungrateful to Him, nor so injurious to ourselves, as to harass and oppress our minds with that burden of anxiety which He has so graciously taken off. Every verse speaks at once to the understanding and to the heart. We will not, therefore, indulge these unnecessary, these useless, these mischievous cares. We will not borrow the anxieties and distresses of the morrow, to aggravate those of the present day. Rather we will cheerfully repose ourselves on that heavenly Father who knows we have need of these things; who has given us the life which is more than meat, and the body which is more than raiment. And thus instructed in the philosophy of our heavenly Master we will learn a lesson of faith and cheerfulness from every bird of the air, and every flower of the field."

33. **But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.** (1 Tim. 4. 8.) "Singly aim at this, that God, reigning in your heart, may fill it with the righteousness above described. And, indeed, whoever seeks this *first* will soon come to seek this only"—WESLEY. (Lev. 25. 20, '21; 1 Kings 3. 13; Ps. 37. 25; Mark 10. 30, 21.)

34. **The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.** The morrow (personified) will have its own anxieties and its own promised succours. (Deut. 33. 25; Heb. 13. 5, 6.) **The evil thereof.** "Speaking after the manner of men: but all trouble is, upon the whole, a real good. It is good physic, which God dispenses daily to His children, according to the need and the strength of each"—WESLEY.

"Who, after reading this part of our Lord's sermon, can doubt whether the Scripture teaches the doctrine of a particular providence? That which the philosophy of the world so often stumbles at, God's attention to minute and individual things and persons, is here most fully declared. He provides for the fowls of the heaven, that is, for every one of them; He paints every flower of the field; He regards each individual of His human family in particular; marks who among them 'seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,' and deals with him accordingly. The government of God over individuals, as such, cannot be more strongly marked"—R. W.

CHAPTER VII.

SEPARATE CHARACTERISTIC LAWS OF THE KINGDOM, AND CONCLUSION. The discourse up to this point progresses from stage to stage in unbroken continuity. Its connection with that which follows is less clear, yet each part of the remaining section has the same characteristic relation to the righteousness of the kingdom

of heaven, in contrast with the righteousness taught and practised by the Pharisees.

Ver. 1. **Judge not.** (Luke 6. 37; Rom. 2. 1-3, 17-23; 1 Cor. 4. 5; Jas. 3. 1.) Elsewhere our Lord says, "Judge righteous judgment"; and in vers. 5, 15, and 20 of this chapter, the act of forming an opinion of the actions and characters of men is spoken of as right and necessary. The meaning is, Avoid a hasty and censorious opinion of others, such as would result from a false and pharisaical conception of your own superiority. "Judge not any man without full, clear, certain knowledge, without absolute necessity, without tender love"—WESLEY.

2. **"With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.** (Judg. 1. 7; Jas. 2. 13.) Awful words! So we may, as it were, choose for ourselves whether God shall be severe or merciful to us. God and man will favour the candid and benevolent: but they must expect 'judgment without mercy, who have showed no mercy'"—WESLEY.

3. **Why beholdest thou.** "In particular, why do you open your eyes to any fault of your brother, while you yourself are guilty of a much greater? **The mote.** The word properly signifies a splinter, or shiver of wood. This, and a **beam**, its opposite, were proverbially used by the Jews to denote—the one, small infirmities, the other, gross palpable faults"—WESLEY.

5. **Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam,** etc. "It is not enough that we should **see clearly** that the mote is *in* the eye of our brother; we must see clearly how **to cast it out,** and that without injury, without offence, and in tenderness and charity. And who can perform so great an office but he that walks with God, and learns of Him?"—R. W. (Gal. 6. 1.)

6. **Give not that which is holy unto the dogs.** (Pro. 9. 7, 8; 23. 9.) Evil-minded men who would be ready to seize and misuse what you offer them. "Do not talk of the deep things of God to those whom you know to be wallowing in sin, or to the profane, furious, persecuting"—WESLEY.

Neither cast ye your pearls before swine. "Who having cast to them something like their natural food—such as peas or acorns—whose value is inappreciable by them, in fury trample them with their feet, and turning against the donor, rend him with their tusks"—A. (Comp. Phil. 3. 2; 2 Pet. 2. 21, 22.) The general meaning is, use a wise discrimination in your efforts to do good to others, especially when you reprove them. A disregard to circumstances or to a person's present temper and mood of mind may do more evil than good.

7. **Ask, and it shall be given you.** (Isa. 55. 6; ch. 21. 22; Mark 11. 24; Luke 13. 24, 25; 18. 1.) For the sake of others, as for yourselves, live in close and confident communion with God. "**Ask, seek, knock**—all expressive of the same act. This is our duty; God requires this as an acknowledgment of our dependence, and as the expression of our faith; but ask with entire and unlimited confidence, **for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth,** etc. There is no respect of persons with God. 'Ask,' as painfully sensible of your wants; 'seek' with diligence, as those who would recover some great thing lost; and 'knock' at the door of the appointed refuge, that you may obtain admission, and be safe from all danger. Words of inimitable simplicity, but of weightiest import"—R. W.

8. **For every one that asketh,** etc. (Ps. 81. 10, 16; John 14. 13, 14; 16. 23, 24; 1 John 3. 22; 5. 14, 15.) An explicit and definite promise to be fulfilled now—**receiveth—findeth—it is opened.**

11. **Being evil.** (Luke 11. 11, etc.) "This word is the most vigorous proof text in all the Scripture for original sin; and, at the same time, one of the strongest testimonies to the superhuman dignity of our Lord, who, excepting Himself from the whole race, can say to all mankind: ὑμεῖς being evil"—S (John 8. 23, 24.) Even in our nearest and most tender relation to others there is evil, therefore selfishness in our nature; but He is essentially holy, therefore essential love. **How much more then shall your Father,** etc. (Ex. 34. 6, 7; Ps. 86. 5, 15.)

12. **Therefore.** God will certainly give to His children the good things they ask Him. "But on this condition, that ye follow the example of His goodness, by doing to all as ye would they should do to you. **For this is the Law and the Prophets.** This is the sum of all, exactly answering **ch. 5. 17.** The whole is comprised in one word—Imitate the God of love"—WESLEY. (Ch. 22. 39, 40; Luke 6. 31; Lev. 19. 18; Rom. 10. 8-10; Gal. 5. 14; 1 Tim. 1. 5.)

With this comprehensive precept our Lord ends the doctrinal part of this great discourse. He has shown how very far the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven exceeds the righteousness exemplified by the Pharisees; that the attainment of this righteousness demands the denial of self, and the renunciation of much that the world follows with eagerness; and that this presupposes that great change of thought, experience, and practice, which His call *to repent* signified. And now, with all this brought clearly and in detail before the minds of His hearers, our Lord exhorts them to immediate decision.

13, 14. **Enter ye in at the strait gate.** (Luke 13. 24, 25.) The allusion seems to be to those narrow entrances into certain houses in Palestine of which travellers speak, which were in retired corners, and had to be sought for. **For wide is the gate**—like the public portals of the houses referred to—**and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.** "It is broad as the world; thou standest and

walkest on it already. But this narrow way and this strait gate must be perseveringly sought, till it is found throughout and to the end"—S. "The metaphor of the 'strait gate' and the 'narrow path' has reference to the previous doctrines which our Lord had delivered. The principles unfolded, and the duties enjoined in them, indicated the only way to eternal life. Yet they are difficult to our corrupt nature to practise, and require a constant course of self-denial and vigorous exertion"—R. W.

15. **Beware of false prophets.** (Deut. 13. 1, 3; Jer. 14. 13-16; 1 John 4. 1.) That is, false teachers, "who, in their preaching, describe a broad way to heaven: it is their 'prophesying,' their 'teaching' the broad way, rather than their 'walking' in it themselves, that is here chiefly spoken of. All those are false prophets who teach any other way than that our Lord hath here marked out. **In sheep's clothing.** With outside religion, and fair professions of love. **Wolves.** Not feeding, but destroying souls"—WESLEY. (Acts 20. 29, 31; 2 Pet. 2. 1. Comp. Ezek. 13. 1-10, 22.)

16. **Ye shall know them by their fruits.** (Ch. 12. 33.) "A short, plain, easy rule, whereby to know true from false prophets; and one that may be applied by people of the meanest capacity, who are not accustomed to deep reasoning. True prophets convert sinners to God; or, at least, confirm and strengthen those that are converted. False prophets do not. They also are false prophets who, though speaking the very truth, yet are not sent by the Spirit of God, but come in their own name to declare it: their grand mark is, 'Not turning men from the power of Satan to God.'"

19. **Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down.** (Ch. 3. 10; John 15. 2, 6.)

21. **Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord.** Here our Lord extends the application of His solemn warning, so as to include all false professors of discipleship to Him, as well as all false teachers of His gospel. (Ch. 25. 11, 12; Isa. 48. 1, 2; Luke 6. 46; 13. 25; Rom. 2. 13; Jas. 1. 22.) "'Not every one'—that is, no one 'that saith Lord, Lord,' that makes a mere profession of Me and My religion, **shall enter,** whatever their false teachers may assure them to the contrary. **He that doeth the will of My Father.** As I have now declared it. Observe, everything short of this is only saying, 'Lord, Lord'"—WESLEY.

"Our Lord sets Himself forth as the Judge in the great day, and at the same time speaks not of *My* will but of My Father"—A.

22. **Many will say to Me in that day.** The day of judgment, as in 2 Tim. 1. 12; 4. 8; 1 Cor. 5. 5; Phil. 2. 16. **Lord, Lord.** A pathetic and strong appeal, as though in dreadest surprise. **Have we not prophesied in Thy name?** Have we not taught openly as with Thy authority? (Acts 19. 13, 15; 1 Cor. 13. 2.) **And in Thy name cast out devils?** Observe how our Lord associates these works with His name, just as He had spoken of the will of His Father.

23. **I never knew you.** (2 Tim. 2. 19.) "There never was a time that I approved of you: so that, as many souls as they had saved, they were themselves never saved from their sins. Lord, is it *my* case?"—WESLEY.

Depart from Me. (Ch. 25. 41; Ps. 5. 5; Rev. 22. 15.)

24. **Therefore**—being thus plainly forewarned—**whosoever heareth those sayings of Mine**—referring to the whole of the foregoing discourse—**and doeth them** (Luke 6. 47-49)—who saith, "Lord, Lord," as a professed disciple, and also doeth the will of My Father, as one of My true and faithful followers. Thus "these sayings" of Christ are identified with the declared will of the Father. And what our Lord affirms of "these sayings" of His applies equally to His words (Col. 3. 16) as spoken through His apostles. **I will liken him unto a wise man** (Ps. 111. 10; 119. 99, 130) **which built his house upon a rock.** Meaning, as the context sufficiently suggests, upon the great spiritual truths and precepts He had delivered as the Divine Perfecter of the Law and the Prophets; but meaning also Himself, to whom all His true disciples are united by a living faith. (Isa. 28. 15-18; 1 Cor. 3. 11-15; 10. 4.)

25-27. **And the rain descended,** etc. "It is by these references to the climate of Palestine, the violence of its winter winds, the impetuous rush of its sudden rains, and the power of the torrents thus formed, that the power of the comparison is made manifest. By these three words, 'rain,' 'winds,' and 'floods,' the severity of our great trials in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, is strongly pointed out. Rain and hail fall with violence upon the roof and upper parts; winds try the sides of the house; floods and rushings of waters, the foundation. And then, should it fall, **great will be the fall of it.** 'It made a great show,' says one, 'while it stood, and it made as great a noise when it fell, the fall being the more notorious by how much the former profession was the more specious'"—R. W.

28, 29. **Astonished at His doctrine** (R.V. "teaching"). Not only at what He had said, but also at the manner in which He had spoken. (Jer. 23. 29; Mark 1. 22; 6. 2.) **For He taught them**—"the multitudes—**as one having authority**—with a dignity and majesty peculiar to Himself, as the great Lawgiver, and with the demonstration and power of the Spirit—**and not as the scribes,** who only expounded the law of another; and that in a lifeless, ineffectual manner"—WESLEY.

The scribes taught with authority, but they taught merely as interpreters of the Law, sup-

porting their own interpretations by continual appeals to the authority of "the wise men," "our rabbans." Christ taught in His own name, "I say unto you."

CHAPTERS VIII. AND IX.

SIGNS OF THE KINGDOM.

In our Lord's miracles, "the word of salvation was incorporated in acts of salvation." "If we ask ourselves what are the physical manifestations of sin: they are sicknesses of all kinds, fevers, palsies, leprosies, blindness, each of these death beginning, a partial death, and, finally, the death absolute of the body. In the conquering and removing of these evils, Christ eminently bodied forth the idea of Himself as the Redeemer of men"—T. Thus His miracles are *signs* of His grace and power, assertions of His superhuman authority, types of the character and tendency of His teaching, and pledges of the ultimate triumph of His gospel. Very naturally, therefore, S. Matthew, who does not confine his narrative to the chronological order of events, introduces immediately after the divine sermon "a solemn procession, as it were, of miracles, confirming the authority with which our Lord had spoken"—A. And also picturing the spiritual results of His teaching.

CHAPTER VIII.

Vers. 1-4. HEALING OF THE LEPER: HOPE FOR THE DESPAIRING. (Mark 1. 40-44; Luke 5. 12-14.)—2. **There came a leper** (S. Luke says, "a man full of leprosy"). "This man tells us parabolically what the true and entire result of the sermon is to be upon ourselves." For a full description of the nature and symptoms of this terrible disease, and the Mosaic ordinances for its treatment, see Lev. 13 and 14. Whether the malady was contagious or not is undecided; but it is certain that the Israelites were taught to regard it as a symbol of the defilement and fatal tendency of sin. "And terrible indeed, as might be expected, was that disease round which this solemn teaching revolved. The leper was a dreadful parable of death. He was to bear about the emblems of death (Lev. 13. 45), the rent—that is, mourning—garments; the mourning for himself as for one dead; the head bare, as they were wont to have it who were in communion with the dead (Num. 6. 9; Ezek. 24. 17); and the lip covered (Ezek. 24. 17). In the restoration, too, of a leper, precisely the same instruments of cleansing were in use—the cedar wood, the hyssop, and scarlet—as were used for the cleansing of one defiled through a dead body, or aught pertaining to death, and which were never in use upon any other occasion. (Comp. Num. 19. 6, 13, 18, with Jer. 14. 4-7.) No doubt when David exclaims, 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean' (Ps. 51. 7), he, in this allusion, looking through the outward to the inward, even to the true 'blood of sprinkling,' contemplates himself as a spiritual leper, as one whose sin had been, while he lived in it, a sin unto death"—T. **And worshipped Him.** This was not properly religious worship, but an act of profound reverence, implying passionate entreaty. S. Mark says, "Beseeching him, and kneeling down to Him"; and S. Luke, "Fell on his face and besought Him." The three accounts should be combined to get a full conception of the scene. **Saying, Lord**—probably an acknowledgment of Him as the Messiah—**if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.** "This is the right 'Lord, Lord, which shall not be used in vain'"—S. The poor man's faith in our Lord's ability is absolute, and he meekly but firmly fixes his hope on His will.

3. **And Jesus**—S. Mark says, "Moved with compassion"—**put forth His hand**; thus asserting His authority as superior to the ceremonial law, which forbade contact with the leprosy (Lev. 5. 3; 13. 12-46). **Saying, I will; be thou** (R.V. "be thou made") **clean.** Complying with the humble cry of faith by an echo of the very words in which it was uttered. This is given without variation by all the Evangelists. "Here the latent divinity of our Lord again breaks forth. As He taught with authority, He heals with authority; and in both, the very *manner* places Him infinitely above the highest commissioned servant: 'I WILL; BE THOU MADE CLEAN!'"—R. W. Contrast the words of S. Peter (Acts 3. 12). "Again, we can hardly forbear to recognise in His touching the leper a deed symbolical of His taking on Him, touching, laying hold of, our nature. (Comp. Luke 14. 4 with Heb. 2. 16)"—A.

4. **See thou tell no man.** "Perhaps our Lord only meant here, not till thou hast showed thyself to the priest, who was appointed to inquire into the case of leprosy. But many others He commanded absolutely to tell none of the miracles He had wrought upon them. And this He seems to have done, chiefly for one or more of these reasons: 1. To prevent the multitude from thronging Him, in the manner related (Mark 1. 45). 2. To fulfil the prophecy (Isa. 42. 2) that He would not be vain or ostentatious. This reason S. Matthew assigns (ch. 12. 17, etc.) 3. To avoid the being taken by force and made a king (John 6. 15). And 4. That He might not enrage the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, who were the most bitter against Him, any more than was unavoidable"—WESLEY. (Matt. 16. 20, 21.) **The gifts that Moses commanded**—(Lev. 14. 4, 10)—**for a testimony unto them**—a testimony to the people that the leper was cleansed.

Vers. 5-13. HEALING A CENTURION'S SERVANT: EXAMPLE OF SIMPLE FAITH. (Luke 7. 1-10.)—**There came unto Him a centurion**—captain of a hundred foot-soldiers, with a sergeant under him, and a colonel and general over him.

As he was probably in the service of Herod Antipas, he may not have been a Roman, but a Syrian. He had evidently renounced idolatry, and become a worshipper with the Jews. In the more detailed account given by S. Luke, it is said that he did not go to Christ himself, but induced Jewish elders to go and plead with Him on his behalf. "And they besought Him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." "Probably he came a little way towards Him, and then went back. He thought himself not worthy to come in person, and therefore spoke the words that follow by his messengers. As it is not unusual in all languages, so in the Hebrew it is peculiarly frequent, to ascribe to a person himself the thing which is done, and the words which are spoken, by his order. And accordingly S. Matthew relates, as said by the centurion himself, what others said by order from him. An instance of the same kind we have in the case of Zebedee's children. From Matt. 20. 20 we learn it was their mother that spoke those words which (Mark 10. 35, 37) themselves are said to speak; because she was only their mouth"—WESLEY.

6. **Sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.** S. Luke says, "Sick and ready to die." In its ordinary form paralysis is free from acute pain, but sometimes is accompanied by cramp, and in that case the suffering is intense.

7. **I will come and heal him.** "A second equally prompt, 'I will'"—S.

8. **Lord, I am not worthy.** (Ps. 10. 17; Luke 15. 19, 21.) An expression of conscious unfitness, which constituted his real worthiness. "It was this utter disclaimer of all claim, outward or inward, which prompted that absoluteness of trust, which deemed all things possible with Jesus, and marked the real faith of the true Israel"—ED. **Speak the word only** — Command with a single word. (Ps. 107. 20.)

9. **Having soldiers under me.** Just as my will is law to the soldiers subject to my authority, so at the instance of Thy will, as Thou shalt speak the word of command, "my servant shall be healed."

10. **He marvelled.** As when He said to another Gentile believer, "O woman, great is thy faith" (ch. 15. 28); and as, on one occasion, He marvelled at the unbelief of certain favoured Jews (Mark 6. 6). "Let not this be hastily read and passed over; let us thoughtfully penetrate the depths which that *wonder* at faith or unbelief in the spirit of the Son of Man discloses. **So great faith**, by which this man, a *man* under authority, absolutely and nakedly trusts in Me; confiding that I have power to command sickness by a *word* without coming or laying on of hands in the name of God, just as he himself can command his servant in the name of his sovereign!"—S.

11. **From the east and west.** Looking forward to the time so near at hand when all distinctions between Jew and Gentile should be abolished, and when all men alike should be admitted into the kingdom by the one door of faith (Acts 14. 27). **And shall sit down.** As though to a banquet at the inauguration of the kingdom of heaven when fully established on earth, but with a direct allusion to the kingdom in its future glory. (Isa. 2. 2, 3; Luke 13. 29; Acts 11. 18; Eph. 3. 6; Rev. 7. 9.)

12. **But the children of the kingdom**— the Jews, to whom the kingdom pertained as by natural inheritance — **shall be cast into outer darkness** — the darkness outside the festive and well-lighted chamber; shall be excluded from the spiritual blessings to which they were first called, but which they have slighted. (Rom. 9. 4, 5; 11. 7.) **There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** These deeply solemn words pointing from the image to the inconceivable reality.

13. **As thou hast believed, so be it unto thee.** This appears to have been spoken to the centurion in person. "It was a great honour which Christ put upon the centurion, when He gave him a blank as it were: 'Be it done as thou believest.' What could ye have more? Yet what was said to him is said to us all: Believe and ye shall receive; only believe. The oil of grace multiplies, and fails not till the vessels of faith fail"—H.

Vers. 14 - 17. THE HEALING OF PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW AND MANY OTHERS—VICARIOUS SUFFERING. (Mark 1. 29-31; Luke 4. 38, 39.) —14. **And when Jesus was come into Peter's house.** It was the Sabbath, and our Lord, after having taught in the synagogue, where He had also healed a demoniac (Mark 1. 23-26; Luke 4. 33-36), had returned into the house of Peter for rest and refreshment. (Comp. Luke 14. 1.) **He saw his wife's mother laid** (struck down) **and sick of a fever.** S. Luke says, "A great," or burning and violent, "fever."

15. **And he touched her hand.** S. Luke the physician says, characteristically and graphically, "stood over her and rebuked the fever"— as He rebuked the winds and waves. **And the fever left her.** "The fever owned His touch and fled." **And she arose, and ministered unto them**—provided for their entertainment and waited upon them; showing her complete recovery and her faith and gratitude. "It was the first *diaconate* of woman in the Church —might we not almost say in the world?—a diaconate to Christ and to those that were His; the diaconate of one healed by Christ; a diaconate immediately following such healing" —ED.

16. **When the even was come** — and the Sabbath therefore ended—**they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils**, etc. S. Mark says, "All the city was gathered together at the door." So widely had the fame of the two miracles on that memorable Sabbath — first that in the synagogue, then this in

Peter's house—spread. **And He cast out the spirits with His word** (R. V. "with a word"). He never touched a demoniac. **And healed all that were sick.** Here as elsewhere the two classes are clearly distinguished the one from the other.

17. **That it might be fulfilled,** etc. (Isa. 53. 4; 1 Pet. 2. 24.) "The prophet spoke these words in a more exalted sense. The Evangelist here only alludes to them as being capable of this lower meaning also. Our Lord fulfilled these words in the highest sense, by 'bearing our sins in His own body on the tree'; in a lower sense, by sympathising with us in our sorrows, and healing us of the diseases which were the fruit of sin"—WESLEY.

He removed diseases, in the sense intended by the prophet, by being Himself "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." "Not so much the healing of these sicknesses was Christ's bearing them, but His burden was that there were these sicknesses to heal." "The whole mass of the world's woe lay upon His spirit, from the beginning to the end; for as His office was to take away the 'sin of the world,' He must first bear its weight. It was in this sense that S. Matthew says, 'He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses'; not, certainly, by transferring the infirmities and sicknesses to His own person, for He became neither infirm nor sick; nor do the words used signify simply to take or bear away, much less the Hebrew term used by Isaiah, but that He took them, and carried them as a load or burden, the sustaining of which was a part of the process of the great atonement. In the strictest sense, therefore, the prophecy quoted by the Evangelist was here 'fulfilled'; not, indeed, fully, for Christ had much more to sustain; but still directly and properly"—R. W.

Vers. 18–27. TEMPEST ON THE LAKE: COMMAND OVER THE POWERS OF NATURE. (Mark 4. 35–41; Luke 8. 22–25.)—18. **The other side.** The eastern shore of the Lake, His object being, as the Evangelist intimates, to escape from the excited **multitudes about Him,** and obtain repose after excessive toil.

19. **And a certain scribe came and said to Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.** (Luke 9. 57, 58.) He seems to have said this as seized for a moment with a sincere desire to become a disciple of Christ, and to adhere to Him faithfully; but the reply shows that his hope was to gain worldly advantage in some form.

20. **The foxes have holes** ("caves," etc.), **and birds of the air have nests** ("lodging-places"); **but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.** This title would remind the scribe of the vision of Daniel, in which he saw "one like the Son of Man," to whom was given "dominion and glory and a kingdom" Dan. 7. 13, 14). The Jews well understood this to refer to the Messiah (John 12. 34), yet our Lord tells this scribe, when applying the title to Himself, that He has not "where to lay His head"; as though He had said, "I am indeed the Son of Man spoken of by Daniel, and, as thou professest to believe, the Messiah; but instead of a kingdom, and glory, and dominion, I have no house of my own, much less a palace and a kingdom." Of a spiritual reign the scribe had no notion; and being cut off from the hope of a visible and earthly one, he probably retired. "'I will follow Thee,' said this forward professor, 'whithersoever Thou goest'; but he secretly meant, only into the paths of publicity and enjoyment, not into those of humility and suffering. Yet wherever Christ leads, the true disciple must follow Him"—R. W. The scribe probably, like the ruler on a later occasion, "went away sorrowful" (ch. 19. 22).

21. **And another of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.** This was his answer to our Lord's command, "Follow Me" (Luke 9. 59). He was already a disciple, and was now called to follow Christ openly and fully; and he was willing to do this, but asked for a short delay. It may be that intelligence of the death of his father had reached him while he was with our Lord, and that He who knew his character foresaw that if he returned to his sorrowing home, and tarried to give attention to home requirements, his desire to follow Him might be lost.

22. **Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead.** (Comp. ch. 10. 37; Luke 14. 26.) Leave funeral rites, sacred as they are, to those who have not experienced the spiritual quickening which thou hast as one of My disciples. The words are added in Luke, "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

23. **And when He was entered into a ship.** The ship, or large fishing-boat, belonging to one or more of His disciples, which was usually at His service. S. Mark notes that "the even was come," that He had been teaching from this ship, and that when the multitude had been sent away, His disciples "took Him even as He was," weary and without preparation of any kind.

24. **And, behold, there arose a great tempest.** A sudden and violent squall, to which that small inland sea, "surrounded with mountain gorges," is known to be exposed. **But He was asleep.** S. Mark adds, "In the hinder part of the ship upon a pillow," probably the steerman's cushion. Asleep, despite the howling of the blast, the dashing of the waters against and into the little vessel, and all the commotion around Him!

25. **Lord, save us: we perish**—they said in their alarm, even as S. Mark records, with a tone of reproach, "Carest Thou not that we perish?"

26. **O ye of little faith.** "He does not chide them for disturbing Him with their

prayers, for disturbing Him with their fears"—H. **A great calm.** (Job 38. 11; Ps. 89. 9; 107. 29.) "Their great fear was the evidence of little faith; for how could they perish when their Master was with them; He whose power over nature they had so often seen and acknowledged? For this they were justly reproved. **He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea,** etc. So that it was in the height of the tempest, amidst the very rage and fury of the elements, and in the extremity of danger, that He issued His authoritative commands. **And there was a great calm.** The very simplicity of the narrative heightens the sublimity of the whole scene as it passes before us—the suddenness and fury of the storm; the vessel labouring among the overwhelming waves; the terror of the disciples; the calm repose of Jesus, asleep amidst all this uproar; the majesty of His action—'He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea'; the immediate effect"—R. W.

27. **What manner of man is this!** (Ps. 79. 8, 9.) "We see here one of the moral purposes to which, in the providence of God, who ordered all things for the glory of His Son, this miracle was intended to serve. It was to lead His disciples into thoughts ever higher and more awful—of that Lord whom they followed, and should more and more bring them to feel that a nearness to Him was all safety and deliverance from every danger"—T.

Vers. 28–34. HEALING OF TWO DEMONIACS: EVIL SPIRITS IN SUBJECTION. (Mark 5. 1–20; Luke 8. 26–39.)—28. **Country of the Gergesenes.** So named from Gergesa, now called *Herza*, or *Gersa*, on the eastern shore of the Lake, and nearly opposite Capernaum. The other Evangelists call it "the country of the Gadarenes"—the district which took its name from Gadara, a Greek city, then of some importance, many ruins of which are still to be seen. **Two possessed with devils.** (Ch. 4. 24.) S. Mark and S. Luke mention only one. S. Matthew speaks as an eye-witness, in agreement with the fact; they speak only of the one who was the more conspicuous at the time and the better known afterwards. **Coming out of the tombs.** "Gersa is within a few miles of the shore, and an immense mountain rises directly above it, in which are ancient tombs, out of some of which the two men possessed of devils may have issued to meet Jesus"—T. **Exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.** S. Matthew only relates that they had made that way impassable; S. Luke alone that "he"—the principal one—"was without clothing," although this is involved in S. Mark's account, who tells us that after he was healed he was found to be "clothed and in his right mind." The fully drawn picture is fearful, and "each Evangelist has some touches which are peculiarly his own, but S. Mark's is the most graphic of all."

29. **They cried out.** S. Mark says that when our Lord stepped out of the vessel, they met Him *immediately*;—that they "saw Jesus afar off, and ran and worshipped Him." "As always, the demons knew Jesus, and His presence seemed to constrain their confession of themselves, and therefore of Him. As in nature, the introduction of a dominant element sometimes reveals the hidden presence of others, which are either attracted or repelled by it, so the presence of Christ obliged the manifestations, and, in the case of these evil spirits, the self-confession of the powers of evil. In some measure it is the same still. The introduction of grace brings to light and experience sin hitherto unknown, and the new life brings consciousness of, and provokes contest with, evil within, of which the very existence had been previously unexpected"—ED. **What have we to do with Thee?** What have we in common? (Comp. 2 Sam. 16. 10; 19. 22; 2 Chron. 35. 21.) **Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?** The true devilish spirit, "which counts it a torment not to be suffered to torment others," and also "the confession of a time coming, an inevitable hour, when there shall be an entire victory of the kingdom of light over that of darkness"—T. (Rev. 20. 10.)

30. **An herd of many swine.** S. Mark says, "They were about two thousand"—"which it was not lawful for the Jews to keep. Wherefore our Lord both justly and mercifully permitted to be destroyed"—WESLEY.

Even if the owners were Gentiles, to keep them was an insult to the conscientious Jews, and a show of contempt for their laws.

31. **So the devils besought Him.** The other Evangelists say that Jesus asked the man of whom alone they speak, "What is thy name?" as though to restore in some measure his self-recollection, and facilitate the cure; and the answer was, "Legion; for we are many." Not of course in the sense of a Roman legion of six thousand warriors; "for it was a common Jewish idea, that, under certain circumstances, a legion of hurtful spirits were on the watch for men"—ED. **Suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.** "The devils—if they must leave their more welcome habitation, the heart of man—yet entreat, in their inextinguishable desire of harming, that they might be allowed to enter the swine"—T.

32. **Go.** A word of permission only. **And, behold, the whole herd of swine,** etc. "The Lake is so near the base of the mountain, that the swine, rushing madly down it, could not stop, but would be hurried on into the water and drowned"—T.

34. **"They besought Him to depart out of their coasts.** They loved their swine so much better than their souls! How many are of the same mind!"—WESLEY.

The whole city came out. "Probably

with the intention to destroy Jesus for having destroyed their swine; but, having seen Him, they were awed by His presence, and only besought Him to depart from their borders. Many love even their swine better than their salvation"—C.

CHAPTER IX.

Vers. 1-8. HEALING OF A PARALYTIC: POWER ON EARTH TO FORGIVE SINS. (Mark 2. 1-12; Luke 5. 18-26.)—1. **His own city**—Capernaum. (Ch. 4. 13.)

2. **They brought to Him**—by the use of extraordinary means which the other Evangelists describe—**a man sick of the palsy.** S. Mark says that after our Lord's return to Capernaum "it was noised that He was in the house"—that in which He was known to reside, probably Peter's—"and straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and He preached the word unto them." S. Luke mentions that among His hearers "were Pharisees and doctors of the law," who had come from curiosity or less worthy motives to see and hear Him, some of them even from Jerusalem. Both these Evangelists state also that the four bearers of the sick man, finding every ordinary way of access to the great Teacher and Healer blocked by the throng, carried him up the flight of steps outside the house on to the flat roof, broke up the thin tiling, and lowered him upon his pallet through the opening "into the midst before Jesus." **And Jesus seeing their faith**—the faith of the sick man's friends, but more especially his own, as the whole narrative implies—seeing his faith, mingled with fear, shame, and a shrinking awe—of which not our Lord's teaching, but His unique personal character was the object, faith in His power and benignity—**said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer**—a form of address full of tenderness and encouragement, evidently used with reference to the man's spiritual distress under a consciousness of sin, and his fear, in agreement with Jewish notions, that his sins might be a hindrance to his recovery. **Thy sins be forgiven thee**—words to be taken as declaratory of the fact. "They are the justification of the sinner; and, as declaratory of that which takes place in the purposes of God, so also effectually shedding abroad the sense of forgiveness and reconciliation in the sinner's heart"—T.

3. **Said within themselves**—(S. Mark, "Reasoning in their hearts")—**This man blasphemeth.** "The offended only can forgive the sin of the offender; and had not Christ been God, that is, the Being offended by the sin of man, He would have been guilty of the charge of taking into His own hands the office of God. Blasphemy, in the sense in which it is here used, and as in other instances applied by the Jews to Christ, signifies, not any reproachful, profane words, malignantly directed against God, but the arrogating of what is proper only to God by a creature; which species of blasphemy, the Jews held, rendered man liable to condign punishment"—R. W.

4. **And Jesus knowing their thoughts** (1 Kings 8. 39; Ps. 139. 2; John 2. 24, 25; Heb. 4. 12, 13; Rev. 2. 23)—**said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?** "Why do ye unjustly account Me an impious person and a blasphemer? Their thinking evil signified, not that they were wrong in assuming that God only could forgive sin, but that they had formed a rash and injurious opinion of Christ; which also had this further evil, that they ought to have admitted Him to be the Messiah because of His miracles, and ought to have so understood their Scriptures as to conclude that the Messiah was a Divine person"—R. W.

5. **For whether is easier,** etc. Our Lord, who sees into their inner being, found them saying, It is easy to say thy sins are forgiven, but let Him prove it! "In our Lord's argument it must be carefully noted that He does not ask, 'Which is easiest, to forgive sins or to raise a sick man?' for it could not be affirmed that that of forgiving was easier than this of healing; but, 'Which is easiest, to claim this power or to claim that,' **to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?** And He then proceeds: 'That is easiest, and I will now prove My right to say it, by saying with effect and with an outward consequence setting its seal to My truth, the harder word, Rise up and walk'"—T.

6. **But that ye may know that the Son of Man.** "In the emphatic and well-understood sense of being the representative Man, who was to bring a new life to humanity; the second Adam, the Lord from heaven"—ED. **Hath power on earth.** "A tacit opposition to 'power in heaven.' This power is not exercised, as you deem, only by God in heaven, but also by the Son of Man upon earth. You rightly assert that it is only exercised by Him who dwelleth in the heavens; but He who, in the person of the Son of Man, has descended also upon earth, has also brought it down with Him here"—T.

8. **They marvelled, and glorified God.** "So what was to the scribes an occasion of blasphemy, was to the people an incitement to praise God"—WESLEY.

Which had given such power unto men—that is, to mankind, with allusion to the title "Son of Man" as just applied by our Lord to Himself, showing that they understood it to mean the Representative of mankind. They seem to have had a true, though dim and faulty, insight into His nature. "The mystery of *Emmanuel, God with us,* was not yet doctrinally fully declared, but was left to be inferred from the actions of our Lord, and the occasional allusions to His superior nature, which occurred in His discourses"—R. W. Observe that our Lord saw and honoured *their*

faith—the faith of the man's friends as well as his own—notwithstanding that their knowledge of His true character was necessarily scanty and erroneous. And shall He not respect the faith of His real and earnest followers on behalf of others in our own times, *when shown by their works?*—when it moves to the use of wise, persistent, and, may we not add, with this case before us, *ingeniously devised* methods to bring them to Jesus?

Vers. 9-13. THE CALL OF MATTHEW. (Mark 2. 14-22; Luke 5. 27-32.)—9. **A man, named Matthew.** The other Evangelists call him Levi, which was probably his original name; Matthew, which signifies the "Gift of the Lord," having been given to him by Christ Himself after He had called him to become an apostle. **Sitting at the receipt of custom**—taxes or tolls, probably connected with the traffic of the Lake. **Follow Me.** A call to give himself up to Christ permanently (ch. 4. 19). He was no doubt a disciple already, in a general sense, but had continued in his occupation like Peter and Andrew, after their first acquaintance with Christ. Now he was called to give himself up wholly to spiritual service. **And he arose.** S. Luke says, "He left all, rose up, and followed Him."

10. **As Jesus sat at meat in the house**—that is, the house of Matthew, as both the other Evangelists state, though he modestly omits to mention this himself—**behold many publicans and sinners came.** Probably they were Matthew's old associates and had been invited by him to this "great feast" (S. Luke), as a kind of farewell repast, but also to give them the opportunity of receiving instruction from his Master.

11. **And when the Pharisees saw it**—**that is,** when the fact came to their knowledge, perhaps a day or two afterwards, for they could not have been present themselves—**they said unto His disciples,** etc. (Ch. 11. 19; Luke 15. 2.) "Thus they continually ask our Lord, Why do Thy disciples this? and His disciples, Why doeth your Master?"—WESLEY. (Ch. 12. 2; 15. 2.)

12. **They that be whole,** etc. Thus our Lord justifies His own conduct, and at the same time rebukes the pride and exclusiveness of these self-deceived censorious men. "Where ought the physician to be but among the sick?"

13. **But go ye and learn,** etc. "Ye that take upon you to teach others. **I will have mercy, and not sacrifice**—that is, I will have mercy rather than sacrifice. I love acts of mercy better than sacrifice itself"—WESLEY.

"The passage referred to is (Hosea 6. 6), 'For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.' Christ quotes only the former part, as being sufficient for His purpose; but the latter clause shows that the former was to be taken comparatively. God had appointed sacrifice; but when mercy and sacrifice could not both be performed, then sacrifice must give place to mercy—positive institutions to moral duties"—R. W. (Ch. 12. 7; Prov. 21. 3; Micah 6. 8.) "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." This is the great principle of the incarnation and of the whole history of Christ. (1 Tim. 1. 15.)

14. **The disciples of John.** They continued to form a distinct sect, notwithstanding their master's declaration that his ministry was preparatory and provisional only. (John 3. 22 *seq.*)

15. **Can the children of the bridechamber,** etc. Thus our Lord recalls to these men their own master's words respecting Himself. The children of the bride-chamber were the bridegroom's friends who accompanied him to meet the bride (Judg. 14. 11) and took part in the marriage festival. Can they **mourn** (S. Mark and S. Luke say "fast") **while the bridegroom is with them?** "As if He had said, 'while I am with them it is a festival time; a season of rejoicing, not mourning'"—WESLEY.

After My departure the time of sorrow and persecution will come. (John 16. 20.) We have here one of our Lord's earliest intimations respecting His death. (See also John 2. 19; 3. 14.)

16. **No man putteth a piece of new** (R.V. "undressed") **cloth unto an old garment.** The piece of undressed cloth representing the gospel, "the old garment" symbolising Judaism. "The complete and beautiful whole of gospel light and liberty must not be engrafted as a mere addition on the worn-out system of ceremonies"—A.

17. **Neither do men put new wine into old bottles** (R.V. "old wine-skins"). "This parable is not a repetition of the former one, but a stronger and more exact setting forth of the truth in hand. The 'garment' was something *outward;* this wine is *poured in,* is something *inward,* the spirit of the system. The former parable respected the outward freedom and simple truthfulness of the New Covenant; this regards its inner spirit, its pervading principle"—A.

Vers. 18, 19, and 23-26. RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS: THE PRINCE OF LIFE. —(Mark 5. 22-24 and 35-41; Luke 8. 41, 42, and 49-56.)

18. **A certain ruler.** The other Evangelists give his name "Jairus." He was probably the president of the synagogue of Capernaum, though his exact position is uncertain (see on 4. 23); but he was evidently a man of high social rank. **And worshipped Him.** S. Mark says, "fell at His feet," in humble and reverent acknowledgment of His greatness of personal character. **Saying, My daughter is even now dead.** Manifestly speaking in a state of bewilderment, as if he had heard of her death at that moment from a messenger sent from his house. S. Mark records words which he had probably spoken previously, "My little

daughter lieth at the point of death." S. Luke simply states the fact in his own words, "she lay a dying." **But come and lay Thy hand upon her.** This faith was strong, but not equal to that of his Gentile fellow-citizen, the centurion, on whose behalf he had recently with other elders interceded with Jesus, "Speak the word only!" (ch. 8. 8).

19. **And Jesus arose, and followed him.** On their way his state of suspense was prolonged but his faith strengthened by witnessing the case of healing which all the Evangelists record in the course of the narrative; and before they arrived at the house the distressed father was told that it was too late, for the end had come: "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?" But Jesus overheard the words, and said to the ruler—"leaving no room for a doubt to insinuate itself into his mind before he had preoccupied him with a word of confidence and comfort"—"Be not afraid, only believe." Then forbidding any man to accompany Him into the house, except the three whom He now for the first time chose to be His witnesses on the most solemn occasions—Peter, James, and John—the Prince of Life entered into the abode of death. And the usual funeral ceremonies had already begun.

23. **He saw the minstrels** (R.V. "flute-players"), **and the people making a noise.** "Musical instruments were used by the Jews as well as the heathens, in their lamentations for the dead; to soothe the melancholy of surviving friends by soft and solemn notes. And there were persons who made it their business to perform this, while others sung to their music. Flutes were used especially on the death of children; louder instruments on the death of grown persons"—WESLEY.

24. **Give place.** "*Withdraw.* There is no need of you now. **For the maid is not dead**—her life is not at an end—**but sleepeth.** This is only a temporary suspension of sense and motion, which should rather be termed sleep than death"—WESLEY.

25. **But when the people**—these professional mourners (2 Kings 4. 32, 33)—**were put forth, He went in.** The house was still. "Two souls, believing and hoping, stand like funeral tapers beside the couch of the dead maiden—the father and the mother. His Church the Lord sees represented in His three most trusted apostles. And now the solemn awakening finds place, and this without an effort on the part of Him who is absolute Lord of quick and dead"—T. **And took her by the hand**—and addressing her as not dead but sleeping, "said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise" (Mark); **and,** at the word and the touch, **the maid arose.**

26. **And the fame,** etc. "Here the person had recently departed; in the case of the widow's son he was in the act of being carried to his grave; and in the instance of Lazarus the corpse had lain in the grave, and had become corrupt. But what can withstand the life-giving energy of the Son of God? Not the deeper death of the soul of man can resist His power. Of how many myriads may it be said, 'And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins'! These miracles are not only glorious attestations of His mission and divinity, but teach us to look up to Him as the great fountain of spiritual life"—R. W.

Vers. 20-22. HEALING OF THE WOMAN. (Mark 5. 25, 34; Luke 8. 43-48.)—20. **Behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years.** (Lev. 15. 19, 23.) Both the other Evangelists add that she had spent ineffectually "all that she had" upon physicians. **Came behind Him**—that is, came to Him from behind—**and touched the hem of His garment**—that is, His outer garment or mantle, which was made so as to hang partly in the front and partly at the back of the body; and to each of the *borders* or corners of which a *fringe* or tassel, bound with a blue riband, was worn. (Num. 15. 38-41.) These tassels were to be constant reminders to them "of the commandments of the Lord," and for this reason a sort of sanctity was attached to them. It was one of these that the woman *touched.*

21. **For she said,** etc. "What strong faith to expect that even contact with Him, the bare touch of His garment, would carry such divine power—as to make her **whole.** Yet in this very strength lay also its weakness. She believed so much in Him, that she felt as if it needed not personal appeal to Him; she felt so deeply the hindrances to her making request of Himself, that, believing so strongly in Him, she deemed it sufficient to touch not even Himself, but that which in itself had no power nor value, except as it was in contact with His Divine Person"—ED. Her faith was real and strong, but ignorant and superstitious. "This is a most encouraging miracle for us to recollect when we are disposed to think despondingly of the ignorance or superstition of much of the Christian world: that He who accepted this woman for her faith, even in error and weakness, may also accept them"—A.

22. **Jesus turned Him about.** "Knowing in Himself that virtue (R.V. 'power') had gone out of Him" (Mark), "said, Who touched My clothes?" (Luke). He did not ask this question because He required to be informed, but to induce her to make an open confession, and so to cause it to be known that the healing had not been obtained by stealth,—that the healing power had gone out of Him by His own will, in answer to her faith. Peter said, almost reproachfully, "Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?" (Luke). Yet she only *touched* with the touch of faith. "And thus it is ever in the Church: many press upon Christ;

His in name; near to Him and to His sacraments outwardly; but not 'touching Him,' because not drawing near in faith; not looking for, and therefore not obtaining, life and healing from Him, and through these"—T. **Thy faith hath made thee whole**—"hath saved thee." "Not merely in the act of touching, but now completely by the act of confession; it saved her *mediately*, as the connecting link between herself and Christ"—A.

Vers. 27–31. HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN. (Related by S. Matthew only.)—27. **And when Jesus departed thence**—from the house of the ruler—**two blind men followed Him**—through the streets of Capernaum—**crying, and saying, Thou Son of David.** A distinct acknowledgment of His Messiahship. (See on ch. 1. 1.) The same form of appeal was used by the two blind men near Jericho (ch. 20. 30, 31), and by the woman of Canaan (ch. 15. 22); and it is remarkable that in all these cases our Lord tried the faith of the applicant by delay. When faith in Him as the Hope of Israel is expressly avowed, He exercised and strengthened it by seeming indisposition to respect it. **Believe ye that I am able to do this?** The question is not, Do ye truly believe Me to be what you call Me, David's Son and Heir? but, Believe ye truly and firmly that I am able to heal your blindness?

29. **According to your faith.** At the same time touching their eyes. "No direct word of power passes from our Lord, but a relative concession making that which was done 'a measure of the faith' of the blind men"—A.

Vers. 32–34. HEALING OF A DUMB DEMONIAC. (Related by S. Matthew only.)—32. **A dumb man possessed with a devil.** (Ch. 12. 22.) The dumbness, no doubt, caused by the possession.

33. **The multitudes marvelled.** They had probably seen many cases of possession and many exorcisms or attempts to exorcise (Acts 19. 13, 14); but any such twofold cure as this was altogether new. **Saying, It was never so seen in Israel**—"Even in Israel, where so many wonders have been seen"—WESLEY.

"This was not a hyperbolical exclamation; for when had such a number of miracles, so great and so affectingly beneficent, been performed in a few hours?—the curing of the woman, the raising the daughter of Jairus to life, the restoration of sight to two blind men, and the ejection of an evil spirit, in the course of one afternoon! To which Jesus immediately added many more; for it is added, 'He went about all their cities, teaching, etc., and healing every sickness and every disease among the people'"—R. W.

34. **But the Pharisees said.** Probably in muttered whispers to the astonished people, to check their enthusiasm and prevent the inquiry, as on a later occasion, "Is not this the Son of David?" **He casteth out devils**, etc. (See ch. 12. 22.)

CHAPTERS IX. 36—X. 43.

THE KINGDOM PROCLAIMED GENERALLY: THE TWELVE CHOSEN, COMMISSIONED, AND CHARGED.

(Mark 3. 13–19; 6. 7–13; Luke 6. 12–16; 9. 1–6.)

Ver. 36. **Moved with compassion on them**—not elated with the signs of His popularity—**because they, fainted and were scattered abroad.** Many of them were far from their homes and oppressed with weariness, but the allusion is more especially to their spiritual condition. **As sheep having no shepherd**—"And yet they had many teachers: they had scribes in every city. But they had none who cared for their souls; and none that were able, if they had been willing, to have 'wrought any deliverance.' They had no pastors after God's own heart"—WESLEY. (Num. 27. 17; 1 Kings 22. 17; Jer. 3. 15; Eph. 4. 11; Zech. 10. 2.)

38. **Pray ye therefore.** "See of how great value are prayers"—B. (Ezek. 36. 37; Isa. 62. 6, 7; Ps. 2. 8; 1 John 5. 14–16.) **The Lord of the harvest**—"whose peculiar work and office it is, and who alone is able to do it, 'that He would thrust forth'—for it is an employ not pleasing to flesh and blood; so full of reproach, labour, danger, temptation of every kind, that nature may well be averse to it. Those who never felt this, never yet knew what it is to be labourers in Christ's harvest. He sends them forth, when He calls them by His Spirit, furnishes them with grace and gifts for the work, and makes a way for them to be employed therein"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1. **And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples.** This implies that they had been already chosen, which agrees with the representations of the other Evangelist. **He gave them power**, etc. "This is the grand distinction between the miraculous powers of Christ and those of His apostles. The one was inherent in Himself; the other was expressly communicated by Him, and was never employed but as His power, not as theirs who exercised it. The distinction, before noticed, will here again be remarked between 'casting out unclean spirits, and healing all manner of sickness'; so that possession is excluded expressly from the class of sickness and disease"—R. W.

2. **The names of the twelve apostles.** So named by Christ Himself (Luke). The title is here used for the first time. It signifies *one sent*—a messenger. It was in frequent use among the Jews, as a title of dignity. So that when our Lord applied it to the Twelve, He was "not introducing a new term, but adopting one which, from its current

usage, would suggest to His hearers the idea of a highly responsible mission." The name is never used by John, and only once each by Matthew and Mark. But Luke, who was not himself an apostle, uses it repeatedly (6. 13; 9. 10; 11. 49; 17. 5; 22. 14; 24. 10). **The first, Simon, who is called Peter.** (John 1. 42.) He was *first*, "not only as regards arrangement or mere priority of calling, but as *first among equals*. That, however, no such idea was current among the apostles as that he was destined to be the *primate of the future Church* is as clear as the prominence given to him on many occasions before the rest"—A. **And Andrew his brother.** (John 1. 37–40.) They were fishermen of Bethsaida, and partners in trade with **James and John**, the brothers next named (Luke 5. 10), who were the sons of Zebedee and Salome. James was the first to suffer martyrdom (Acts 12. 1, 2); John the last survivor of the whole company. The name *Boanerges* was given to them at the time of this appointment (Mark), probably on account of their zealous earnestness.

3. **Philip** was also a native of Bethsaida. (John 1. 43; 6. 7; 12. 22; 14. 8.) **Bartholomew** (son of Talmai). No doubt the same as Nathanael. (John 1. 43; 21. 2.) **Thomas**, or Didymus, the twin, who is shown, by the references to him in John, to have been strongly and faithfully attached to Christ, but naturally despondent. (John 11. 16; 14. 5; 20. 25; 21. 2.) **And Matthew the publican**, whose call to follow Christ is recorded in ch. 9. 9. **James, the son of Alphæus**, so called to distinguish him from the brother of John. **And Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus**, that is, Judas.

4. **Simon the Canaanite** (R.V. "the Cananæan, or Zealot"). In Luke and Acts 1. 13, "Simon Zelotes." He seems to have belonged to the party of the Zealots, originally peculiarly strict Jews, but who degenerated into wild fanaticism. **And Judas Iscariot**—probably a man of *Kerioth*, a village near Hebron. He was the only apostle who was not a Galilean.

5. **These twelve Jesus sent forth**—"with power and authority" (Luke). "Herein exercising His supreme authority, as God over all. None but God can give men authority to preach His word. **Go not.** Their commission was thus confined now, because the calling of the Gentiles was deferred till after the more plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost"—WESLEY.

Into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. Samaritans were descendants of the colonies imported into the territory of the ten tribes by the king of Assyria (2 Kings 17. 24). Though thus of heathen origin they were instructed in the Law of Moses, and had built a temple on Mount Gerizim, which was destroyed about B.C. 130. The bitterest hostility existed between them and the Jews. (John 4. 9; see Ezra 4; Neh. 6.)

6. **Lost sheep of the house of Israel.** (Ch. 9. 16; Ps. 119. 176; Isa. 53. 6; Jer. 50. 17.)

7. **Preach** — proclaim — **the kingdom of heaven.** (Ch. 3. 2; 4. 17.) Not yet the king. Their present announcements were to be preparatory. **Is at hand.** Not yet fully founded. (Contrast with this Col. 1. 26–28.)

8. **Heal the sick**, etc. Show the signs of the kingdom and manifest its advent by benevolent works. **Freely ye have received** "all things; in particular the power of working miracles. **Freely give.** Exert the power wherever you come" — WESLEY. (Acts 8. 18–20.)

9. **Provide neither gold**, etc. (Luke 22. 35; 1 Cor. 9. 7.) "'Provide not' — The stress seems to lie on this word: they might use what they had ready; but they might not stay a moment to provide anything more, neither take any thought about it. Nor indeed were they to take anything with them, more than was strictly necessary—(1) Lest it should retard them; (2) Because they were to learn hereby to trust God in all future exigencies"—WESLEY.

10. **Nor scrip.** That is, a wallet, or bag to hold provisions. "Nor yet a staff." We read (Mark 6. 8), "Take nothing, save a staff only." He that had one might take it; they that had none might not provide any. "**For the workman is worthy of his maintenance.** The word includes all that is mentioned in the 9th and 10th verses; all that they were forbidden to provide for themselves, so far as "was needful for them"—WESLEY.

11. "**Inquire who is worthy.** That you should abide with him who is disposed to receive the gospel. **There abide** — in that house, till ye leave the town"—WESLEY.

12. **Salute it.** In the usual Jewish form, "Peace" (that is, all blessings) "be to this house" (Luke 10. 5).

13. "**If the house be worthy** of it, God shall give them the peace you wish them. If not, He shall give you what they refuse. The same will be the case when we pray for them that are not worthy"—WESLEY. (Ps. 35. 13.)

14. "**Shake off the dust from your feet.** The Jews thought the land of Israel so peculiarly holy, that when they came home from any heathen country they stopped at the borders, and shook or wiped off the dust of it from their feet, that the Holy Land might not be polluted with it. Therefore the action here enjoined was a lively intimation, that those Jews who had rejected the gospel were holy no longer, but were on a level with heathens and idolaters"—WESLEY. (Neh. 5. 13; Acts 13. 51; 18. 6.)

15. **Verily I say unto you**, etc. (Ch. 11. 22, 24.) With this solemn "Verily," followed by His reference to the day of final judgment, our Lord closes the first part of this great charge (comp. ch. 7. 27; 8. 11, 12), that relating to the first mission of His apostles. They were to

limit their proclamations to the Jews, and to govern their conduct among them by these instructions, all of them harmonising with Jewish ideas and usages. The second part (vers. 16–23) contains predictions and precepts of more general application, yet referring chiefly to the ministry of the apostles and the persecutions to which they would be subject among both Jews and Gentiles after His ascension, up to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the apostolic age.

16. **Behold, I send you forth.** This clearly marks a new starting-point of the discourse. **Wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.** Prudent but guileless. (Rom. 16. 19; Eph. 5. 15; Phil. 2. 15.)

17. **But beware of men.** (Phil. 3. 2; ch. 24. 9; Mark 13. 9; Acts 5. 4.) "Think not that all your innocence and all your wisdom will screen you from persecution. **They will scourge you in their synagogues.** In these the Jews held their courts of judicature, about both civil and ecclesiastical affairs"—WESLEY. (See on ch. 4. 23.)

19. **Take no thought**—"Be not anxious." (Mark 13. 11; Luke 12. 11; 21. 14; Ex. 4. 12.)

20. **Spirit of your Father.** "Our Lord can only say *My Father* and *your Father*, never *our Father*"—S.

22. **The end.** (Dan. 12. 12, 13; Rev. 2. 10; comp. 1 Cor. 1. 8; Heb. 3. 6; 6. 11.)

23. **Flee ye into another.** Not merely for your safety, showing the prudence of the serpent, but also for the purpose of continuing to carry out this My commission. **For verily I say unto you.** A repetition of the solemn form of words with which the first part of the discourse had ended, to indicate that this was the end of the second portion. "**Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel**—make what haste ye will—**till the Son of Man be come** to destroy their temple and nation"—WESLEY.

And also shall be "come in His kingdom (ch. 16. 28) for the fulfilment of the prophetic vision from which the title "Son of Man" is taken. (Dan. 7. 12–14.) For the destruction of the Temple and capital of Judaism, and the necessary termination of the economy of Moses, marked the fuller establishment of that spiritual kingdom over which "the Son of Man" (see Acts 7. 56) shall be Head and Lord until "all enemies shall be put under His feet." (1 Cor. 15. 27, 28; Rev. 22. 3, 7, 12.) The third and most weighty section of this discourse "extends its glance to the remote and final end, promising, by its third **Verily**, a corresponding reward which shall come at the same time with the judgment"—S.

24. **The disciple is not above his Master**—that is, should not expect to be treated better than his Master. (Luke 6. 40; John 13. 16; 15. 20.)

25. **Beelzebub.** In margin, "Beelzebul," which is no doubt the correct reading. The word means "Lord of the house," it may be "of the temple," or "Lord of idolatry," more strictly, "Lord of sacrificing to idols." The worst of demons. (Ch. 9. 34; 12. 24.)

26. **Fear them not therefore.** "For ye have only the same usage with your Lord." **For there is nothing covered,** etc. (Mark 4. 22; Luke 12. 2, 3; 1 Cor. 4. 5.) "The form of this sentence seems to indicate a proverbial saying, which our Lord uses here with special reference to His gospel, which, though now obscure, shall shortly be made manifest and be triumphant"—S. C.

27. **In darkness.** "Even **what I** now **tell you** secretly is not to be kept secret long, but declared publicly. Therefore, **what ye hear in the ear, publish on the house-top.** Two customs of the Jews seem to be alluded to here: their doctors used to whisper in the ear of their disciples what they were to pronounce aloud to others. And, as their houses were low and flat-roofed, they sometimes preached to the people from thence"—WESLEY.

28. **And fear not them.** (Isa. 8. 12, 13; 51. 7, 12; 1 Pet. 3. 14.) **But rather fear Him.** (Jas. 4. 12.) "It is remarkable that our Lord commands those who love God, still to fear Him, even on this account, under this notion"—WESLEY.

29, 30. **Are not two sparrows.** (1 Sam. 14. 45; Luke 21. 18; Acts 27. 34.) "The particular providence of God is another reason for your not fearing man. For this extends to the very smallest things. And if He has such care over the most inconsiderable creatures, how much more will He take care of you (provided you 'confess' Him 'before men,' before powerful enemies of the truth); and that not only in this life, but in the other also!"—WESLEY.

32. **Whosoever therefore shall confess Me**—publicly acknowledge Me for the promised Messiah. But this confession implies the receiving His whole doctrine (Mark 8. 38), and obeying all His commandments.

33. **But whosoever shall deny Me.** (2 Tim. 2. 12.) "The context shows plainly that it is a practical, consistent confession which is meant, and also a practical and enduring denial. The Lord will not confess the confessing Judas, nor deny the denying Peter; the traitor who denied Him in act is denied; the apostle who confessed Him even to death will be confessed"—A.

34. **Think not that I am come to send peace.** (Luke 12. 49, 53.) That is, think not that universal peace will be the immediate consequence of My coming: just the contrary. Both public and private divisions will follow, wheresoever My gospel comes with power. Yet this is not the design, though it be the event, of His coming, through the opposition of devils and men.

35, 36. **A man at variance,** etc. (Micah 7. 6; Ps. 41. 9.)

37. **Is not worthy of Me.** (Luke 14. 26, 27; comp. Deut. 23. 9; Ex. 32. 26, 29.) "Christ is the exceeding great reward of those that love Him; the greatest love and the most to be loved above all others"—S. "Not that, as is sometimes erroneously supposed, a very great *degree* of love to the dearest on earth amounts to loving them more than Christ. No degree of proper affection can ever make affection wrongful, even as *no* diminution of it would make wrongful affection right. The love which Christ condemneth differs not in degree, but in kind, from rightful affection. It is one which takes the place of love to Christ—not which is placed by the side of that of Christ"—ED.

38. "**He that taketh not his cross**—that is, whatever pain or inconvenience cannot be avoided but by doing some evil, or omitting some good"—WESLEY.

This is our Lord's first express allusion to His death by *crucifixion;* and His apostles must have heard it with amazement. The saying has become familiar to us as a proverb, but at that time it was new to them, for crucifixion was unknown to Jewish law, and the very mention of the cross must have thrilled them with horror. On later occasions our Lord repeated the saying with more direct reference to Himself. (Ch. 16. 24; Mark 10. 21; Luke 9. 23.) But His disciples never rightly understood His meaning.

39. **He that findeth his life shall lose it.** (Ch. 16. 25; John 12. 25.) "He that saves his life, by denying Me, shall lose it eternally; and he that loses his life, by confessing Me, shall save it eternally. And as you shall be thus rewarded, so in proportion shall they who entertain you for My sake."

40–42. **He that receiveth you receiveth Me.** (Ch. 18. 5; 25. 40, 45.) "You," that is, His apostles. But He immediately passes on to **prophets** representing any divinely-commissioned teacher (1 Cor. 14. 22–32); to **righteous** men, "saints" (Acts 9. 13); those whom He recognises as true subjects of His kingdom (ch. 5. 20); then to **these little ones**—learners, probably His feeble and inexperienced followers, or, it may be, to children, pointing to some near Him as He spoke ("of such is the kingdom of heaven"). The truth affirmed throughout is that Christ identifies Himself with His disciples—"I in them, and Thou in Me" (John 17. 21, 23)—and will accept and reward as acts of devotion to Himself every act of service rendered to them for His sake.

CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 1–30. MESSAGE FROM JOHN THE BAPTIST: OUR LORD'S ANSWER, AND FOLLOWING DISCOURSE. (Luke 7. 18–35; 10. 13–15, 21, 22.)—1. **To teach and to preach in their cities.** Thus for a time our Lord laboured apart from the Twelve, but where and with what results is not stated.

2. **John had heard in the prison.** Said by Josephus to have been the strong fortress of Machærus, near the north-east corner of the Dead Sea. **The works of Christ,** that is, of *the* Christ. The Evangelist evidently uses this title to intimate that this was the form in which our Lord's works had been reported to John. S. Luke states that they were his own disciples who told him of our Lord's miracles, and also that they had given rise to a widely circulated report that "a great Prophet had been raised up" (Luke 7. 15–18). On hearing this from his disciples, in words suggesting the hope that the "Great Prophet" might be the Messiah, John **sent two of his disciples** to obtain from our Lord a definite answer to the question, Art Thou or art Thou not the very Christ? His motive was, most probably, not only to satisfy his disciples, but also to obtain reassurance for himself.

3. **Art Thou He that should come?** The coming One for whose appearing all Israel is anxiously awaiting. (Isa. 11. 1–4; Luke 4. 18, 19.)

4. **Go and show John again** those signs of My being the Messiah of which you have already spoken to him, and "which are a stronger proof than any bare assertions can be"—WESLEY.

S. Luke says that, at the very moment when the messengers arrived, our Lord was occupied with works of healing in many forms.

5. **The blind receive their sight,** etc. (Isa. 29. 18; 35. 5; 61. 1.)

6. **Shall not be offended in Me**—who shall not find in Me, as the Messiah, an occasion of stumbling or of a faltering faith. It is clear from these words, which it should be observed are part of the answer to be conveyed to John, that his mind had been harassed with some difficulty respecting Christ. The testimony which our Lord bore to him after the departure of his messengers is confirmatory of this; for it implies that until His kingdom should be fully established, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, an obscure and defective conception of His character would be unavoidable.

7. **What went ye out into the wilderness to see?** What kind of man did you expect to find him to whom you went out in crowds? A man to be symbolised by **a reed shaken with the wind**? Meaning of course is, you went to see a man of known inflexible moral purpose.

8. **A man clothed in soft raiment?** "An effeminate courtier, accustomed to fawning and flattery. You may expect to find such a character in palaces, not in a wilderness"—WESLEY.

9. **A prophet? yea** (ch. 21. 26), **and more than a prophet.** "For the prophets only pointed Me out afar off; but John was My immediate forerunner"—WESLEY.

10. **For this is he,** etc. (Isa. 40. 3; Mal. 3. 1.) "It is remarkable that both S. Matthew and S. Luke, as well as S. Mark in another

place (1. 2), cite this prophecy of Malachi with the substitution of *Thy* way before *Thee.* In the original, God is represented as speaking of Himself; in the citation He addresses the Messiah. The Lord thus, in applying the prophecy to Himself as Messiah, asserts His own Deity, as one with the Lord of Hosts who speaks through the prophets"—S. C.

11. **He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.** "Which an ancient author explains thus: 'One perfect in the Law, as John was, is inferior to one who is "baptized into the death of Christ." For this is the kingdom of heaven, even "to be buried with Christ," and to be "raised up together with Him." John was greater than all who had been then born of women; but he was cut off before the kingdom of heaven was given.' He seems to mean that righteousness, peace, and joy, which constitute the present, inward kingdom of heaven. 'He was blameless as to that "righteousness which is by the Law"; but he fell short of those who are perfected by the Spirit of life which is in Christ. Whosoever therefore is "least in the kingdom of heaven," by Christian regeneration, is greater than any who has attained only the righteousness of the Law, because "the Law maketh nothing perfect."' It may further mean, the least true Christian believer has a more perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ, of His redemption and kingdom, than John the Baptist had, who died before the full manifestation of the gospel"—WESLEY.

12. **The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.** (Luke 16. 16.) Ever since John began to preach the coming of My kingdom, and to bear witness of Me, hindrances of every kind have been so multiplied by My opponents that, if men enter it at all, it must be with the violent determination of those who take a city by storm.

13. **For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.** "For all that is written in the Law and the Prophets only foretold as distant what is now fulfilled. In John the old dispensation expired, and the new began"—WESLEY.

14. **This is Elias, which was for to come.** (Ch. 17. 12; Mal. 4. 5.) In a spiritual sense John was Elijah (Luke 1. 17). That he was Elijah actually, in the sense in which the Jews expected his return, John himself denied (John 1. 21).

15. **He that hath ears,** etc. An intimation that only men of spiritual discernment would pierce the deeper meaning of the prophet's words to which he was calling attention.

16. **This generation**—"that is, the men of this age. They are like those froward children of whom their fellows complain, that they will be pleased no way"—WESLEY.

18. **John came neither eating nor drinking**—"in a rigorous, austere way, like Elijah—**and they say, He hath a devil**—is melancholy, from the influence of an evil spirit"—WESLEY.

19. **The Son of Man came eating and drinking**—showing that man might be holy without asceticism—**and they say,** etc. His conduct in social life is unbefitting that of a prophet of the Lord. "The children of that generation expected quite another Elijah and quite another Christ, and disbelieved and complained, because the real Elijah and Christ did not meet their foolish thoughts"—ED. **But wisdom**—here personified, as in Prov. 9. 1-6, etc.—**is justified of her children.** This is a general truth, but means, as our Lord applies it to Himself, My character and position in social life is vindicated by the truly wise.

20. **Most of His mighty works.** Yet we have no record of any of them; very few of our Lord's miracles, comparatively, have been narrated.

21. **Woe unto thee**—"that is, miserable art thou. For these are not curses or imprecations, as has been commonly supposed; but a solemn, compassionate declaration of the misery they were bringing on themselves. Chorazin and Bethsaida were cities of Galilee, standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. Tyre and Sidon were cities of Phœnicia, lying on the seashore. The inhabitants of them were heathens"—WESLEY.

This is the only occasion on which Chorazin is mentioned. (Luke 10.13.) Its site was long unknown, but is now supposed to be identical with that of Kerazeh, two miles north-west of Capernaum.

22. **But I say unto you.** "Besides the general denunciation of woe to those stubborn unbelievers, the degree of their misery will be greater than even that of Tyre and Sidon, yea, of Sodom."

23. **Thou, Capernaum, who hast been exalted to heaven**—"that is, highly honoured by My presence and miracles"—WESLEY.

25. **Jesus answered and said.** This may mean simply Jesus said. More probably it means, said, as in a momentary outburst of His continual inner communion with the Father. **Because Thou hast hid these things**—the things concerning Himself and His kingdom, of which He had been speaking—**from the wise and prudent**—in the worldly and Jewish sense; from the self-misguided and misguiding Scribes and Pharisees and men whom they represent. **And hast revealed them unto babes.** Those who receive communications of spiritual truth with childlike simplicity and confidence. (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 26-30; 2. 9, 10; 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.)

27. **All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.** (Ch. 28. 18; Luke 10. 22; John 3. 35; 5. 26, 27; 6. 44, 46; 14. 6-9; 17. 2; 1 Cor. 15. 27.) The declaration is absolute, but here refers directly to the things of supreme knowledge of which He was speaking; all things pertaining to His own mysterious nature and

the spiritual character of His kingdom. **And no man** (R.V. "no one") **knoweth the Son, but the Father.** "None but the Almighty Father has full entire possession of the mystery of the person and office of the Son: it is a depth hidden from all being but His, whose purposes are involved in it and by it." **Neither knoweth any man** (R.V. "neither doth any know") **the Father save the Son.** "Nor does any fully apprehend, in the depths of his being, the love and grace of the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son, by the Eternal Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, will reveal Him"—A. (Col. 1. 12; John 16. 15.)

28. **Come unto Me.** (Isa. 45. 22; John 6. 25-37, 44-47.) **All ye that labour**—toil as in a yoke—**and are heavy laden**—as with a burden. The allusion is, in the first instance, to those who felt the rites of the Mosaic (Acts 15. 10) and the superadded rites of tradition and the oral laws (ch. 23. 4; Luke 11. 46) to be intolerable; but also as determined by the preceding discourse to all who were struggling against intellectual doubt and difficulty respecting Christ and His mission, or were oppressed under a consciousness of guilt. **And I will give you rest**—of mind, heart, and spirit.

29. **Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.** (2 Cor. 10. 1; Phil. 2. 6, 8; 1 Pet. 2. 21.) "Believe in Me; receive Me as your Prophet, Priest, and King. **For I am meek and lowly in heart**—meek towards all men, lowly towards God. **And ye shall find rest.** (Jer. 6. 16.) Whoever therefore does not find rest of soul is not meek and lowly. The fault is not in the yoke of Christ; but in thee, who hast not taken it upon thee. Nor is it possible for any one to be discontented, but through want of meekness or lowliness"—WESLEY.

30. **For My yoke is easy**—"Or rather, gracious, sweet, benign, delightful. **And My burden**—contrary to those of men, is ease, liberty, and honour"—WESLEY. (Rom. 6. 17-23; 8. 1-4.)

CHAPTER XII.

PROGRESS OF THE KINGDOM PERSISTENTLY DISPUTED.

Vers. 1-8. PLUCKING EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH. (Mark 2. 23-28; Luke 6. 1-5.)

—1. **His disciples were an hungered.** A fact to be ascribed either to their poverty, or to their unceasing services to their ever active Master. **To pluck the ears of corn.** S. Luke adds, "rubbing them in their hands." Which shows that the corn was not barley, but wheat, and indicates that the season was the early summer.

2. **Not lawful.** For it was regarded as a kind of reaping. "Do Thy disciples break the Sabbath before Thine eyes, and dost Thou not rebuke them? Is this what they learn from Thee?" So the act was perfectly lawful in itself. (Deut. 23. 25.)

3. **What David did.** (1 Sam. 21. 6.) Whom ye teach your disciples to take as the great example of obedience to the Law.

4. **Into the house of God.** (Ex. 26. 30; 29. 32, 33; Lev. 24. 9.) "Into the tabernacle. The Temple was not yet built. **The shewbread.** So they called the bread which the priest, who served that week, put every Sabbath day on the golden table that was in the holy place, before the Lord. The loaves were twelve in number, and represented the twelve tribes of Israel. When the new were brought, the stale were taken away, but were to be eaten by the priests only"—WESLEY.

It is to be noted also that the new bread was *hot* (1 Sam. 21. 6), and must therefore have been baked the same day. "Not merely does the sacred history relate exceptional instances of *necessity*, but the Law itself ordains labour on the Sabbath as a *duty*"—S.

5. **Read in the Law.** (Neh. 8. 8.) **Profane the Sabbath.** (Num. 28. 9; John 7. 22, 23.) "That is, do their ordinary work on this, as on a common day, cleansing all things, and preparing the sacrifices. **A greater than the Temple.** If therefore the Sabbath must give way to the Temple, much more must it give way to Me"—WESLEY.

6. **One greater than the Temple.** (John 2. 19; 2 Chron. 6. 18; Mal. 3. 1.)

7. **I will have** (R.V. "I desire") **mercy, and not sacrifice.** (Ch. 6. 15; Hos. 6. 6.) That is, when they interfere with each other, I always prefer acts of mercy before matters of positive institution—yea, before all ceremonial institutions whatever; because these being only means of religion are suspended, of course, if circumstances occur wherein they clash with love, which is the end of it"—WESLEY. (Comp. 1 Cor. 13. 1-3.)

8. **For the Son of Man is Lord.** "Therefore they are guiltless, were it only on this account, that they act by My authority, and attend on Me in My ministry, as the priests attend on God in the Temple"—WESLEY.

This is the emphatic ending of the record by each of the three Evangelists; but in S. Mark the important principle is given before these last words, "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Three things are here then put beyond dispute: 1. The Sabbath was given to man for his benefit. It must therefore be thankfully observed as a boon, and used for the bodily and spiritual ends for which it was instituted. 2. But we are not to observe it in a slavish obedience to the letter of the institution, as if the end of our own creation was to honour the Sabbath. There are works to be done on the Sabbath for ourselves and for others, which we cannot blamelessly omit. 3. He who is "the Son of Man," and One greater than the Temple,

the Head and Sovereign of mankind, has power even over the Sabbath, to use it as He will for the gracious ends of His manifestation. And is it not by an act of His supreme authority that the first day of the week has been substituted for the seventh, *the Lord's Day* becoming *God's holy day?*

Vers. 9–14. THE WITHERED HAND HEALED: REPEATED CHARGE OF SABBATH-BREAKING. (Mark 3. 1–6; Luke 6. 6–11.) — 9. **Their synagogue.** Where it was cannot be decided.

10. **His hand**—(S. Luke says, "his right hand") — **withered** — that is, in a state of paralysis or atrophy. The other Evangelists add that the "scribes and Pharisees," probably the same men whose cavils He had just confuted, "watched Him." They seem to have brought the man into the synagogue in the expectation that Jesus would be present, in order to see whether He would exert His healing power on his behalf, and afford them ground for a formal and definite charge of Sabbath violation. S. Luke says, "that He knew their thoughts"—their insidious reasonings—"and said to the man, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst." So that the healing might take place before the whole assembly. **And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?** Which our Lord answered by a counter-question, as at other times (ch. 21, 24), "Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil?" His purpose was to do good; theirs to do evil; for they were plotting to put Him to death.

11. **If it fall into a pit**, etc. (Deut. 22. 4; Luke 14. 5.) "But they held their peace" (Mark).

13. **Then saith He to the man**—"when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (Mark)—**Stretch forth thine hand** (1 Kings 13. 6); thus He gave them no legal basis for an accusation against Him. He did not touch the man. He did not command the restoration to take place. He simply bade him do an impossible thing. **And he stretched it forth.** He manifested his faith in the great Healer by the attempt to obey His command; and in the attempt the cure was wrought.

14. **Held a council** (R.V. "took counsel") **how they might destroy Him.** (John 5. 16, 18.) So little power have miracles to conquer prejudice and command faith. They have been disgracefully baffled in their attempt to fix the capital offence of Sabbath-breaking upon Him; and now, *filled with madness*, as S. Luke records, they came together as an irregular council, associating with them their political opponents, "the Herodians" (Mark), to consider by what means they might put Him to death, with a semblance of righteous zeal for the Law.

15. **He withdrew Himself.** (Ch. 10. 23.) **And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.** (Ch. 19. 2; Luke 5. 17.)

17. **That it might be fulfilled**, etc. (Ch. 1. 22.) **By the prophet.** (Isa. 42. 1–4.)

18. **Behold My Servant.** (Zech. 3. 8.) Points of resemblance between *the servant of the Lord*, as described by Isaiah, and Christ, in whom Isaiah's Ideal is realised, were continually before the mind of Matthew. (Ch. 7. 29.)

19. **He shall not strive, nor cry.** Calm in the consciousness of His absolute authority, He should be free from all the wild gesticulations and ravings of false prophets. **Neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets**—"that is, he shall not be contentious, noisy, or ostentatious; but gentle, quiet, and lowly. We may observe, each word rises above the other, expressing a still higher degree of humility and gentleness."

20. **A bruised reed**—"a convinced sinner; one that is bruised with the weight of sin. **Smoking flax**—one that has the least good desire, the faintest spark of grace. **Till He send forth judgment unto victory**—that is, till He make righteousness completely victorious over all its enemies"—WESLEY.

Vers. 22–30. HEALING A BLIND AND DUMB DEMONIAC: A CHARGE OF BEING CONFEDERATE WITH SATAN. (Mark 7. 24–27; Luke 11. 14–29.) —22, 23. **Then was brought unto Him.** A similar incident is recorded in ch. 9. 32–34. But the effects of the possession in this case were more distressing, and the blasphemous plea of the Pharisees more complete. "This instance of possession being accompanied both with blindness and the loss of speech, induced in consequence, probably, of the terrible power exerted by the devil upon the whole frame, rendered the sudden healing of this unfortunate man, by the expulsion of Satan, exceedingly remarkable; and as it produced great **amazement** among the people, so that they said, **Is not this the Son of David?** and showed a disposition to acknowledge our Lord to be the Messiah in a tumultuary manner, so it excited the Pharisees to endeavour to countervail this impression, by spreading among the people the blasphemous theory they had adopted to account for His miracles, 'This man doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils'"—R. W.

24. **When the Pharisees heard it** (S. Mark says, "they came down from Jerusalem"). They had been sent down as spies to watch His movements and note His sayings, in order to detect some ground of accusation, and to counteract His influence over the people. **But by Beelzebub.** This had been already put forth (ch. 9. 34), but it is now reported openly and with emphasis, it may be as having been agreed to at the consultation mentioned in ver. 14. **The prince of the devils.** (See ch. 10. 25.)

25. **And Jesus knew their thoughts**—that is, their intentions. "It seems, they had as yet only said it in their hearts"—WESLEY.

26. **How shall then his kingdom stand?** How could any kingdom stand, one part of it seeking the destruction of the other?

27, 28. **By whom do your children** (R.V. "your sons") (2 Kings 2. 3)—that is, disciples—**cast them out.** It seems, some of them really did this; although the sons of Sceva could not. (Acts 19. 14–16.) **Therefore they shall be your judges.** Ask them, if Satan will cast out Satan: let even them be judges in this matter. And they shall convict you of obstinacy and partiality, who impute that in Me to Beelzebub, which in them you impute to God. Besides, how can I rob him of his subjects, till I have conquered him? **The kingdom of God is come unto you**—unawares; before you expected. So the word implies—Come upon (R.V.) "you," so that you are surprised into an attitude of malignant opposition.

29. **How can one enter,** etc. (Isa. 49. 24.) "So Christ coming into the world, which was then eminently the strong one's, Satan's house, first bound him, and then took his spoils"—WESLEY.

30. **He that is not with Me is against Me.** For there are no neuters in this war. Every one must be either with Christ or against Him; either a loyal subject or a rebel. And there are none upon earth who neither promote nor obstruct His kingdom. For he that does not gather souls to God scatters them from Him.

31. **I say unto you.** (Luke 12. 10.) I who alone have authority to reveal this. (Ch. 6. 29; 18. 10, 19.) **The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.** "How much stir has been made about this! How many sermons, yea volumes, have been written concerning it! And yet there is nothing plainer in all the Bible. It is neither more nor less than the ascribing those miracles to the power of the devil, which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost"—WESLEY.

This is made sufficiently clear by the explanation given by S. Mark (3. 22-30)—"Because they said He had an unclean spirit." The warning is, that "he who, with full evidence and knowledge of the Divine power manifested by Christ, persists in enmity to Him, and blasphemes the work of the Holy Spirit as the work of Satan, who wilfully and knowingly calls evil good and good evil, gives proof of that reprobate mind which gives no hope of future repentance"—S. C. (Neh. 6. 4-8.)

32. **Whosoever speaketh against the Son of Man**—"In any other respect—**it shall be forgiven him**—upon his true repentance. (1 Tim. 1. 13.) **But whosoever speaketh thus against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come.** This was a proverbial expression among the Jews, for a thing that would never be done. It here means further, he shall not escape the punishment of it, either in this world or in the world to come. The judgment of God shall overtake him, both here and hereafter"—WESLEY.

33. **Either make the tree good and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt**—"that is, you must allow, they are both good, or both bad. For if the fruit is good, so is the tree; if the fruit is evil, so is the tree also." **For the tree is known by its fruit.** (Ch. 7. 20.) "As if He had said, Ye may therefore know Me by My fruits. By My converting sinners to God, you may know that God hath sent Me."

34. **O generation of vipers.** (Ch. 3. 7.) *Adder's poison* was under their lips (Ps. 140. 3). "In another kind also, the tree is known by its fruits, namely, the heart by the conversation"—WESLEY. (Luke 6. 45.)

36. **Every idle word.** Every word which is not spoken for the true and fitting end of speech. This does not condemn conversation meant to promote cheerfulness in company, but words which are in their nature unfruitful of good (Eph. 5. 11); or provocative of evil, such as "foolish talking and jesting." (Eph. 5. 4; 4. 29; Col. 4. 5, 6.)

37. "**For by thy words** (as well as thy tempers and works) **thou shalt** then be either acquitted or condemned. Your words as well as actions shall be produced in evidence for or against you, to prove whether you were a true believer or not. And according to that evidence you will either be acquitted or condemned in the great day"—WESLEY.

38. **We would see a sign from Thee.** This they said, "tempting Him" (Luke)—putting Him to the test. A sign from heaven—like those of Moses (ch. 16. 1; 1 Cor. 1. 22; comp. John 6. 30, 31; 12. 28–31). In order that they might be convinced that His miracles were really wrought by the Holy Ghost, let Him give them the decisive proof of a sign from heaven.

39. "**An adulterous generation.** (Isa. 57. 3.) Whose heart wanders from God, though they profess Him to be their husband. Such adulterers are all those who love the world, and all who seek the friendship of it. **Seeketh a sign**—after all they have had already, which were abundantly sufficient to convince them, had not their hearts been estranged from God, and consequently averse to the truth. **The sign of the prophet Jonah**—who was herein a type of Christ"—WESLEY.

"The sign of Jonas is the most remarkable foreshadowing in the Old Testament of the resurrection of our Lord"—A.

40. **Three days and three nights.** "It was customary with the Eastern nations to reckon any part of a natural day of twenty-four hours for the whole day. Accordingly they used to say, a thing was done after three or seven days, if it was done on the third or

seventh day from that which was last mentioned. Instances of this may be seen (1 Kings 20. 29); and in many other places. And as the Hebrews had no word to express a natural day, they used night and day, or day and night, for it. So that to say a thing happened after three days and three nights was with them the very same as to say it happened after three days, or on the third day. (See Esther 4. 16; 5. 1; Gen. 7. 4, 12; Ex. 24. 18; 34. 28.)"—WESLEY.

In the whale's belly. Rather "in the fish's belly." The Greek word signifies any sea-monster or huge fish, without specifying the kind. So, in Jonah 1. 17, it is only called "a great fish"—S. C.

41. **Because they repented at the preaching of Jonas.** (Jonah 3. 5.) S. Luke says, "As Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites"—that is, as his miraculous deliverance was a sign of his Divine mission. **So shall also the Son of Man be.** "The preaching of Jonas to the Ninevites was a sign after *his* resurrection; so shall the preaching of the Son of Man be, by His Spirit in His apostles, after *His* resurrection"—S.

42. **The uttermost parts of the earth.** (1 Kings 10. 1.) A great distance. **A greater than Solomon is here.** "His preaching, greater than that of Jonah; His wisdom, than that of Solomon"—A.

43. **When the unclean spirit,** etc. With this most solemn warning, recorded by S. Luke in almost the same words (ch. 11. 24), our Lord concludes this, one of His most instructive and admonitory discourses. He speaks directly with reference to *that generation* as worse than preceding generations, because it was rejecting greater advantages, and incurring the heavier doom (vers. 31, 32). But this warning is equally applicable to ourselves. **Is gone out of man.** "Not willingly, but being compelled by One that is stronger than he. **He walketh**—wanders up and down—**through dry places**—barren, dreary, desolate; or, places not yet watered with the gospel. **Seeking rest, and findeth none.** How can he, while he carries with him his own hell? And is not this the case of his children too? Reader, is it thy case?"—WESLEY.

44. **Whence I came out.** "He speaks, as if he had come out of his own accord: see his pride! **He findeth it empty**—of God, of Christ, of His Spirit. **Swept**—from love, lowliness, meekness, and all the fruits of the Spirit. **And garnished**—with levity and security; so that there is nothing to keep him out, and much to invite him in"—WESLEY.

45. **Seven other spirits**—"that is, a great many; a certain number being put for an uncertain. **More wicked than himself.** Whence it appears, that there are degrees of wickedness among the devils themselves. **They enter in and dwell**—for ever, in him who is forsaken of God. **So shall it be to this wicked generation**—yea, and to apostates in all ages"—WESLEY.

46. **While He yet talked**—He was abruptly interrupted. The incident is related by S. Mark (ch. 3. 31–35), and by S. Luke (ch. 8. 19–21). It implies another attempt on the part of our Lord's determined opponents to ensnare and destroy Him. They had said that He was possessed by an unclean spirit, and seemed to have persuaded His mother and brethren to believe this; for they "went out to lay hold on Him; for they said, He is beside Himself" (Mark 3. 21). They had thought only of His excessive and self-forgetful labours, but His enemies had ascribed these to weakness; and even they, *His friends*, were beginning to accept this explanation.

47. **Then one said unto Him, Behold Thy mother and Thy brethren**—James, Joses, Simon, Judas—**stand without**—an indication of their anxiety and want of confidence. **Desiring to speak with Thee.** But also, as we know, and as is shown by their coming as a body, to control Him.

48. **But He answered, and said.** "Our Lord's knowing why they came sufficiently justifies His seeming disregard of them"—WESLEY.

49, 50. **He stretched forth His hand,** etc. (John 15. 14; Heb. 2. 11.) "See the highest severity and the highest goodness! Severity to His natural, goodness to His spiritual, relations. In a manner disclaiming the former, who opposed the will of His heavenly Father, and owning the latter, who obeyed it"—WESLEY.

"All obedient believers are near akin to Jesus Christ. They wear His name, bear His image, have His nature, are of His family. He loves them, converses freely with them, as His relations. He bids them welcome to His table, takes care of them, provides for them, sees that they want nothing that is fit for them; when He died He left them rich legacies; now He is in heaven, He keeps up a correspondence with them, and will have them all with Him at last, and will in nothing fail to do the kinsman's part (Ruth 3. 13); nor will ever be ashamed of His poor relations, but will confess them before men, before the angels, and before His Father"—H.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KINGDOM EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED BY PARABLES.

Vers. 1–23. THE SOWER: CONDITION FOR RECEIVING THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM. (Mark 4. 4–20; Luke 8. 5–15.)—1. **Out of the house.** Probably the house of Peter in Capernaum, where His mother and brethren had sought to seize and secure Him through a device of the Pharisees. (Ch. 12. 46, 47.) **And sat by the sea-side.** The northern shore of the Lake

of Gennesaret; "when He began again to teach" (Mark).

2. **Great multitudes** (S. Luke says, "out of every city"). **So that**—to avoid the pressure of the crowds, and enable them to see and hear Him—**He went into a ship**, or boat, **and sat.**

3. **In parables.** "A parable is a serious narration, within the limits of probability, of a course of action, pointing to some moral or spiritual truth; and derives its form from real analogies impressed by the Creator of all things on His creatures"—A. "The word is here taken in its proper sense, for apt similes or comparisons. This way of speaking, extremely common in the Eastern countries, drew and fixed the attention of many, and occasioned the truth delivered to sink the deeper into humble and serious hearers. At the same time, by an awful mixture of justice and mercy, it hid them from the proud and careless. In this chapter our Lord delivers seven parables; directing the four former, as being of general concern, to all the people; the three latter to His disciples"—WESLEY.

"**Behold, the sower.** How exquisitely proper is this parable to be an introduction to all the rest! In this our Lord answers a very obvious and a very important question. The same sower, Christ, and the same preachers sent by Him, always sow the same seed. Why has it not always the same effect? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"—WESLEY.

4. **Fell by the wayside.** The hard footway through the field. S. Luke, "and it was trodden down." **And the fowls came and devoured them up.** "It is observable, that our Lord points out the grand hindrances of our bearing fruit, in the same order as they occur. The first danger is, that the birds will devour the seed. If it escape this, there is then another danger, namely, lest it be scorched, and wither away. It is long after this that the thorns spring up and choke the good seed. A vast majority of those who hear the word of God receive the seed as by the highway side. Of those who do not lose it by the birds, yet many receive it as on stony places. Many of them who receive it in a better soil, yet suffer the thorns to grow up and choke it: so that few even of these endure to the end, and bear fruit unto perfection. Yet, in all these cases, it is not the will of God that hinders, but their own voluntary perverseness"—WESLEY.

5. **Stony places.** S. Luke, "On the rock." The meaning is continuous rock, covered with a thin coating of mould, where the plant would shoot forth quickly on account of the great heat, and would as quickly wither, "because it lacked moisture" (Luke).

7. **Among thorns**—thistles, weeds, etc.; they greatly infested the soil of Palestine.

8. **Good ground**—soft, deep, and with the roots of thorns and all other useless plants carefully cleared away.

9. **Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.** (Ch. 11. 15.) This solemn call to attention is given by the three Gospels. (Comp. Rev. 2. 11; 13. 9.)

10. **And the disciples came**—probably when He was returned "into the house" (ver. 36) "and was alone" (Luke)—**and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?** So that hitherto our Lord had rarely used this method of teaching.

11. **It is given unto you**—"who have—**to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.** (Ch. 11. 25; Rom. 16. 25; 1 Cor. 2. 7, 10; Eph. 1. 9, 18; 3. 9; Col. 1. 26, 27; 1 John 2. 27.) The deep things, which flesh and blood cannot reveal, pertaining to the inward, present kingdom of heaven. **But to them,** who have not, **it is not given. Therefore speak I in parables,** that ye may understand, while they do not understand"—WESLEY.

A mystery is a hidden truth. As so frequently used in the New Testament it is a truth or Divine purpose, formerly hidden, but now revealed. (Rom. 11. 25; Eph. 3. 4–11.) Our Lord was at that time gradually revealing to His recipient and faithful hearers the secret truths which centred in Himself, and were the essential principles of His kingdom, and which, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, were to be revealed fully. (2 Cor. 3. 6–18.)

12. **For** (ch. 25. 29; Luke 19. 26) **whosoever hath**—"that is, improves what he hath, uses the grace given according to the design of the Giver—**to him shall be given**—more and more, in proportion to that improvement. **But whosoever hath not**—improves it not—**from him shall be taken even what he hath.** Here is the grand rule of God's dealing with the children of men: a rule, fixed as the pillars of heaven. This is the key to all His providential dispensations; as will appear to men and angels in that day"—WESLEY.

13. "**Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not.** In pursuance of this general rule, I do not give more knowledge to this people, because they use not that which they have already: having all the means of seeing, hearing, and understanding, they use none of them: they do not effectually see, or hear, or understand anything"—WESLEY.

14. **And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias.** (Isa. 6. 9; see also John 12. 40; Acts 28. 26, 27; Rom. 11. 8.) "**Hearing ye will hear, but in no wise understand**—that is, ye will surely hear; all possible means will be given you; yet they will profit you nothing, because your heart is sensual, stupid, and insensible; your spiritual senses are shut up—yea, you have closed your eyes against the light; as being unwilling to understand the things of God, and afraid, not desirous, that He should heal you"—WESLEY.

16. "**But blessed are your eyes.** For you both see and understand. You know how to prize the light which is given you"—WESLEY.

17. **Prophets and righteous men.** (2 Sam. 23. 5; Eph. 3. 5, 6; Heb. 11. 13; 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.)

18. **Hear ye therefore.** Hear in your heart, that you may understand the true meaning (ver. 15). "'The seed is the word of God" (Luke). (Col. 1. 5, 6; 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7; 1 Pet. 1. 23; Jas. 1. 21.) "Also, conversely, the word of God is seed"—S. It contains the principle of life.

19. **When any one heareth the word of the kingdom**—(ch. 4. 23)—**and understandeth it not**—"fails to recognise his own relation to it, and to the kingdom it proclaims—'and considereth it not'—the first and most general cause of unfruitfulness. **The wicked one cometh**—either inwardly, filling the mind with thoughts of other things; or by his agents. Such are all they that introduce other subjects, when men should be considering what they have heard"—WESLEY.

20. **Into stony places.** (Ezek. 33. 31, 32; John 5. 35; Gal. 4. 15.) "The seed sown 'on stony places,' therefore *sprung up* soon, because it did not sink deep (ver. 5). **He receiveth it with joy**—perhaps with transport, with ecstasy; struck with the beauty of truth, and drawn by the preventing grace of God"—WESLEY.

21. **Yet hath he not root in himself.** (John 6. 66.) "No deep work of grace; no change in the ground of his heart. Nay, he has no deep conviction; and without this, good desires soon wither away. **He is offended** (R.V. 'he stumbleth'). He finds a thousand plausible pretences for leaving so narrow and rugged a way"—WESLEY.

22. **Among the thorns is he that heareth the word,** and considereth it—in spite of Satan and all his agents; yea, hath root in himself, is deeply convinced, and, in great measure, inwardly changed; so that he will not draw back, even **when tribulation or persecution ariseth.** And yet even in him, together with the good seed, the thorns spring up (ver. 7), perhaps unperceived at first, till they gradually *choke* it, destroy all its life and power, **and he becometh unfruitful.**

"Cares are thorns to the poor; wealth, to the rich; the desire of other things, to all. **The deceitfulness of riches**—deceitful, indeed! for they smile, and betray; kiss, and smite into hell. They put out the eyes, harden the heart, steal away all the life of God; fill the soul with pride, anger, love of the world; make men enemies to the whole cross of Christ; and all the while are eagerly desired, and vehemently pursued, even by those who believe there is a God"—WESLEY. (Comp. ch. 6. 33; Luke 17. 25, 31.)

23. **Into the good ground.** "Not only deep earth, prepared for the seed by the ploughing, but kept free from weeds by diligent and watchful labour. **Understandeth it**—so considers it and meditates upon it; maintains in his mind so deep and lively a conviction of its excellency and supreme importance, as to apply it to practical ends, both in the regulation of his heart and conduct. Hence in S. Luke it is, 'and keeps it in an honest and good heart'; a heart rendered so by the grace of God, communicated through previous religious advantages,—as the word of God contained in the Jewish Scriptures, or the preaching of John the Baptist,—and maintained and perfected by the word of Christ, kept within it. 'And bring forth fruit with patience' (Mark); with persevering resistance to all temptations, and a strong and unyielding endurance"—R. W. (Comp. John 14. 21; Jas. 1. 25.)

Vers. 24-30; 36-43. THE WHEAT AND THE TARES: TRUE AND COUNTERFEIT SUBJECTS OF THE KINGDOM.—24. **Is likened unto a man.** The history of **the kingdom of heaven,** or the reign of the Messiah, is like the case of a man who **sowed good seed in his field**—the seed being "the word of God," and "the field being the world" (ver. 38).

25. **His enemy came and sowed tares.** "Our Lord did not imagine here a form of malice without example, but alluded to one which may have been familiar enough to His hearers, one so easy of execution, involving so little risk, and yet effecting so great and so lasting a mischief"—T. The word translated *tares*, means more probably, as suggested in the margin of the R.V., "darnel," a poisonous plant which is scarcely distinguishable in the blade from wheat or barley. The tares represent non-spiritual members of Christ's visible and professing Church.

26. **Then appeared the tares also**—when coming into ear, not previously.

29. **Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares.** "Even the farmers, who in this country generally *weed* their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other. They would not only mistake good grain for them, but very commonly the roots of the two are so entertwined, that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. Both, therefore, must be left to **grow together** until the time of harvest"—T. "A zeal that is rash and precipitate is as much to be feared as the total lack of strict discipline"—C.

37. **Is the Son of Man**—Who was then personally sowing the word of spiritual life. Whatever good seed there is in the world, it all comes from the hand of Christ, and is of His sowing; truths preached, graces planted, souls sanctified, are good seed, and all owing to Christ. Ministers are instruments in Christ's hand to sow good seed; are employed by Him; and the success of their labours depends purely upon His blessing; so that it may well be said, "It is Christ and no other that sows the good seed"—N.

38. **The field is the world.** Humanity; the entire human seed. **The good seed are the children of the kingdom**—true, spiritual,

faithful followers of Christ; those who have received the truth in the love of it; who have experienced its transforming power, and who show the fruits of righteousness in their character. (John 3. 3–5; Rom. 8. 4–17.) **But the tares are the children of the wicked one.** (John 8. 44; Acts 13. 10; 1 John 3. 8.) Apparent subjects of the kingdom of heaven, but real subjects of the kingdom of darkness; followers of Christ only in name and form; honoured, as belonging to Christ, by man that looketh only at the outward appearance, but disowned by Him who looketh at the heart. "Darnel, in the Church, is, properly, outside Christians, such as have the form of godliness without the power. Open sinners, such as have neither the form nor the power, are not so properly darnel as thistles and brambles; these ought to be *rooted up* without delay, and not *suffered* in the Christian community. Whereas should fallible men attempt to *gather up the darnel*, they would often *root up the wheat with them*"—WESLEY.

It is perfectly clear from this parable that the term, "the kingdom of heaven," is not synonymous with *the Church*, except when understood in the restricted and distinctive sense of the spiritual Church. (Col. 1. 12–18.)

39. **The harvest is the end of the world.** (Joel 3. 13; Rev. 14. 15.) In the margin of R.V. "The consummation of the age," that is, of the age or dispensation which began with the manifestation of the Son of God in the fulness of time, and will be completed "when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. 15. 24). **The reapers are the angels**—not the "servants," mentioned in ver. 27. (Rev. 14. 15–19; 2 Thess. 1. 5–10.)

41. **They shall gather out of His kingdom**—shall separate from His true subjects with whom they had mingled during the age, or dispensation now come to an end. **All things that offend** — "whatever had hindered or grieved the children of God; whatever things or persons had hindered the good seed which Christ had sown from taking root or bearing fruit. The Greek word is, *all scandals*"—WESLEY.

42. **And shall cast them.** (Ch. 25. 41; Rev. 21. 8.)

43. **Then** — when counterfeits have been separated from them—**shall the righteous**—sharers of that true and complete righteousness exceeding "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," which men in Christ attain (1 Cor. 1. 30)—**shine forth as the sun.** Their life previously "hidden in Christ with God," shall burst forth in all its vigour and activity; and *the light* in which they had *walked*, as behind a veil, shall beam out in its gladdening clearness. **In the kingdom of their Father.** (Dan. 12. 3; Rom. 8. 19.) "The kingdom," until the completion of the age, is the kingdom of Christ, "or the kingdom of Christ and of God"; then the subjects of the mediatorial kingdom shall enter with triumph into the eternal "kingdom of their Father." Then will be the full "manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8. 19). **Who hath ears,** etc. (Ver. 9.)

Vers. 31, 32. THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED: EXTERNAL GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM. (Mark 4. 30–34; Luke 13. 18, 19.)—31. **Like to a grain of mustard seed.** The comparison of the growth of kingdoms to that of trees occurs in the Old Testament, and might have been familiar to our Lord's hearers. (Ps. 80. 8–11; Ezek. 17. 22, 24; 31. 3–9; Dan. 4. 10–12.)

32. **The least of all seeds.** This expression need not be taken literally, but as meaning in popular speech something very minute. "'As a grain of mustard seed' was a proverbial expression among the Jews for smallness; and in the rabbinical writings the mustard plant is mentioned as a tree growing to a size and strength that a man might ascend into it"—R. W. **So that the birds,** etc. "This fact of the fondness of birds for the seeds, and the manner in which, therefore, they congregate in the branches, was probably familiar to our Lord's hearers as well. They too had beheld them congregating in the branches of the tree, whose seed thus serves them for meat, so that there must have been a singular liveliness in the image"—T. The most essential point of instruction which the parable contains is, that the kingdom which Christ was founding in the world was a living power which, although at that time small and despised, would ultimately *fill the earth*. It has a twofold reference. "I. In the *general* sense, the insignificant beginnings of the kingdom are set forth—the little Babe cast in the manger at Bethlehem; the Man of Sorrows with no place to lay His head; the crucified One. Or, again, the hundred and twenty names who were the seed of the Church after the Lord had ascended; then we have the kingdom of God waxing onward and spreading its branches here and there, and different nations coming into it. We must beware, however, of imagining that *the outward Church form* is this kingdom. 2. The individual application of the parable points to the small beginnings of Divine grace—a word, a thought, a passing sentence may prove to be the little seed which eventually fills and shadows the whole heart and being"—O.

Ver. 33. THE LEAVEN: HIDDEN WORKING OF DIVINE GRACE. (Luke 13. 20, 21.)—33. **Like unto leaven.** Elsewhere leaven is used as a symbol of sin; it may be with reference to its disturbing and corrupting power, or because the use of leaven was forbidden during the Passover season. (Ex. 12. 1; 15. 20; Luke 12. 1–17; Gal. 5. 9; 1 Cor. 5. 6, 7.) Here the allusion is to its secret, penetrating, effectual working. **Which a woman took**—from some dough, or from bread already leavened—**and hid in three measures of meal.** "This was the quantity which they usually baked at

once. **Till the whole was leavened.** Thus will the gospel leaven the world, and grace the Christian"—WESLEY.

"Its influence is invisible, even slow; but it exerts a secret activity, conveying its own properties progressively, until, like the measures of meal, the whole mass is leavened. This must become matter of personal experience, that no principle of action, no affection of the soul, no temper, no thought, word, or action shall escape that influence of the gospel, the effect of which, when not wilfully counteracted, is to assimilate everything to its own charity and purity. In the world the process, from the vastness of the mass, will be slow; and yet, what reflecting mind can fail to remark with joy that, wherever the great truths of our Divine religion are fully and faithfully preached, how certainly, and often indeed rapidly, do great moral changes in the state of society follow?—a higher standard of judging as to right and wrong, a stricter regard to justice, a corrected state of morals, a more liberal benevolence, kindlier feelings, manliness of intellect, and an ameliorated state of the social affections. Let this encourage the exertions of the disciples of Christ."

34. **Spake Jesus unto the multitude**—whom at this point He dismissed. The parables which follow were spoken to His disciples only, when they had withdrawn with Him *into the house.* (Ver. 36; Mark 4. 33, 34.)

35. **Which was spoken by the prophet.** (Ps. 78. 2.)

Ver. 44. THE HIDDEN TREASURE: THE KINGDOM FOUND WHEN UNLOOKED FOR.—44. **Treasure hid in a field.** This and the parable following represent the kingdom of heaven simply in its relation to the individual. "Each man must have it for himself, and make it his own by a distinct act of his own will. He cannot be a Christian without knowing it"—T. (Mark 10. 15; John 3. 3; Heb. 12. 28.) The concealment of money and jewels in the ground was a frequent practice formerly, especially in the East. (Job 3. 21; Prov. 2. 4, 5; Jer. 41. 8.) And naturally, in cases of flight, death, and other obvious causes, the hidden treasure may have remained undisturbed for ages. In this parable a man comes to the knowledge of some such buried treasure as by accident; and in order to make it his own he quickly *hideth* it again, **and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.** What is thus represented is the unexpectedness with which the kingdom of heaven has come to those who have received it. "The woman of Samaria (John 4.) was thinking of anything rather than of lighting on the hid treasure when she came to draw water from the well"—T. The jailor at Philippi as little thought of finding salvation when Paul and Silas were committed to his custody. Christ was found of those who sought Him not. It should be observed that the means which this man adopted to possess himself of the treasure at any price, "that of purchasing the field while concealing its value from the owner (for this seems implied in the narrative) is not commended any more than the dishonesty of the unjust steward is commended along with his wisdom. In the present case, indeed, the feature of the parable is from the very nature of the case excluded from comparison. A worldly treasure can only be obtained by one man through being parted with by another; the blessings of the gospel may be shared by all without being diminished to any one"—S. C.

Vers. 45, 46. THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE: THE KINGDOM SOUGHT.—45. **Seeking goodly pearls.** (Prov. 3. 14, 15; 8. 11.) This case is the reverse of the former. It is that of a man, dissatisfied with his present attainments, who is carefully and unremittingly seeking something nobler and better. As a Jew, he may have had a "zeal for God, but not according to knowledge," making righteousness by the Law the object of his search, until, under better guidance, he finds the righteousness of faith. As a Gentile he may first have striven to "do the works of the Law as it is written in the heart" (Rom. 2. 14). Then having been instructed out of the Law, as a convert to Judaism, may have become like Cornelius, "a just man, and one that feared God"; and finally, like Cornelius, may have heard in faith *words* whereby he was fully saved (Acts 11. 14).

46. **One pearl of great price.** "The person has been seeking and finding goodly pearls; what is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; but at last he finds 'one pearl' of great price—the efficacious principle of inward and spiritual life. We hear of no emotion, no great joy of heart as before, but the same decision of conduct; he sells all and buys it"—A. (Isa. 55. 1; Rev. 3. 18; Prov. 23. 23.)

Vers. 47–50. THE DRAG NET: AGENCIES OF THE KINGDOM.—47. **Like unto a net.** The word means a large drag or hauling net, such as is called in Cornwall a seine. **The sea.** Used elsewhere as an emblem of the nations (Rev. 17. 15; Isa. 8. 7; Ps. 65. 7)—the net being the gospel instrument of bringing men of all nations out of the world to Christ (Rev. 7. 9). The gospel is to be proclaimed throughout the world as the draw-net is cast into the sea, and is to **gather of every kind.** (Ch. 22. 10.) "But Christian discipline, and strong, close exhortation, begin that separation in this world which shall be accomplished by the angels of God in the world to come"—WESLEY.

49. **The angels shall come forth.** Not now the *fishers of men—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers;* but "the angels," as in ver. 30. **Shall sever the**

wicked from among the just (the righteous); those who were the true subjects of "the kingdom of heaven," having earnestly sought and attained its distinctive "righteousness" (ch. 5. 20).

50. **And**—the angels as ministers of justice—**shall cast them**—thus completely separated from the righteous—**into the furnace of fire.** (Ch. 24. 32; 25. 46; Rev. 21. 8.) This awful saying is a repetition, word for word, of ver. 42.

51. **Have ye understood? Yea, Lord.** They had really understood something; and "Christ receives their answer as true; for he who understands something is certainly in the right way"—S.

52. **Therefore every scribe**—official teacher—**which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven** (R.V. "who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven"). Evidently a description of the apostles, as called and taught by Himself, and who would be more fully instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom hereafter, for the enlightenment and salvation of the world. **Is like unto a man that is an householder,** etc. And this is true of every scribe really instructed in spiritual truth. "Every really spiritually-learned scribe of the kingdom of heaven is able, from the increasing stores of his genuine experimental knowledge of the word (not merely from books or learning or the Bible itself), **to bring out of his treasure things new and old**"—A.

53. **He departed thence**—that is, from Capernaum, where He had for some time resided as in "His own city."

54. **Come into His own country.** Nazareth and its neighbourhood. (Mark 6. 1.) **He taught them in their synagogue.** "But with no better success than He had there before"—WESLEY. (Luke 4. 16–31.)

55. **Is not this the carpenter's Son?** (S. Mark, "Is not this the carpenter?") (John 6. 42.) Every Jew was taught a trade, but comparatively few were instructed and trained for the office of scribe, and the fellow-citizens of Jesus knew that He had not been so qualified. He was a "carpenter," and "the son of a carpenter"—nothing more. But with what dignity does this fact invest manual labour!

57. **And they were offended in Him.** (Ch. 11. 6.) **A prophet is not without honour**—as He had reminded them on the former occasion (Luke 4. 24; also John 4. 44), that is, "he is usually more honoured by strangers than by his immediate connections, who are apt to be moved by envy at the distinctions put upon him. Besides, the latter, if reproved by him in the faithful exercise of his ministry, are most apt to be offended, and are most ready to remind him of any circumstances of meanness which may be connected with his family and rank in life"—R. W.

58. **He did not many mighty works there.** Some He had wrought (ver. 54, etc.)—and S. Mark says that "He laid His hand upon a few sick folk and healed them." **Because of their unbelief.** "Not that He was without power, but they without faith. Christ modifies the exercise of omnipotence according to the disposition of those to whom He comes. The Holy Spirit alone, who knows the mind of Christ, would have spoken thus of His power, and of the laws by which He is pleased to limit and control its manifestations."

CHAPTER XIV.

Vers. 1–12. DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST: A DISMAL PARENTHESIS. (Mark 6. 14–29; Luke 3. 19, 20; 9. 7–9.)—1. **Herod**—Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great—**the tetrarch.** Properly the ruler of the fourth part into which a province was divided. By his father's will Herod Antipas was made tetrarch of Ituræa and Peræa. In ver. 9 and Mark 6. 14, he is called king by courtesy.

2. **This is John the Baptist.** Herod appears to have adopted this opinion from a popular rumour (Luke 9. 7). John's character had commanded his involuntary veneration (Mark 6. 20); and the murder of that *just and holy* man continued to trouble his guilty conscience, and had brought upon him the censure of the people. **He is risen from the dead,** etc.—an allusion to His "supposed greater power acquired by having passed through death. This is an incidental confirmation of John 10. 41, where we read that John wrought no miracle"—A.

3. **For**—what follows is an explanatory parenthesis—**Herod had laid hold on John,** etc. (Ch. 11. 2.) **His brother Philip's wife**—therefore, his sister-in-law. She was also his niece, the daughter of his brother Aristobulus. His brother Philip is not the "tetrarch" mentioned in Luke 3. 1, but a disinherited son of Herod the Great, known simply as Herod Philip. At the time of his marriage to Herodias, his former wife and her former husband were yet living.

4. **It is not lawful for thee to have her.** (Lev. 18. 16; 20. 21.) S. Luke states that "Herod was reproved" by John; and a terrible struggle took place in his guilty mind; for, inspired with respect and awe for his prisoner, he sent for him time after time, and not only heard him with seriousness, but "did many things" that John enjoined upon him, though not the one thing of putting away his unlawful wife (Mark 6. 19, 20).

5. **Would have put him to death**—under the instigation of Herodias (Mark); but was restrained by his own misgivings, and because **he feared the multitude.**

6. **Herod's birthday**—or possibly the anniversary of his accession. "A convenient day,"—for the fell purpose of Herodias, according to S. Mark, who adds that Herod invited to

the feast he provided, "his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee." **Danced before them, and pleased Herod.** This was probably a kind of pantomimic performance, not unlike that of the dancing-girls of India.

7. **Whereupon**—to show how much he was gratified, influenced by wine and the applause of his guests—**he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.** S. Mark adds, "unto the half of my kingdom." (Comp. Esther 5. 3; 7. 2.)

8. **Instructed of her mother**—who saw in a moment that her opportunity was come for carrying out her crafty designs. **Said, Give me here**—that is, forthwith; before you and your guests separate—not some royal domain or palace—but **John Baptist's head in a charger**—that is, a large dish or trencher.

9. **And the king was sorry.** S. Mark says, "exceeding sorry." **Nevertheless for the oath's sake.** "So he murdered an innocent man from mere tenderness of conscience"—WESLEY.

10. **And he sent**—a soldier of the guard—**and beheaded John in the prison.** Probably a dungeon of the castle in which the banquet was held. "How mysterious is the providence which left the life of so holy a man in such infamous hands! which permitted it to be sacrificed to the malice of an abandoned harlot, the petulancy of a vain girl, and the rashness of a foolish, perhaps drunken, prince, who made a prophet's head the reward of a dance! But we are sure the Almighty will repay His servants in another world, for whatever they suffer in this"—WESLEY.

12. **His disciples**—the disciples of John—**took up the body, and buried it.** Where is not known. **And told Jesus.** And we may reasonably believe transferred to Him the confidence and devotion they had shown toward John. This tragic event did not occur at the period in our Lord's history which S. Matthew is here relating, but probably some little time previously. It is introduced here to explain why Herod, when "he heard of the fame of Jesus," and of the conjectures of the people respecting Him, was so greatly alarmed.

MORE SIGNS OF THE KINGDOM.

Vers. 13–21. FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND: THE PEOPLE TEMPORARILY CONVINCED. (Mark 6. 31–44; Luke 9. 10–17; John 6. 5–14.)—13. **He departed thence.** His motives being the consternation produced in Herod's court by tidings of His works; the fact recorded by S. Luke that the troubled and evil-minded king "desired to see Him"; and also, as expressly stated by S. Mark, the need of rest for Himself and the Twelve: "for they had not time so much as to eat bread." **Into a desert place.** S. Luke says, "belonging to the city called Bethsaida" (The House of Fishing.) This was on the north-east of the Lake, and was known as Bethsaida-Julias. There was another city of this name on the west, called "Bethsaida of Galilee" (John 12. 21). **They followed Him on foot.** Round the head of the Lake, the distance being only about six miles from Capernaum.

14. **Moved with compassion.** (Ch. 9. 36; 15. 32; Heb. 4. 15.) S. John says, "He went up into a mountain"; meaning the higher ground on the bank of the Lake, "and there He sat" till the multitude had assembled. "And He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing" (Luke 9. 11).

15. **And when it was evening.** The first evening, or that which began at about three o'clock; the second, which began about five, is mentioned in ver. 23. (Ex. 12. 6.) **Send the multitude away.** From John we learn that, while people were streaming together from all directions, our Lord said to Philip, in order to "prove or try him, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Philip confessed the impossibility of providing food for them; and afterwards the disciples as a body, little conjecturing the wondrous work for which the question addressed to Philip was meant to prepare them, besought Him to dismiss the multitude that they might procure food.

16. **Give ye them to eat.** They had well pondered the difficulty our Lord had Himself suggested, and reply to His command, as with one voice, alluding to Philip's estimate of what would be required, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth" (about seven pounds' worth of bread? (Mark). He bids them go and see what quantity they had brought with them.

17. **And they say unto Him.** S. John states that their spokesman was Andrew. **We have here but five loaves and two fishes**—or, as given by S. John, "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves"—the food of the poor only. (Judg. 7. 13.) "And two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

18, 19. **Bring them hither to Me.** "And the scanty store being brought to Him, and then distributed by the disciples to each one, not only were the disciples themselves witnesses of the miraculous increase of the food, but every individual who received it at their hands. No miracle could be wrought with greater publicity, or under circumstances which more effectually excluded all deception. For the loaves and the fishes being *taken* by our Saviour Himself, as the Master of the feast, whilst all eyes were fixed upon Him, **He looked up to heaven,** the seat of His Father's glory, **blessed**—that is, He blessed or gave thanks to God, as the Giver of food to His creatures; **and brake** the bread, and gave it to His disciples, and they to the multitude; so that it would appear that it increased in His hands, and was taken from Him by the disciples and distributed, fresh supplies being dealt out to them by Christ until the whole multitude were

fed. All were fully satisfied; for on this the words of the Evangelist are most express. **And they did all eat, and were filled:** and the fragments, filling twelve baskets, gave additional evidence of the vastness of the miracle, since more remained after all were fed than the original quantity from which it had proceeded"—R. W.

20. **Twelve baskets full.** They were the wicker baskets or wallets which poor Jews usually carried when on a journey. Probably each of the Twelve used his own.

21. **About five thousand.** They were easily counted; for they had been made to sit down "on the green grass" in groups of "fifty or a hundred" (Mark and Luke).

The immediate and special end for which this stupendous miracle was wrought will be manifest to every reader of this Gospel who keeps in mind S. Matthew's well-understood design of showing believing Jews how fully our Lord revealed Himself to His apostles and first followers as the Spiritual Deliverer, so variously promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. But this becomes still more evident from the statement of S. Luke that our Lord had just previously discoursed to the multitude concerning "the kingdom of God," and from S. John's record of the conclusion to which the miracle brought them. His statement is that when they had seen it they said, simultaneously, "This is of a truth that Prophet which should come into the world," referring no doubt to Deut. 18. 15; and that they would have taken Him "by force to make Him a king." Their conceptions of His purposes were in accordance with the then current notions of the Messiah, and were seriously wrong; but their conviction that He was the coming One, for whom the whole nation were waiting, was for a moment complete. They were therefore in some measure prepared for the strangely new and startling doctrines so shortly afterwards declared to them. The next day this miracle became the basis of the great testing-discourse delivered to many of the same people in the synagogue of Capernaum, upon Himself as the *Bread of Life*,—the Bread of God come down from heaven to give life unto the world. (John 6. 26–58.)

Vers. 22–33. WALKING ON THE LAKE: WORSHIPPED AS THE SON OF GOD. (Mark 6. 45–51; John 6. 14–21.)—22. **Straightway Jesus constrained His disciples**—who naturally shared the enthusiasm of the people, and were unwilling to be separated from Him. **To get into a ship** (R. V. "to enter into the boat"). No doubt the same in which they came (ver. 13). **To go before Him unto the other side**—S. Mark, "unto Bethsaida"; S. John, "toward Capernaum." The two places were near each other. This Bethsaida, the city of Andrew, Peter, and Philip (John 1. 43, 44), is distinguished from the other as *Bethsaida* in Galilee (John 12. 21). The instruction given to the disciples was to return to Capernaum, keeping near the north-western shore.

23. **Apart to pray.** "Here His Divine Majesty lay, so to speak, in repose; ready in due season to shine forth"—CALVIN. After showing Himself to be more than man by the quiet exercise of His creative energy, He yet, as a true man, seeks rest after the toils of the day, and relief from the oppressive influence of the excited crowd by direct personal communion with God. "In seclusion such as this, matters of the greatest importance took place between God and the Mediator"—B. (Mark 1. 35; Luke 6. 12; ch. 6. 6.) **When the evening was come**—that is, the second evening (ver. 15)—**He was there alone**—there to spend the night in prayer, as on an earlier occasion. (Luke 6. 12.)

24. **In the midst of the sea.** S. John says they had rowed "five and twenty or thirty furlongs," having kept to the shore as long as they could, but they were now carried irresistibly by the violence of the north-easterly storm into the centre of the Lake, perhaps three miles from land in any direction.

25. **And in the fourth watch of the night**—about three o'clock in the morning. The Jews had at this time, like the Romans, four watches (Mark 13. 35). **Jesus went unto them**—after the severe testing of six or seven hours' duration—**walking on the sea.** S. John says, "Drawing nigh unto the ship," and S. Mark, "that He would have passed by them." This was to call forth their prayer "that He would *not* pass them by, that He would not forsake them. Exactly in the same way, walking with His two disciples to Emmaus, after His resurrection, 'He made as though He would have gone farther,' thus drawing out from them the entreaty that He would abide. And at the root of what a multitude of God's other dealings does something of the same kind lie!"—T.

26. **Saw Him walking on the sea.** "S. John uses an expression which shows us, in the pale light, those in the boat intently, fixedly, fearfully gazing at the apparition as it moved still closer and closer"—ED. **Cried out for fear**—under the influence of a popular superstition. "The sight would have troubled men less superstitious than simple fishermen"—G.

27. **Be of good cheer; it is I.** They mistook the form of their Master; but it would have been impossible to mistake the reassuring tones of that familiar voice; and unutterable must have been the consolation conveyed by these few words of grace. (Comp. Isa. 41. 10; Rev. 1. 7.)

28–31. **And Peter answered**—with characteristic impulsiveness; giving expression to a true faith, but at the same time to a feeling strangely inconsistent with that suppression of self which Christ requires of His followers—**Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.** "His ardent spirit, excited by this new proof

of the high and Divine character of his Lord, probably at once concluded that his faith in His power and majesty was now sufficiently strong, that he could venture his life upon His bidding, undismayed by winds and waves. He was permitted to make the trial, in order to teach him more humble views of himself, by revealing the weakness of that faith which he thought so strong; for **when he saw the wind boisterous**, and consequently the waves greatly agitated, he looked off from that omnipotence of his Saviour, on which his faith at first simply and exclusively fixed, and, his fear rising with his unbelief, he began **to sink**, and cry out for help. That help was seasonably given; but with suitable though tender reproof: **O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?** The doubt of Peter did not imply that he was not fully persuaded that the appearance was that of Christ Himself—that he knew before he left the vessel; for the expression, **If it be Thou**, is equivalent to, 'Since it is Thou Thyself,' and expresses full conviction. And his appeal to Christ for help, when sinking, also shows that he had no doubt as to the Person he was addressing. But he doubted, in the sense of hesitating, whether to regard the violence of the waves or the power of Christ; like a man standing where two ways meet, undetermined which to enter; or a balance vibrating with opposite impulses. He thus lost that full, simple view of the omnipotence of Christ, under the influence of which he had cast himself upon the water. This teaches us, in all matters where we have a warrant from Christ to trust in Him—a bidding of Christ to come to Him, though through storms and tempests, to look alone at His word of eternal faithfulness; and to 'walk by faith, not by sight'"—R. W.

32. **The wind ceased.** "The two most uncontrollable forces of nature again obey their Lord"—R. W. S. John adds, "Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went," or were going. The storm had accomplished its purposes, and apparently, by another miraculous act, the vessel suddenly reached its destination.

33. **The Son of God.** One of those who thus adoringly addressed our Lord had previously exclaimed, when suddenly convinced that He was the Messiah, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel" (John 1. 49). But this is the first time the name was given to Him by a company of His followers unitedly. He had been proclaimed "the Son of God" by the voice from heaven. The great title was profanely echoed by Satan immediately afterwards (ch. 4. 3, 6); and evil spirits had uttered it (ch. 8. 29); but we have no record of its having been hitherto used by men. We find, however, that the conceptions of His mysterious Person, which this miracle forced upon them who witnessed it, were altogether peculiar. S. Mark says, "They were amazed beyond measure and wondered"; and here it is added that they **came and worshipped Him**—as from an enlightened and involuntary impulse, **saying**, as with one voice, **Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.** "They felt more or less clearly that this One must stand in wonderful relation to Him of whom it is written, 'Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known' (Ps. 77. 19); 'which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea' (Job 9. 8)"—T.

34. **The land of Gennesaret.** A fertile plain on the western shore of the Lake, between four and five miles long, and more than a mile wide. At its northern end was Capernaum.

35. **The men of that place had knowledge of Him.** S. Mark says, "They straightway knew Him." They had been blessed by His presence and ministry on former occasions; they recognised Him instantly as the well-known great Prophet and Healer, and hastened to bring before Him, from **all that country round about, all that were diseased.** His stay must have been very short, for the next day He discoursed to some of the same wondering multitude in the synagogue of Capernaum. (John 6. 22–24.)

36. **Only touch the hem of His garment.** (Ch. 9. 20–22.) We may infer from this general description of our Lord's miracles, and similar accounts elsewhere, how vast must have been their number. (John 21. 25.)

CHAPTER XV.

Vers. 1–20. CEREMONIAL AND SPIRITUAL PURITY. (Mark 7. 1–23.)—1. **Which were of Jerusalem.** S. Mark says more clearly, "Certain scribes which came from Jerusalem"—evidently as commissioned by the authorities, to collect instances of His violation of the Law.

2. **Tradition of the elders**—that is, the oral explanations of the Law, and the precepts based upon them which came down from their forefathers. (Comp. Heb. 11. 2 — *elders* = ancients). **For they wash not.** "The duty of washing before meat is not inculcated in the Law, but only in the traditions of the scribes. So rigidly did the Jews observe it, that Rabbi Akiba being imprisoned, and having water scarcely sufficient to sustain life given to him, preferred dying of thirst to eating without washing his hands"—A. S. Mark, writing for Gentile believers, explains the practice of the Pharisees in full detail (ch. 7. 3, 4). The washings spoken of were not for cleanliness, but for ceremonial purification from possible contact with Gentiles.

3. **Trangress the commandment of God by your tradition.** Our Lord thus acknowledges the omission complained of, but denies the authority of tradition generally, as having originated, not in command of God, but in the narrow views of men, and as being, in this

instance, subversive of the Divine Law. (Mark 7. 8, 9; Col. 2. 8, 23; Tit. 1. 14.)

4. **For God commanded.** (Mark, "For Moses said.") (Comp. John 5. 46, 47; 7. 19, 22.) **Honour thy father and mother.** "Which implies all such relief as they stand in need of" —WESLEY. (Ex. 20. 12; Lev. 21. 9.)

And he that curseth (R.V. "speaketh evil of") **father or mother, let him die the death.** (Ex. 21. 17; Deut. 27. 16.) Thus our Lord puts together one of the commandments of the Decalogue and a penalty enjoined by Moses as of equal authority.

5. **A gift**—that is, a sacred and devoted thing. S. Mark gives the word the Jews pronounced "corban"—consecrated. "I have given, or at least purpose to give, to the treasury of the Temple, what you might otherwise have had from me"—WESLEY.

Yet such was the insincerity encouraged by Pharisaic traditionalism, that the use of this expression did not bind the son who uttered it to devote that which he withheld from his parents to religious purposes. It sanctioned his unnatural refusal to succour them, but did not oblige him to dedicate his possessions to God. So openly and reproachfully did men make **the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition.**

7. **Prophesy of you.** (Isa. 29. 13.) "That is, the description which Isaiah gave of your fathers is exactly applicable to you. The words therefore which were a description of them are a prophecy with regard to you"—WESLEY.

8. **Their heart is far from Me.** "And without this, all outward worship is mere mockery of God"—WESLEY.

9. **In vain they do worship Me**—their worship is an empty show—**teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.** "As equal with, nay superior to, those of God. What can be a more heinous sin?"—WESLEY.

"The portion of Isaiah from which this citation is made (ch. 24–35) sets forth, in alternate threatenings and promises, the punishment of the mere nominal Israel, and the salvation of the true Israel of God. And, as so often in the prophetic word, its threats and promises are for all times of the Church—the particular event then foretold being but one fulfilment of those deeper and more general declarations of God, which shall be ever having their successive illustrations in His dealings with men"—A.

10, 11. **He called the multitude.** Turning away from those haughty, self-deceived Pharisees, as though in despair of making them discern His meaning. **And said**—in their presence, to the people they misled—**Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man**—maketh a man common or unclean. (Acts 10. 14.) He here anticipates the more formal abrogation of the ceremonial distinction between clean and unclean meats. (Acts 15. 18, 19.)

12. **Then came His disciples**—(S. Mark, "After He was entered into the house")—**and said unto Him**—apparently under fear for His safety—**Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended**—referring probably to whisperings of reproach and condemnation which they overheard as He withdrew from them.

13, 14. **Every plant**, etc. (John 15. 2, 8.) This term applies directly to the traditions, and indirectly to the men who enforced their observance.

16. **Yet without understanding.** A mild remonstrance, but also an intimation that they were as yet very far from being spiritually enlightened. (Comp. Col. 1. 9; Eph. 3. 4.)

19. **For out of the heart proceed**, etc. "The seat is there; they all spring from that source; and on this is grounded the necessity of that renewal of the heart, that entire regeneration of the will, affections, and all other moral faculties of the soul, upon which our Lord insisted, in opposition to the Pharisees, who placed holiness in external acts, and left the vices of the heart unremedied"—R. W. Our Lord here sets forth and shows by example the simple purity and spirituality of His kingdom and its laws, in contrast with prevailing externalism. There had grown up from the earliest times among the Jewish people a system of religious and social enactments, based upon non-spiritual interpretations of the Law, which had tended, by its very nature, to make them unreal and formal in worship, and to create opinions and usages in their relation to each other, which were repugnant to the most elementary principles of sound morality. In the time of our Lord the single plea in support of this system, and that which was allowed to silence every remonstrance of reason and conscience against it, was the authority of the ancients. The commandments of God were set aside by tradition. It is this, the fundamental principle of Pharisaism, that our Lord on this important occasion openly and directly assails. At the same time, He here enunciates "the fundamental principle of His own interpretation of the Law. That Law was not a system of externalism, in which outward things affected the inner man. It was moral and addressed itself to man as a moral being—to his heart and conscience. As the spring of all moral action was within, so the mode of affecting it would be inward. Not from without inwards, but from within outwards; such was the principle of the new kingdom"—ED.

Vers. 21–28. THE WOMAN OF CANAAN: THE PRAYER OF FAITH. (Mark 7. 24–30.)—21. **Then Jesus went thence**—partly to avoid the growing hostility of the Pharisees, and to secure a short season of retirement and rest, but also and chiefly for the sake of the more advanced instruction to be given to His apostles by the incident which follows—**and departed into the coasts** (R.V. "withdrew into the parts") **of Tyre and Sidon.** In con-

trast with the cavilling and scornful distrust of our Lord, which the representatives of the Jewish people continued to manifest, as the Evangelist has just shown, he now sets before us an example of faith in its true simplicity and resoluteness; as commanded by Christ's character and works, and unchecked by an illusive traditionalism. The region referred to was north and north-west of Palestine. Whether our Lord crossed the frontier or not is doubtful; but the statement of S. Mark that "He entered into a house" makes it probable that He did not actually cross the boundary. S. Mark adds that He "would have no man know of His presence, but He could not be hid."

22. **A woman of Canaan.** S. Mark calls her "a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation." "Meaning by the first term to designate her religion, that it was not Jewish but heathen; by the second, the stock of which she came, being even that accursed stock once doomed of God to a total excision, but of which some branches had been spared"—T. **Came out of the same coasts** (R.V. "out from those borders"). Came from within that heathen territory to the house where our Lord was being entertained. **And cried unto Him**—probably at or near the entrance—**Have mercy on me**—thus identifying herself with her child. (Comp. Mark 9. 22.) **O Lord, Thou Son of David.** Though a Gentile, as she lived on the borders of the land of Israel, she would necessarily know something of the expectation by the Jews of the coming of a Deliverer, whom they called the Messiah, and that His proper title was "the Son of David." And she had heard of the fame of Jesus; for it had spread through her country from the very opening of His ministry, and many of the inhabitants had experienced His power to heal. (Ch. 4. 24; Mark 3. 8; Luke 6. 17.) **My daughter**—(S. Mark, "My young daughter")—**is grievously vexed with a devil.**

23. "**He answered her not a word.** He sometimes tries our faith in like manner"—WESLEY. (Ps. 28. 1; Lam. 3. 8.)

"She begs for pity, but He pities her not. The fountain of mercy, usually open to every hand that only touches the hem of His garment, flows not; the much lauded Physician and Helper will not heal and help; the friendly mouth, which is ever so ready to give comfort, is silent"—S. Our Lord's object was most probably to prove and make manifest the strength of her faith, as an example for the instruction of His apostles and the world. But His silence, when His help was humbly besought, was unlike anything the Twelve had ever previously witnessed, and it filled them with astonishment. They did not presume to ask Him why He seemed to treat the distressed stranger with indifference, but supposing her appeals to be irksome to Him, they begged Him to **send her away**; not meaning, perhaps, command her to depart without giving heed to her petition, but simply yield to her entreaty, that she may go away. **For she crieth after us**—rousing public attention to us and destroying all hope of Thy obtaining quietude and rest.

24. **Not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.** (Acts 3. 26; comp. Ezek. 34.) This was said to the apostles, and would naturally remind them of the instruction given to themselves not to go into the way of the Gentiles. (Ch. 10. 5, 6.) It was not meant to suggest that He was disinclined to comply with the woman's petition, or that the terms of His commission rendered it necessary to disappoint her; but to intimate that the proper course of His personal ministry restricted His labours at that period to the Jews.

25. **Then came she**—into the house; pressing forward eagerly, desperately, into His presence—**and worshipped Him.** S. Mark says, "fell at His feet"—prostrated herself before Him in profound homage. **Saying, Lord, help me.** "The most condensed possible form of expression, wrung from the anguish of her heart"—S. And we learn from S. Mark that our Lord's silence was now broken, but that His answer was a repetition, in a modified form, of the saying He had just addressed to the apostles—"Let the children first be filled"—the children of "the house of Israel, the children of the kingdom," to whom I am sent. (Comp. Rom. 15. 8, 9.) This was not a refusal, and was, no doubt, spoken in a tone to encourage hope.

26. **It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.** (Ch. 7. 6; Rev. 22. 15.) The term dog was used by the Jews as an expression of extreme contempt. (Phil. 3. 2.) Its use, in application to this distressed and humbly importunate mother, must have sounded peculiarly severe. Only He who knew the strength of her faith and foresaw the issue of this trial could have safely used it.

27. **Truth, Lord: yet the dogs,** etc. (R.V. "Yea, Lord, for even the dogs"). She accepts the title and makes it the ground of her deeply humble and final appeal. Let me fare as the dogs do, for they are fed without loss to the household. "From the very word which seemed to make most against her, with the ready wit of her faith, she drew an argument in her favour"—T.

28. **Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.** "He who at first seemed as though He would have denied her the smallest boon now opens to her the full treasure-house of His grace, and bids her to help herself to carry away what she will"—T. "Persevering faith and prayer are next to omnipotent. No person can thus pray and believe, without receiving all his soul requires"—C. "It is here most instructive to mark the character of the faith which our Lord thus commends and rewards. It was not faith

merely in His Messiahship, though that was the ground of its higher exercises; it was grounded upon the knowledge which the woman had attained of His character, as manifested in His acts of power and compassion; and on this it rested all through the trial to which it was subjected. To His ability and His kindness the piercing eye of that faith looked through all the veils with which even our Lord Himself had surrounded them: He was silent; He refused the intercession of His disciples; He answered in the contemptuous language of the Jews to her own imploring supplication—yet still she received no direct denial. The language was contemptuous, but to faith it seemed not to sound like His own; and still she resolutely clung to the full persuasion that He was *full of grace and truth.* Such is true faith in its highest exercises in all. It looks through everything simply to the love, pity, and power of the Saviour; and presses its plea until it triumphantly carries off the blessing"—R. W.

Vers. 29–38. A SEMI-HEATHEN MULTITUDE TAUGHT, HEALED, AND FED. (Mark 7. 31–8. 1–9.)—29. **Nigh unto the sea of Galilee**—the eastern shore of the Lake. S. Mark says that He travelled "through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis," or the region of "the ten cities," all of which, with one exception, were on the east of the Jordan and of the Sea of Galilee. The locality indicated would be the high land not far from the place where the five thousand had been fed. (Ch. 14. 15–21.)

30. **He healed them.** (Ps. 103; Isa. 35. 5, 6.) S. Mark relates one of these cases of healing, probably a typical instance, in detail. (Ch. 7. 32–35.)

31. **They glorified the God of Israel.** "Perhaps this is added as an expression of the joy of the disciples themselves, who contrasted the fulness and abundance of the acts of mercy now before them with the instance they had just seen of the difficulty with which the faith of a Gentile had prevailed to obtain help"—A. But this name, "the God of Israel," was used with special reference to the more than half-heathen condition of the population of this district. Our Lord had come with the Twelve from the borders of a wholly Gentile and idolatrous country into a locality which, although chiefly heathen, was in close proximity to a purely Jewish population, and where in consequence the name of the God of Israel would be known and revered. He was thus conquering the national prejudices of His apostles, and gradually preparing them for their future mission among "all the nations."

33. **Whence should we have so much bread?** "At first it excites some surprise that the apostles, with that other miracle fresh in their memories, should now have been equally at a loss how the multitude should be fed as they were before. . . . Yet it is evermore thus in times of difficulty and distress. All former deliverances are in danger of being forgotten. . . . God may have divided the Red Sea for Israel, yet no sooner are they on the other side than, because there was no water to drink, they murmur against Moses, and count that they must perish for thirst (Ex. 17. 1–7), crying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' (Comp. Ex. 16. 13 with Num. 11. 21, 22.) It is only the man of a full-formed faith, a faith such as apostles themselves at this time had not, who argues from the past to the future, and truly derives confidence from God's former dealings of faithfulness and love"—T. But more than this may be said. "We must remind ourselves that the former provision was for Jews, and the disciples might, from their standpoint, well doubt, or at least not assume, that the same miracle would supply the need of the Gentiles, and the same board be surrounded by Jew and Gentile"—ED.

39. **Came into the coasts of Magdala.** "Magdala or Migdol (a watch-tower) is identified with the modern *Mejdel*, a collection of ruins and squalid huts at the south-eastern corner of the plain of Gennesaret, opposite Gergesa"—C. B. It was probably the native place or the home of Mary Magdalene. S. Mark calls the locality *Dalmanutha.*

CHAPTER XVI.

Vers. 1–12. WARNINGS AGAINST HYPOCRISY. (Mark 8. 10–21; Luke 12. 54–56.)—1. **The Pharisees also with the Sadducees.** (See on Matt. 3. 7.) Hitherto the Pharisees only are spoken of as our Lord's prominent critics and adversaries; now they strangely combine their opposition to Him with that of their own opponents. **Came** (S. Mark, "came forth"), indicating that they resided elsewhere, though probably at no great distance from this obscure locality. **Tempting**—putting His claims as the Messiah to a test. **Desired him that He would show them a sign from heaven.** (Ch. 12. 38, 39.) They based this demand on the common expectation that signs from heaven would bring in the kingdom of the Messiah, and probably justified it by an appeal to such signs of Divine authority as Moses had produced before Pharaoh. (Ex. 7. 9, 10.) They had seen or heard of innumerable *mighty works* as wrought by Christ, but they were not *signs* such as they looked for, and might have been illusions. Besides, had they not sufficiently accounted for some of them? (Ch. 12. 24.) Let Him give them some clear and indubitable *sign* of His Divine mission direct from heaven.

2. **He answered and said** (S. Mark, "He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith")—probably pointing as He spoke to the glow on the western sky—**When it is evening**, etc.

3. **Can ye not** (R.V. "Ye cannot") **discern the signs of the times?** Meaning, no doubt, those proofs of His Messiahship which were continually before their eyes—such as the appearance and testimony of John the Baptist, the fulfilment of prophecy in His own ministry,

His miracles, and the character and testimony of all His teaching.

4. **There shall no sign be given to it** (no further sign), **but the sign of the prophet Jonas.** "The only sign to Nineveh was Jonah's solemn warning of near judgment, and his call to repentance—and the only sign now, or rather *unto this generation no sign*, was the warning cry of judgment and the loving call to repentance"—ED. **And He left them, and departed.** (S. Mark adds, "to the other side of the Lake.") "Just severity. Our Lord never left *the people* in this manner"—B. (Titus 3. 10.)

5. **They had forgotten to take bread** (S. Mark, "Neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf"). They left in haste and excitement, and when they landed discovered that they had omitted to provide for probably a long journey.

6. **Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.** An evident allusion to their recent hypocritical demand of "a sign from heaven." "In Luke 12. 1, where the warning is given on a wholly different occasion, the leaven is explained to mean 'hypocrisy,' which is of all evil things the most penetrating and diffusive"—A.

7. **They reasoned**, etc. "They thought the words of Christ implied that, in His view, they had not *forgotten* to bring bread, but purposely omitted to do so in order, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, to 'seek of Him a sign' of His Divine Messiahship—nay, to oblige Him to show such—that of miraculous provision in their want"—ED.

8. **Why reason ye?** "Why are ye troubled about this? Am I not able, if need so require, to supply you by a word?"—WESLEY.

"If the experience of the past—their own twice-repeated question, and the practical answer which it had received in the miraculous provision of not only enough, but to spare—had taught them anything, it should have been to believe that the needful provision of their wants by Christ was not *a sign*, such as the Pharisees had asked, but what faith might ever expect from Christ"—ED.

9. **Do ye not yet understand?** Are ye not only so weak in faith, but so wanting in spiritual discernment?

12. **Of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.** "In both cases *hypocrisy;* in the Pharisees hypocritical formalism, in the Sadducees hypocritical liberalism. These two apparently antagonistic tendencies have been practically united ever since in opposing Christ"—SC.

Vers. 13–20. THE GREAT CONFESSION: STARTING-POINT OF THE SECOND PERIOD OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY. (Mark 8. 27–38; Luke 9. 18, 21.)—13. **The coasts** (parts) **of Cæsarea Philippi**—that is, the Cæsarea of Philip the Tetrarch—so called to distinguish it from the Cæsarea on the coast of the Mediterranean. (Acts 23. 33.) It was situated at the foot of Mount Hermon, at the principal source of the Jordan. It is the most northerly point that our Lord ever reached. It does not appear that He entered the city. He visited only the *parts* around it. (S. Mark says, "the towns, or villages of Cæsarea Philippi.") **He asked His disciples**—after He had been "alone praying" (Luke); everything indicates that our Lord was preparing to enter upon a new and most solemnly and vitally important part of His ministry. **Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?** (R.V. "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?") The people had frequently heard Him call Himself *the Son of Man*, and our Lord now inquires of His apostles how they had understood Him to use the term. Do the people believe Me to be "the Son of Man" spoken of by Daniel the prophet (see on ch. 8. 20), or do they attach another and inferior meaning to that title?

14. **Some say that Thou art John the Baptist** (ch. 14. 2; Luke 9. 7)—**some Elias** (on the authority of Mal. 4. 5); **and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.** Jeremiah being mentioned as representative of "the old prophets" (Luke), one of whom the Jews generally believed would appear to usher in the advent of the Messiah. (John 1. 21.) "But, however they differed, in this all agreed, that they regarded Him not as an ordinary man or teacher, but His mission as straight from heaven; and also, in this also, that they did not view Him as the Messiah. Thus far then there was retrogression in popular opinion, and thus far had the Pharisees already succeeded"—ED.

15. **But whom say ye that I am?** The former question led to this, which was to call forth the greatest of all confessions.

16. **Simon Peter answered and said**—as the truth suddenly flashed on his powers of spiritual discernment, and sprang to his lips—**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.** "The confession is not made in the terms of the other answer: it is not, We say, or I say, but 'THOU ART!' It is the expression of an inward conviction wrought by God's Spirit. The excellency of this confession is, that it brings out both the human and the Divine nature of our Lord: 'The Christ' is the Messiah, the Son of David, the anointed King; 'the Son of the Living God' is the Eternal Son, begotten of the Eternal Father, as the last word most emphatically implies,—not *Son of God* in any inferior figurative sense, not *one of the sons of God*, of angelic nature,—but THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD, having in Him the Sonship and the Divine nature *in a sense in which they could be in none else*"—A.

17. **Blessed art thou.** As greatly favoured of God; for thou hast uttered a truth which no human mind could conceive. **Bar-jona**—son of Jonah. **For flesh and blood**—the nature of man (1 Cor. 15. 20; Gal. 1. 16; Eph.

6. 12) in contrast with God—**hath not revealed it unto thee.** Not thy own mind, nor that of any other man, however great; **but My Father which is in heaven.** (Ch. 11. 25–27; Gal. 1. 15.)

18. **Thou art Peter**—a rock. This name I gave thee prophetically when thou wast first brought to Me by thy brother Andrew. (John 1. 42.) **And upon this rock**—clearly referring to Peter himself—**I will build My Church.** The Church is built pre-eminently upon Christ. (Isa. 28. 16; 1 Cor. 3. 11.) In a subordinate sense it is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. 2. 20; comp. Rev. 21. 14.) In this subordinate meaning of the expression it applies specially to Peter; for it was through his ministry that the Church was first founded among the Jews (Acts 2. 41), and afterwards among the Gentiles (Acts 10. 44–48). "Peter, in the list of the apostles, is called *first*, and is always put in the first place." (Ch. 10. 2; 1 Pet. 2. 4–7.) "All these things are said with safety, for what have they to do with Rome?"—B. The term "Church," which is first used here, occurs in only one other place in the Gospels (ch. 18. 17). The Greek word so rendered is the exact equivalent for the Hebrew for *convocation*,—meaning a congregation or assembly called for religious purposes. Our Lord here predicts the formation of an organised society of His followers distinct from Judaism. "*My* Church." **The gates of hell**—that is, of *Hades*, the abode of departed spirits. "A well-known oriental form of speech for 'the power of the kingdom of death.' The meaning of the promise is that no adverse power should ever prevail over the Church to extinguish it"—A. (See Job 38. 17; Ps. 9. 13; Isa. 38. 10; Rev. 1. 18.)

19. **And I will give unto thee**—personally, but as is shown by ch. 18. 18, not to him only—**the keys of the kingdom of heaven,** which is here and everywhere else distinguished from the visible Church. The kingdom is within the Church, but is not and never has been identical or coextensive with it,—and it may be said to include, in a true sense, many earnest inquirers after truth and righteousness, whom the Church could not recognise. (John 1. 9; Acts 10. 34, 35; Rom. 5. 13–17.) The key was to the Jews a well-understood emblem of authority. To commit to Peter the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" was to give him authority to proclaim the kingdom open to all who live in loyal subjection to Christ as King, and to guide men into it. (Acts 10. 48; 15. 7.) **Whatsoever thou shalt bind,** etc. This is an extension of the same metaphor in application to acts and things. The best explanation of the whole promise is the historical record of its fulfilment. "The kingdom of heaven," in the full meaning of the term, was opened to believing Jews through the ministry of Peter (Acts 2. 14–39); and through him the Mosaic ritual was declared to be abrogated, and the Holy Spirit was given to believing Gentiles, even as unto the Jews. (Acts 10. 44–48.) In each case what Peter did on earth was manifestly ratified in heaven.

20. **"Then charged He His disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ.** Jesus Himself had not said it expressly even to His apostles, but left them to infer it from His doctrine and miracles. Neither was it proper the apostles should say this openly before that grand proof of it—His resurrection. If they had, they who believed them would the more earnestly have sought to take and make Him a King; and they who did not believe them would the more vehemently have rejected and opposed such a Messiah"—WESLEY.

Vers. 21–28. OUR LORD'S FIRST PREDICTION OF HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH. (Mark 8. 31–38; 9. 1; Luke 9. 22–27.)—21. **From that time forth**—His apostles having been brought to the full conviction and acknowledgment of Him as the Messiah, the Divine Son of God—**began Jesus to show unto His disciples.** S. Mark adds, "openly," or plainly. **How that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things.** He had given them occasionally obscure intimations to this effect from the first (ch. 9. 15; 10. 38; John 2. 19–22; 3. 14); but He now began to show it more and more clearly and "without disguise." "That He must"—not that He would, as an event which He distinctly foresaw, but that "He must." The same emphatic word is used by the other Evangelists. (Comp. ch. 26. 54; Luke 24. 25, 26; 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25.) "This first announcement mentions His passion and death generally; the second, in ch. 17. 22, 23, adds His being betrayed into the hands of sinners; the third, in ch. 20. 17–19, at length expresses His stripes, cross, etc."—B. **Of the elders**—"the most honourable and experienced men; **the chief priests**—accounted the most religious; **and the scribes**—the most learned body of men in the nation. Would not one have expected that these should have been the very first to receive Him? But "not many wise, not many noble, were called"—WESLEY.

22. **Then Peter took Him.** Took hold of Him in some way, and affectionately drew Him aside. **Be it far from Thee, Lord**—an involuntary utterance of alarm and horror—(literally, as in the *margin* of the R.V., "God have mercy on Thee!" "This shall not be unto Thee"). No! never! Nothing so dreadful as this shall befall Thee!

23. **Get thee behind Me, Satan.** As if He felt Himself to be re-enacting the final scene of His temptation in the wilderness. (Ch. 4. 10.) "Perhaps the term 'Satan' may not barely mean, thou art My enemy, while thou fanciest thyself most My friend; but also, thou art acting the very part of Satan"—WESLEY.

Thou art an offence (R.V. "a stumbling-

block") **unto Me**—not the rock on which My Church shalt be built, but a rock of offence. (1 Pet. 2. 8.) **Not the things that be of God**—the things pertaining to the Messiah, which "God had spoken through His holy prophets—**but those which be of men**—the worldly misinterpretations of the prophetic utterances on which current traditional notions of the Messiah and His purposes are based. **Thou savourest**—mindest, hast fixed thy inner eye on the fiction of a worldly empire to be set up by the Messiah, and not on the spiritual and heavenly kingdom which I have come to establish."

24. **Then said Jesus**—taking advantage of Peter's ignorant though affectionate remonstrance, as giving occasion to state general principles respecting His kingdom. S. Mark says, "When He had called the people unto Him with His disciples," and S. Luke, "He said to them all" (see on ch. 10. 38). **If any man will come after Me.** "None is forced; but if any would be a Christian, it must be on these terms. **Let him deny himself, and take up his cross.** S. Luke adds, 'daily.' A rule that can never be too much observed; let him in all things deny his own will however pleasing, and do the will of God however painful. Should we not consider all crosses, all things grievous to flesh and blood, as what they really are—as opportunities of embracing God's will at the expense of our own; and, consequently, as so many steps by which we may advance towards perfection? We should make a swift progress in the spiritual life if we were faithful in this practice. Crosses are so frequent, that whoever takes advantage of them will soon be a great gainer. Great crosses are occasions of great improvement; and the little ones which come daily, and even hourly, make up in number what they want in weight. We may, in these daily and hourly crosses, make effectual oblations of our will to God; which oblations, so frequently repeated, will soon mount to a great sum. Let us remember, then (what can never be sufficiently inculcated), that God is the Author of all events; that none is so small or inconsiderable as to escape His notice and direction. Every event, therefore, declares to us the will of God; to which, thus declared, we should heartily submit. We should renounce our own, to embrace it; we should approve and choose what His choice warrants as best for us. Herein should we exercise ourselves continually; this should be our practice all the day long. We should in humility accept the little crosses that are dispensed to us as those that best suit our weakness. Let us bear these little things, at least for God's sake, and prefer His will to our own in matters of so small importance, and His goodness will accept these mean oblations; for He despiseth not the day of small things"—WESLEY.

25. "**Whosoever will save his life**—at the expense of his conscience; whosoever, in the very highest instance, that of life itself, will not renounce himself, shall be lost eternally. But can any man hope he should be able thus to renounce himself, if he cannot do it in the smallest instances? **And whosoever will lose his life shall find it.** What he loses on earth, he shall find in heaven"—WESLEY.

26. **Lose his own soul.** Shall forfeit his life in the higher and spiritual sense; "life here and hereafter"—A. "Every man has a soul of his own. It is possible for the soul to be lost, and there is danger of it. If the soul is lost, it is the sinner's own losing, and his blood is on his own head. One soul is of more worth than all the world; so the winning of the world is often the losing of the soul. The loss of the soul cannot be made up by the gain of the whole world. If the soul be once lost, it is lost for ever"—U.

27. **For the Son of Man shall come**—in the final judgment. (Dan. 7. 9, 10; Zech. 14. 3; Jude 14; John 5. 22.) **According to his works.** (Ps. 62. 12; Rom. 2. 8.)

28. **Verily I say unto you**—a solemn introduction to the change of thought in the next declaration—**there be some standing here which shall not taste of death.** A Jewish phrase for shall not die. (Heb. 2. 9.) **Till they see the Son of Man coming**—not, as before, "in the glory of His Father," etc., **but in His kingdom.** As given by S. Luke, "Till they see the kingdom of God"; and by S. Mark, "Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." There may be a reference in these words to His remote coming for the destruction of "the Temple, city, and polity of the Jews" (Heb. 12. 27); but as our Lord's intention seems to have been to dispel discouragement from the minds of His disciples, after having discoursed to them on His own approaching death, and on the crosses which they would be required to bear, it is probable that His special reference was (1) to His transfiguration, which some standing near Him witnessed six days later, and which one of them described as "His coming and power" (2 Pet. 1. 16)—His coming in His kingdom by a symbolical vision; and (2) to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after His glorification—His coming for His universal spiritual dominion, in reality and in power.

CHAPTER XVII.

Vers. 1–3. THE TRANSFIGURATION: SYMBOL AND EARNEST OF COMING IN HIS KINGDOM. (Mark 9. 2–13; Luke 9. 28–36.)—1. **And after six days.** So also S. Mark. S. Luke says, "About an eight days after these sayings," meaning the same as the others, but including the day when "these sayings" were spoken, and also that of the event he was about to relate. **Peter, James, and John.** The three who had been already chosen to witness the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5. 37), and whom He

afterwards chose to be with Him in Gethsemane. (Ch. 26. 37.) **Into an high mountain.** S. Luke adds, "to pray." Neither of the Evangelists names this mountain, but as they give no hint of our Lord having left the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, it is almost certain, as now generally held by expositors, that the scene of the solemn event was one of the peaks, though not the highest, of Mount Hermon.

2. **Transfigured**—changed in form—**before them.** No explanation of this word is given, and none can be imagined. From what follows we learn that an effulgence of the Divine glory which did not fall upon Him from without, but which emanated from within, clothed His Person with a dazzling radiance beyond description. **His face did shine as the sun.** S. Luke says, "As He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered." As though the very "form of God" (Phil. 2. 8) was manifesting itself visibly through the veil of flesh. **His raiment was white as the light.** S. Mark, "Became shining, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth" (however skilful) "could white them"; and S. Luke, "White and glistering." It was a momentary outburst of glory essentially Divine. (John 1. 14; Ps. 104. 2; Heb. 3. 4.)

3. **There appeared unto them**—and were immediately recognised, partly by intuition, and partly perhaps by the conversation they overheard—**Moses and Elias** (Elijah)—the acknowledged representatives, the one of the Law and the other of the Prophets. **Talking with Him.** S. Luke says, "Spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." "The same mysterious and inconceivable event of which He had distinctly forewarned them, six days previously; now, however, presented to them in a less startling form. Then He told them that He would be *killed;* now they hear His death described as His *decease*—His *exodus*, or *departure* (2 Pet. 1. 15); and also as the fulfilling of a predetermined design. The decease which He should *accomplish.* The weighty word involves His passion, cross, resurrection, and ascension" —B.

4. **Then**—as the heavenly visitants were about to depart—**answered Peter**—for, eager and impulsive as he was, he did not dare to break in upon the strange heavenly conference—**Lord, it is good for us to be here.** It is best to remain in this glorious condition and company. **Let us make here three tabernacles,** or booths; **one for Thee** (implying, probably, "and us with Thee," as Thy attendants), **and one for Moses, and one for Elias.** He would at least prolong the bliss so unexpectedly realised. But, as the other Evangelists explain, "He wist not what to say." He was bewildered, but full of delight, to which he gave expression in his own ardent manner by simply praying that it might not be taken from them.

5. **A bright cloud overshadowed them**—that is, our Lord, Moses, and Elijah. "S. Luke adds that the apostles 'feared as they (the glorious three) entered into the cloud.' It was the token and awful symbol of the Divine Presence, overshadowing by its excessive and insufferable brightness. **A voice out of the cloud**—repeating and confirming the essential truth which Peter had confessed so recently under direct Divine revelation. **This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** (Ch. 3. 17; John 12. 28.) **Hear ye Him.** (Comp. the three clauses of this verse with Ps. 2. 7; Isa. 42. 1; Deut. 18. 15; Acts 3. 22, 23.) The command, 'Hear ye Him,' and disappearance of the heavenly attendants, are symbolically connected, as signifying that God, who had spoken in times past to the fathers by the prophets, henceforth would speak by His Son"—A.

8. **Save Jesus only.** The one Mediator of the New Covenant, the Supreme Ruler in that kingdom of His grace to which the Law and the Prophets had looked forward, and which He was now personally bringing in.

9. **Tell the vision**—the heavenly realities they only had seen (Mark and Luke)—**to no man**—"not to the rest of the disciples, lest they should be grieved and discouraged because they were not admitted to the sight; nor to any other persons, lest it should enrage some the more, and His approaching sufferings should make others disbelieve it. **Till the Son of Man be risen again**—till the resurrection should make it credible, and confirm their testimony about it"—WESLEY.

10. **Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?**—"before the Messiah, if no man is to know of his coming? Should we not rather tell every man that he is come; and that we have seen him witnessing to Thee as the Messiah?"—WESLEY.

11. **Restore all things.** By calling men to repentance, and proclaiming the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, to introduce something better than had previously existed. "Regulate all things in order to the coming of Christ"—WESLEY. (Luke 3. 4; Acts 1. 5; 3. 21.)

12. **Elias is come already.** "And yet when the Jews asked John, Art thou Elijah? he said, I am not. (John 1. 21.) His meaning was, I am not Elijah the Tishbite, come again into the world. But he was the person of whom Malachi prophesied under that name" —WESLEY.

The doctrinal meaning of this most solemn central event in our Lord's history is sufficiently self-evident, and is clearly indicated by its connection with the great occasion preceding it, when His apostles first expressly declared their conviction that He was the promised Messiah, and He then began to announce to them that He, the Divine-human Messiah, must suffer and die in order to establish His saving dominion. But its import is explained

more directly by one of the three chosen witnesses of the weighty scene, S. Peter himself: "We were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a Voice from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (2 Pet. 1. 16, 17). It was the declaration of the Eternal Father's infinite complacency in Him as a sacrificial Victim offering Himself for the salvation of the world. It was an attestation by the presence of Moses, who represented the types of the Law, and of Elijah, who represented the Prophets, of the fulfilment in the Cross of Christ of those pre-intimations of His sufferings, which they had not themselves understood, but into which they *searched diligently*. (1 Pet. 1. 10–12.) It was a revelation of the glory by which His sufferings were to be followed and crowned. It was a proclamation of His sovereignty in "the kingdom to be possessed by the saints" (Dan. 7. 13–22), and of the majesty of His supreme rule. It was the imperious call to all men to submit loyally to His authority. *Hear Him!* "Whoever would know the mind of God, must hearken to Jesus Christ; for by Him God hath in these last days spoken to us. The Voice from heaven has made all the sayings of Christ as authoritative as if they had been thus spoken out of a cloud. God does here, as it were, turn us over to Christ for all the revelations of His mind. Moses and Elias were now with Him the Law and the Prophets; hitherto it was said, 'Hear them' (Luke 16. 29). The disciples were ready to equal them with Christ, when they must have tabernacles for them as well as for Him. No, saith God, *hear Him*, and that is enough"—WESLEY.

Vers. 14–21. HEALING OF A LUNATIC CHILD: FAILURE OF APOSTLES, AND ITS CAUSE. (Mark 9. 14–29; Luke 9. 37, 42.)—14. **And when they were come to the multitude.** (S. Luke, "on the next day")—the day following the night of the Transfiguration—"When they were come down from the hill." "An abrupt and sorrowful transition of experience! The elect apostles, who had just heard their Master proclaimed King of Saints amidst scenes of heavenly splendour on the 'holy mount,' now suddenly find Him in conflict with the powers of darkness, yet also again calmly asserting His dominion over them. S. Mark, whose account of this miracle is full of interesting details, says that when Jesus returned to the nine apostles, whom He had left at the foot of the mountain, He found them beset by a company of noisy 'scribes, questioning with them'; probably taunting them with their failure to effect a miracle which they had proposed to them as a test or *sign* of their Master's Divine mission, and arguing from their inability to that of their absent Master. 'And,' S. Mark continues, 'straightway all the people when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed'—at His coming so suddenly, so seasonably, so unexpectedly; perhaps also at some rays of majesty and glory which yet remained on His countenance"—WESLEY. (Ex. 34. 30.)

"And running to Him saluted Him"—telling Him, no doubt, of the discomfiture of His poor disciples, and how opportunely He had reappeared. "And He asked the Scribes"—thus graciously transferring the task of silencing their opposition from His perplexed apostles to Himself. "What question ye with them?" But before they could answer, **there came to Him a certain man**—he who had been the occasion of the dispute—**kneeling down to Him**—and with the gesture of lowly homage saying—

15. **Lord, have mercy on my son**—"my only child" (Luke)—**for he is a lunatic**—moon-struck. The symptoms were those of epilepsy, but were supposed to be the effects of an influence from the moon. In S. Mark the father describes him as having "a dumb spirit"—possessed by a demon who deprived him of the power to articulate words, though at times "he suddenly cried out" (Luke); so that the boy was at once mentally disordered, epileptic, and dumb.

16. **And I brought him to Thy disciples**—the nine apostles—**and they could not cure him.** The other Evangelists record words of the distressed father which ascribe the child's affliction to its real cause: "Lo, a spirit taketh him; I besought Thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not."

17. **O faithless and perverse generation.** (Deut. 32. 5; ch. 12. 34; 16. 4.) This severe rebuke is addressed directly to the mocking Scribes, as representatives of the people generally, but was also intended for the disciples themselves, and for the faintly believing father. **Bring him hither to Me.** S. Mark adds, "And they brought him." And then, in the presence of Christ occurred an instance of what the father had just described to him. "As he was yet a coming—straightway the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming." Our Lord asked, "How long is it ago since this came to him?" And he said, "Of a child"; and, true to nature, and in order to move more deeply the pity of the great Healer, began to relate again how oftimes the evil spirit had sought to destroy him. "But, if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us" (Mark 9. 22). "There is all the calm majesty of Divine self-consciousness, yet without trace of self-assertion, when Jesus, utterly ignoring the 'if Thou canst,' turns to the man and tells him that, while with the Divine Helper there is the possibility of all help, it is conditioned by a possibility in ourselves, by man's receptiveness, by his faith. Not, if the Christ can do anything or even everything, but, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth'"—ED. And his faith thus chal-

lenged, "straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe," "and then the little spark of faith which is enkindled in his soul, revealing to him the abyssmal deeps of unbelief which are there, he adds this further, 'Help Thou mine unbelief.' For thus it is ever; only in the light of the actual presence of a grace in the soul does that soul perceive the strength and prevalence of the opposing corruption. Till then it had no measure by which to measure its deficiency"—T.

18. **And Jesus rebuked the devil.** S. Mark adds, "Saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him." I, whose command thou canst not disobey. I, even I Myself, now charge thee. "And the spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him; and the child was as one dead, insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose." "Thus everything was permitted to manifest the more strikingly the fierceness and obstinacy of the possession, and the saving might of Christ, and the more forcibly to abash the gainsaying scribes, whose exultation, like that of 'the hypocrite, was but for a moment'"—R. W.

19. **Then came the disciples to Jesus apart**—disquieted and perplexed by their humiliating failure—**and said, Why could not we cast him out?** (See ch. 10. 1; Luke 9. 1.)

20. **Because of your unbelief** (R.V. "your little faith"). Your want of full reliance on *My Name* and My almighty grace. This was the precious lesson which the humbled nine were to learn from their failure, and it is a lesson for all the followers of Christ and for all time. **If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed**—"that is, the least measure of it. But it is certain, the faith which is here spoken of does not always imply saving faith. Many have had it who thereby cast out devils, and yet will at last have their portion with them. It is only a supernatural persuasion given a man, that God will work thus by him at that hour. Now, 'though I have all' this 'faith so as to remove mountains,' yet if I have not the 'faith which worketh by love,' I am nothing. 'To remove mountains,' was a proverbial phrase among the Jews, and is still retained in their writings to express a thing which is very difficult, and to appearance impossible"—WESLEY.

"But this faith, though it might not be saving to the individual, differed from saving faith only as it was directed to a different object. Faith, in both cases, does not mean mere credence given to some truth proposed, but trust or reliance. Faith is saving when it is the trust of a heart, broken and contrite on account of sin, in the great atonement, which is the only object of saving faith; so the faith by which miracles were wrought by the disciples of Christ was also trust or reliance, but its object was the name or power of Christ, and this undoubtedly some persons appear to have possessed, who had not the faith which placed them in a state of salvation"—R. W.

21. **Howbeit this kind,** etc. "And so it is for each of us individually. This kind—whether it be of sin, of the world, or of science falsely so-called, of temptation, or of materialism, cometh not out by any of our ready-made formulas or dead dogmas. Not so are the flesh and the devil vanquished; not so is the world overcome. It cometh out by nothing but by prayer—'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief'"—ED.

22. **While they abode in Galilee.** S. Mark says that after the miracle just described, which had taken place in the extreme north of the country, near Cæsarea Philippi, "they departed thence, and passed through Galilee" (Upper Galilee), "and He would not that any man should know it." It was during this journey towards Capernaum, when quietly passing through regions which He would never visit again, that our Lord began for the second time to warn His apostles that the time was drawing near when He must be taken from them violently by betrayal and death. This became evidently at this period the subject of their constant conversation. "And He said unto His disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears" (Luke).

23. **And they were exceeding sorry.** "They understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him" (Mark). They did not dare to remonstrate, like Peter on the former occasion (ch. 16. 22), but pondered the startling prediction in pensive sorrow.

Vers. 24–27. THE TRIBUTE MONEY: THE DIVINE SONSHIP RE-AFFIRMED. — 24. **When they were come to Capernaum**—from which He had been for some time absent. **They that receive tribute money**—that is, the collectors of the half-shekel for the Temple service, which every Jew above twenty years of age was expected to contribute annually. (Ex. 30. 11–16; 2 Kings 12. 4; 2 Chron. 24. 6.) Its value was equal to about one shilling and fourpence of our money. Our Lord, who had just reappeared in the city, was probably passing into the house (ver. 25) when the collectors **came to Peter**—who was following Him—**and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute?**—the question implying that it was not absolutely obligatory, yet that the collectors looked for an affirmative answer.

25. **He saith, Yes.** And with affectionate pride stepped forward, it may be to procure the money. "Zealous for his Lord's honour, he pledged Him without hesitation to the payment. Yet was he over-hasty in this. There was on his part a failing here to recognise the higher dignity of his Lord. For the time he had lost sight of his Lord's true position and prerogative—that He was a Son over

His own house, and not a servant in another's; the Head of the theocracy—not one of its subordinate members—so that it was *to* Him in His Father that offerings were to be made, not *from* Him to be received." **Jesus prevented him**—anticipated him, or (R.V. "spake first to him"), showing that He knew already what he desired to say. **Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom** (dues on goods), **or tribute** (a capitation tax), **of their own children, or of strangers?** of their own sons, or of mere subjects?

26. **Then are the children free.** "The sense is, This is paid for the use of the house of God. But I am the Son of God. Therefore I am free from any obligation of paying this to My own Father"—WESLEY.

The argument is clear, and the inference irresistible, as founded on the Divine Sonship of Christ, which Peter had so lately confessed, and afterwards heard proclaimed by the Voice from the excellent glory. (Comp. John 2. 16.)

27. **Lest we should offend them.** "Lest we should place a stumbling-block in their way, create a prejudice against us, as though I disregard the Temple and its service, and teach you also to slight it. I waive insisting upon my right of exemption as the Son of God, and the Lord of the Temple itself"—R. W. **A piece of money.** "The original word is *a stater*, which was in value two shillings and sixpence—just the sum that was wanted. **Give unto them for Me and thee.** Peter had a family of his own; the other apostles were the family of Jesus"—WESLEY.

"Observe our Lord does not say, '*This give for us.*' For though He had condescended to unite Himself with the apostle by saying, Lest *we* should cause them to stumble, the separation is instantly made again, and the distinction is uniformly kept up. (Comp. John 20. 17.) How illustrious a degree of knowledge and power did our Lord here discover! Knowledge penetrating into this animal, though beneath the waters; and power, in directing this very fish to Peter's hook, though he himself was at a distance. How must this have encouraged both him and his brethren in a firm dependence on Divine Providence"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Vers. 1–14. GREATNESS IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. (Mark 9. 33–37; Luke 9. 46–48.) —1. **At the same time**—that is, during this our Lord's last visit to Capernaum—**came the disciples unto Jesus** (S. Mark says, "Being in the house")—**saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?** We learn from the other Gospels that this appeal to our Lord arose out of a dispute while on their way to Capernaum after the Transfiguration—probably caused by our Lord's preference of the three whom He took with Him to be witnesses of that weighty scene, and by the previous distinction bestowed on Peter (ch. 16. 18). As the Twelve were now quietly gathered about Him in the house, Jesus "perceiving the thought of their heart" (Luke) gave occasion for their question by first asking them, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" (Mark). For a moment shame and confusion kept them silent. "They held their peace" (Mark). But, reassured by signs of His gracious forbearance, they ventured to answer His question by the timid appeal to Him, **Who** (R.V. "Who, then,") **is greatest**—who among us will have priority—**in Thy kingdom?** They must have been fully convinced by this time that the kingdom which He, *Messiah the Prince*, was to establish, would differ from all other kingdoms, yet they still clung to the notion of something visible and worldly—a theocracy perhaps, morally and materially superior to that of the Jews in the purest period of their history, but a kingdom, a theocracy, with real distinctions of rank.

2. **Called a little child to Him**—and sought to impress the timely admonitory lesson now to be given by a formal act which they should never forget. S. Mark says that "He sat down and called the Twelve"; then "took a child," probably Peter's little son. **And set him in the midst of them**—afterwards took him "in His arms"—"possibly drawing a lesson for His disciples from his ready submission and trustfulness"—A.

3. **And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted** (R.V. "Except ye turn")—from your present worldly, unspiritual, self-seeking ideal and aims—**and become as little children** (Ps. 131. 2; ch. 19. 14; Mark 10. 14; Luke 18. 16; 1 Pet. 2. 2)—**ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.** "Nothing could serve to impress them more strongly with the exclusive spirituality of that kingdom which He was about to establish than making a childlike character the essential qualification for entering it. Civil offices would require skill; the government of men energy and decision of character; the overthrow of the Roman legions, in order to deliver their country from a foreign yoke—courage; but Christ requires that they should become *little children!* From this alone they might most certainly conclude that, notwithstanding some better and more hallowed views, they had been under the influence of the most erroneous conceptions of the nature of the kingdom of Messiah"—R. W. "The first step towards entering into the kingdom of grace is to become as little children: lowly in heart, knowing yourselves utterly ignorant and helpless, and hanging wholly on your Father who is in heaven for a supply of all your wants. We may further assert (though it is doubtful whether this text implies so much), Except ye be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; except ye be entirely, inwardly changed, renewed in

the image of God, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of glory. Thus must every man be converted in this life, or he can never enter into life eternal. **Ye shall in nowise enter**—so far from being great in it"—WESLEY.

4. **Whosoever therefore shall humble himself.** (Ch. 20. 27; 23. 11.) **As this little child**—as he is humble—**the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.** In what, then, does the humility of a little child consist but in the absence of self-consciousness—in freedom from ambition and a striving to be the greatest. "Humility, therefore, as our Lord intended we should understand it, is the root of all the graces; when self is utterly removed; when things spiritual become the supreme objects of interest and desire; when others are preferred to ourselves; when we gladly embrace the inferior offices which may be assigned us by our Lord, and tremble at the responsibility of the highest; when we are ready to endure suffering, and to submit to lowly circumstances; and are not puffed up, and despise others, if placed in higher; and, finally, when we live under an entire sense of our dependence upon God for strength and grace, and maintain an habitual consciousness of our own insufficiency, then shall we be ranked with 'the greatest in the kingdom of heaven'"—R. W.

5. **Whoso shall receive**—into his affections and his fellowship—**one such little child in My name**—because of his relation to Me, and his fidelity to My cause—**receiveth Me.** (Ch. 10. 42; 1 Cor. 14. 20.) "All who are in this sense little children are unspeakably dear to Me. Therefore help them all you can, as if it were Myself in person; and see that ye offend them not—that is, that ye turn them not out of the right way, neither hinder them in it"—WESLEY.

6. **And whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me**—that is, shall cause them to stumble, referring immediately to His lowly, weak, and inexperienced followers, but, as is evident from Luke 9. 43, including children literally—**it were better for him that a millstone,** etc. Capital punishment by drowning was not practised by the Jews, but was common in Greece and Rome. Our Lord's warning is that death itself, even in this terrible form, would be better for a man than to incur the guilt of causing others, especially artless and simple-minded children or childlike believers, to fall away from Him. "A man may enter into the kingdom and do service; yet if, in so doing, he disregard the law of love to the little ones, far better his work should be abruptly cut short; better one of those large millstones, turned by an ass, were hung about his neck, and he cast into the sea!"—ED. "**Woe to the world because of offences**—that is, unspeakable misery will be in the world through them. **For it must needs be that offences come.** Such is the nature of things, and such the weakness, folly, and wickedness of mankind, that it cannot be but that they will come. **But woe to that man**—that is, miserable is that man—**by whom the offence cometh.** Offences are all things whereby any one is turned out of, or hindered in, the way of God"—WESLEY.

8. **If thy hand or thy foot offend thee.** As it is at thy peril that thou become a cause of stumbling to others, so thy safety demands the removal of causes of stumbling to thyself. The "hand" and the "foot" are symbols of activity in the world. If thy worldly business, thy personal associations, or thy private interest, though dear and apparently necessary to thee, are stumbling-blocks in the path of thy duty—**cut them off**—renounce them at any cost. (See on ch. 5. 29, 30.) "If the most dear enjoyment, the most beloved and useful person, turn thee out of, or hinder thee in, the way—part with them. Is not this an hard saying? Yes; if thou take counsel with flesh and blood"—WESLEY.

10. **Take heed.** Our Lord returns to the question of pre-eminence, which had been so evidently a matter of serious dispute among the Twelve, and declares the preciousness of modest, unobtrusive, unswerving fidelity to Him, even though associated with what the world would call feebleness. "**See that ye despise not one of these little ones**—as if they were beneath your notice. Be careful to receive, and not to offend, the very weakest believer in Christ; for as inconsiderable as some of these may appear to thee, the very angels of God have a peculiar charge over them; even those of the highest order, who continually appear at the throne of the Most High. **To behold the face of God** seems to signify the waiting near His throne, and to be an allusion to the office of chief ministers in earthly courts, who daily converse with their princes"—WESLEY.

The term "little ones" here undoubtedly includes children, and this saying of our Lord assures us "that those angels whose honour is high before God are entrusted with the charge of the humble and meek—the children in age and the children in grace"—A. (Ps. 34. 7; 91. 11; Heb. 1. 14.)

11. **For the Son of Man,** etc. (Luke 19. 10.) "Another and a yet stronger reason for not despising them is that I Myself came into the world to save them"—WESLEY.

"What an immeasurable word again, so simply spoken! There stands the ladder of Jacob before our eyes; below are the 'little ones; then their 'angels'; then the heavenly 'Son of Man,' He who comes as the original Angel from the presence and from the bosom of the Father; and then above Him (ver. 14) the 'Father' Himself and His good pleasure"—S.

12. **How think ye?** etc. (Comp. Ezek. 34. 6, 11, 12.) This parable was repeated in an

expanded form on another occasion (Luke 15. 4, 6). It is instructive to note that the same imagery is used in application to weak believers and children, as in Luke to publicans and sinners.

14. **That one of these little ones**—however feeble spiritually—**should perish.** (Comp. S. Paul's admonitions with reference to those who are weak in the faith, 1 Cor. 8. 11–13; 10. 24–33; 12. 21–24.) As the little ones evidently include children—one of whom was still standing in the midst of our Lord's hearers—how absolutely certain it is that none of them, dying in childhood, shall perish; not because they are untainted with sin, but because the Son of Man came to save.

Vers. 15–35. LAST WORDS IN CAPERNAUM: FORGIVENESS—THE UNFORGIVING FORGIVEN DEBTOR.—15. **Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee.** (Luke 17. 3, 4; comp. Zech. 8. 17; Prov. 17. 10.) "Yet a further depth of Christian love remained to be shown which, all self-forgetful, sought not its own but the things of others. This also bore on the circumstances of the time, and the dispute between the disciples, but went far beyond it, and set forth eternal principles"—ED. **Tell him his fault.** (In S. Luke, "rebuke him.") The connection of this with the preceding discourse is obvious. "But how can we avoid giving offence to some, or being offended at others—especially, suppose they are quite in the wrong; suppose they commit a known sin? Our Lord here teaches us how: He lays down a sure method of avoiding all offences. Whosoever closely observes this threefold rule will seldom offend others, and never be offended himself. If any do anything amiss, of which thou art an eye or ear witness, thus saith the Lord, 'If thy brother,'—any one who is a member of the same religious community, 'sin against thee,' go and reprove him alone, if it may be, in person; if that cannot so well be done, by thy messenger; or in writing. Observe, our Lord gives no liberty to omit this, or to exchange it for either of the following steps. If this do not succeed, **Take with thee one or two more**—men whom he esteems or loves, who may then confirm and enforce what thou sayest, and afterwards, if need require, bear witness of what was spoken"—WESLEY. (See Num. 35. 30; Deut. 17. 6; 19. 15; John 8. 17; 2 Cor. 13. 1.)

17. **Tell it to the Church.** The apostles would at that time understand our Lord to mean, appeal to the body of ruling elders of a synagogue. But He was looking forward to the establishment of His Church, as in ch. 16. 18—the only other place in the Gospels where the word is used. "**Tell it to the elders of the Church**—Lay the whole matter open before those who watch over your and his soul. If all this avail not, have no further intercourse with him, only such as thou hast with heathens. Can anything be plainer? Christ does here as expressly command all Christians, who see a brother do evil, to take this way, not another; and to take these steps in this order, as He does to honour their father and mother. But if so, in what land do the Christians live? If we proceed from the private carriage of man to man to proceedings of a more public nature, in what Christian nation are church censures conformed to this rule? Is this the form in which ecclesiastical judgments appear in the popish, or even the Protestant world? Are these the methods used even by those who boast the most loudly of the authority of Christ, to confirm their sentences? Let us earnestly pray that this dishonour to the Christian name may be wiped away, and that common humanity may not with such solemn mockery be destroyed, in the name of the Lord! **Let him be to thee as the heathen**—to whom thou still owest earnest goodwill, and all the offices of humanity"—WESLEY. (See 1 Cor. 5. 11; 2 Thess. 3. 14, 15.)

18. **Whatsoever ye shall bind,** etc. Here our Lord extends to all His apostles the promise already given to Peter (ch. 16.19), with especial reference now as before to the release of His followers through them from the obligations of the Mosaic ritual (Acts 15. 23–31); but also, as the context shows, with a much wider scope. In the rules just laid down for dealing with grievances among themselves as individual believers, our Lord had used the singular number ("If *thy* brother," etc.), now, most notably, when giving to them, as a class apart, legislative authority, to be used in His name on behalf of His Church, the plural *ye* is introduced. It should also be observed that our Lord is not speaking now, as previously, with reference to persons ("these little ones"; "thy brother"), but only concerning things; "whatsoever," evidently the principles and rules of moral conduct which the apostles, after the Holy Spirit had been given to them to guide them into all the truth, should declare to be binding or not binding on all the followers of Christ. Our Lord is speaking to the Twelve only, for no other persons were present, and with exclusive reference to their peculiar relation to His Church.

19. **Again** (the solemn *verily* being understood) **I say unto you**—My apostles—**that if two of you**—whom I appoint to be the founders, first teachers, and rulers of My Church—**shall agree on earth**—under the plenary light and power of My Spirit—**as touching anything that they shall ask**—as My servants and for the interests of My kingdom—**it shall be done for them.** The connection of this promise with the words standing before it limits its application in the first instance to the apostles to whom it was spoken; but other promises of answers to prayer quite as definite and positive, and clearly intended for all believers (ch. 7. 7, 8; 1 John 3. 22; 5. 14, 15), give authority to extend the application of

this also to Christians generally. Yet to be pleaded in prayer there must be a careful observance of the implied limitations and conditions, agreement of heart, and understanding by the power of "the Spirit of grace and supplications" (Zech. 12. 10), and all that is concentrated in the phrase, "In My name."

20. **For where two or three.** Observe our Lord does not repeat the words, "of you," My apostles; for He now speaks to them simply as the representatives of all His followers. **Are gathered together in My name**—for the ends of My grace and of My kingdom, in the exercise of faith and in reliance on My sufficiency (John 14. 12, 13)—**there am I in the midst of them** (ch. 28. 20; 1 Cor. 1. 2; 12. 13)—as Mediator, through whom they have access to the Father. "Where"—any place; "two or three"—the smallest company possible. "I suppose a man and his wife"—WESLEY.

Being one in heart and object; praying "in My name," in fellowship with Me; what they supplicate "shall be done for them by My Father."

21. **Then came Peter.** Evidently on the same precious occasion. Our Lord is seated "in the house," surrounded by His twelve apostles, who are His only hearers, perhaps with the little child He had called to Him still nestling in His arms. He had just shown them how He requires each disciple of His to deal with his brother if injured by him, probably alluding directly to Peter, as having been wounded by insinuations thrown out in the course of their recent wrangling on the question of priority in the kingdom. Peter had heard the encouraging words, "thou hast gained thy brother," and with a readiness to forgive, and a longing to regain the love and confidence of the offender, he ventured to submit to Christ the question in the presence of all his brethren, **Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?** The rabbis taught, on the authority of Amos (1. 3, 9, 11), that forgiveness might not be extended more than three times; so that probably Peter in his simplicity felt that he was suggesting a very liberal extension. "But the matter stands quite otherwise. For if I can still count, then have I not yet forgotten what went before, and therefore not at all really forgiven from the heart"—S.

22. **I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.** "He means by this saying, which is quite as definite as it is indefinite, let there be no numbering at all"—S. Let there be no limit. Forgive as often as there is occasion to do so.

23. **Therefore**—in this respect, in order to show that My law of forgiveness has no definite limit—**is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants**—his ministers, servants of the crown, or, it may be, the governors of his provinces.

24. **One was brought unto him**—for he would not have presented himself but under constraint—**which owed him ten thousand talents.** It is not said whether gold or silver talents; but the value of ten thousand talents, even of silver, would be equal to nearly two millions and a half sterling.

25. **His lord commanded him to be sold.** This would have been according to the law of Moses. (Lev. 23. 39–47.) But it is probable that the imagery is derived from the despotisms of neighbouring countries.

26. **Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.** "Words characteristic of the extreme fear and anguish of the moment, which made him ready to promise impossible things." But also words in which we may hear "the voice of self-righteousness, imagining that, if only time were allowed, it could make good all the shortcomings of the past. It is clear that he had never come to a true recognition of the immensity of the debt"—T. Yet even in this respect an exact representation of our condition before God; for who of us, however deeply penitent, has ever estimated aright the number and enormity of his sins?

28. **An hundred pence**—equivalent to about four pounds of our money.

29. **Have patience with me,** etc. The same words of entreaty which he had himself used in his appeal to the king.

34, 35. **His lord was wroth,** etc. "Before he had dealt with him as a creditor with a debtor, now as a judge with a criminal." (Jas. 2. 13.) **Delivered him to the tormentors.** "Imprisonment is a much severer punishment in the Eastern countries than in ours. State criminals especially, when condemned to it, are not only confined to a very mean and scanty allowance, but are frequently loaded with clogs or heavy yokes, so that they can neither lie nor sit at ease; and by frequent scourgings, and sometimes rackings, are brought to an untimely end. **Till he should pay all that was due to him**—that is, without all hope of release, for this he could never do. How observable is this whole account, as well as the great inference our Lord draws from it: (1) The debtor was freely and fully forgiven; (2) He wilfully and grievously offended; (3) His pardon was retracted, the whole debt required, and the offender delivered to the tormentors for ever. And shall we still say, But when we are once freely and fully forgiven, our pardon can never be retracted? Verily, verily, I say unto you, **So likewise will My heavenly Father do to you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses**"—WESLEY.

"Without drawing any dogmatic inference from the parable, it seems to proceed on these two assumptions, that suffering neither expiates guilt, nor in itself amends the guilty, and that

as sin has incurred a debt which can never be discharged, so the banishment, or rather the loss and misery of it, will be endless"—ED. "The truth taught is the impossibility of the unforgiving being forgiven, but the chief lesson is the example of the Divine spirit of forgiveness in the act of the king"—C. B.

CHAPTER XIX.

Vers. 1–12. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. (Mark 10. 1–12.)—1. **He departed from Galilee—finally—and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan.** "This does not mean that any part of Judea itself extended beyond Jordan, but that Jesus came into the country beyond Jordan, which, with the river itself, formed the eastern boundary of Judea." The Evangelist here omits many incidents which took place at this period of our Lord's ministry, but are supplied partly by S. Luke (9. 51–17. 11;) and partly by S. John (7. 8–10 and 10. 22–39; also 11. 1–46, 54). "The best mode of harmonising this verse with the narratives of S. Luke and S. John is to suppose a break in the middle. He departed from Galilee, and (after an interval not recorded by S. Matthew) came into Judea by the way of Peræa"—S. C. (S. Mark says, "By the further side of Jordan").

3. **Tempting Him** (ch. 16. 1). **Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?**—"that is, for anything which he dislikes in her"—WESLEY.

The question was not whether divorce was lawful in itself, for upon that they were agreed, but whether a man might put away his wife for any reason he chose to plead for taking this course. This was at that time the point of dispute between two great rabbinic schools—that of Hillel who asserted the right of arbitrary divorce, and that of Shammai who allowed it only in cases of unfaithfulness. The object of this appeal to our Lord was to bring Him into conflict with one of these parties, and so to impair His influence; for even in the retired region of Peræa where He now was, "multitudes resorted to Him again, whom He healed and taught." Not improbably also the tempters hoped that they might induce our Lord to commit Himself to some condemnation of divorce, and if this reached the ears of Herod the Tetrarch, within whose dominions He was now dwelling, it would provoke him and Herodias to hostility against Him.

4. **Made them male and female.** (Gen. 1. 27.) Our Lord thus avoids the snare so artfully laid for Him, by referring to what God did in the original institution of marriage. "He made them (man as a race) *male* (not *a* male) *and female*, but then the male and female were implicitly shut up in one; and therefore after the creation of woman from man, when one man and one woman were united in marriage they should be one flesh, because woman was taken out of man. The answer then is, that *abstractly*, from the nature of marriage, it is *indissoluble*"—A.

5. **And said**—"by the mouth of Adam, who uttered the words"—WESLEY. (Gen. 2. 24.)

Or rather, through the historian, but in either case, "He that made them said, For this cause," etc. (Eph. 5. 20). "By making them one man and one woman He condemned polygamy; by making them *one flesh* He condemned divorce"—WESLEY.

7, 8. **Why did Moses then**, etc. (See on ch. 5. 31, 32.) "Our Lord's answer is, Moses permitted, not commanded **it, because of the hardness of your hearts**, because neither your fathers nor you could bear the more excellent way"—WESLEY.

9. **And I say unto you**—"I revoke that indulgence from this day, so that from henceforth," **whosoever shall**, etc.—WESLEY.

Our Lord did not say this to His tempting opponents, but to His disciples in private. S. Mark says, "that in the house His disciples asked Him again of the same matter. And He saith unto them, Whosoever," etc. "Here again our Lord takes the character of Lawgiver, as well as Teacher, by re-enacting the original law, and abrogating the relaxation, though that rested upon the same author as the other Mosaic institutions. **From the beginning it was not so**, nor shall it be henceforward; for **I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife**, etc. This then is the formally promulgated law of the Christian dispensation. 'The Lord hateth putting away'; and in no case is it permitted, but that one in which the very essence of the relation is previously destroyed, and the twain have ceased to be 'one flesh'"—R. W.

10, 11. **If the case of a man be so with his wife**—if he may not resort to divorce but in the single case our Lord allowed—**it is not good to marry.** "**But He said to them**—This is not universally true; it does not hold with regard to all men, but with regard to those only 'to whom is given' this excellent gift of God. Now, this is given to three sorts of persons—to some, by natural constitution, without their choice; to others, by violence, against their choice; and to others, by grace, with their choice, who steadily withstand their natural inclinations, that they may 'wait upon God without distraction'"—WESLEY.

12. **For the kingdom of heaven's sake**—believing that they can best promote the interests of Christ's kingdom unmarried. S. Paul was a noble example of this. (1 Cor. 7. 7; 9. 5.) But there is not a word here to exalt celibacy in itself into a state of superior spiritual worth. "**He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.** This gracious command (for such it is unquestionably, since to say such a man *may* live single, is saying nothing — whoever doubted this?) is not designed for all men; but only for the few who are 'able to receive it'"—WESLEY.

Let the prosperity of My kingdom be the end and aim of all My disciples, and let each decide for himself whether in his own case the married or unmarried state would most conduce to this end.

Vers. 13–15. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND LITTLE CHILDREN. (Mark 10. 13 - 16; Luke 18. 15–17.)—13. **Brought unto Him**—no doubt into "the house" where He had taught His disciples as just stated—**little children** (S. Luke says, "infants"). Probably children of various ages were brought—**that He should put His hands on them, and pray.** "This was a rite that was very early used in praying for a blessing on young persons"—WESLEY. (Gen. 48. 14–20.)

In the time of Christ "Jewish parents usually brought their infant children on the first anniversary of their birthday to be blessed by the rabbi of the synagogue" — *Bib. Dict.* Perhaps in part under the sanction of this custom, but chiefly as moved by His manifestations of unspeakable benignity and tenderness, mothers led their little children by the hand or carried their babes in their arms to Him, even when in comparative retirement, to obtain His blessing upon them. **And the disciples rebuked them.** It may be for having dared to obtrude into His presence and interrupt Him when giving them instruction, or perhaps they inconveniently crowded around Him.

14. **But Jesus said** (S. Mark adds, "much displeased"), **Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me.** The interference of the apostles, though apparently well meant, showed how little they understood His will and purpose, and was a grief to Him. But their error was overruled so as to be the occasion of the utterance of words of precious instruction for the guidance and encouragement of Christ's followers in all ages. **Of such is the kingdom of heaven**—of these, and such as these. (Ch. 18. 3.) "That this kingdom signifies the spiritual kingdom of Christ upon earth, and also that glorious reign of God over redeemed and glorified men in a future world, are points not to be disputed; and the words of our Lord, if they relate to one, must relate to both. If little children are the subjects of His spiritual kingdom on earth, then, until the moment that by actual sin they bring personal condemnation upon themselves, they remain heirs of the kingdom of eternal glory; and if they become the subjects of the latter by dying, then a previous vital relation must have existed on earth between them and Christ as their Redeemer and Sanctifier, and that this relation is not a merely nominal but a vital and beneficial one, appears as clearly from His praying for them, putting His hands upon them, and blessing them; all which, being acts of favour and acceptance, indicated their most certain heirship, through His merits and intercession, should they die before forfeiture of this grace by personal actual offence, to the felicities of immortal life in His perfected kingdom above. Thus this important passage satisfactorily proves the share which infants have in the mercies of the Redeemer, both in this and in a future life"—R. W. But this anticipates and answers another question. "Not only may the little infants be brought to Him—but in order for us who are mature to come to Him, we must cast away all that wherein our maturity has caused us to differ from them, and *become* LIKE THEM. Not only is Infant Baptism *justified*, but it is the NORMAL PATTERN OF ALL BAPTISM; none can enter God's kingdom except *as an infant*"—A.

15. **He laid His hands on them, and departed thence.** "Methinks it has something observable in it, that, when He had done this He departed thence. As if He reckoned He had done enough then, when He had thus asserted the rights of the lambs of the flock, and made this provision for a succession of subjects in His kingdom"—H.

Vers. 16–30. THE RICH RULER: MAMMON AND THE KINGDOM. (Mark 10. 17–31; Luke 18. 18–30.)—16. **Behold one came** (S. Mark, "When He was gone forth into the way"), after blessing the children "in the house." "Many of the poor had followed Him from the beginning. One rich man came at last"—WESLEY.

Our Lord was now starting on His journey to Jerusalem; and this man, whom S. Luke calls "a certain ruler," that is, probably one of the three rulers of a local synagogue (ch. 4. 23), "came running"—in real eagerness to submit his great question—and "kneeled to Him" (Mark) as before a revered Rabbi—**and said**—with humble sincerity—**Good Master**—clearly with no higher thought than that He was a Teacher come from God—**What good thing shall I do that I may have**—that is, procure by doing, earn the blessing of—**eternal life?** This term occurs here for the first time. It was the thing of supreme importance to which thinking minds were then evidently waking up, chiefly under the influence, more or less direct, of our Lord's teaching. (Comp. John 3. 14, 16, 36; 5. 24; 6. 40.)

17. "**Why callest thou Me good?**—whom thou supposest to be only a man. **There is none good**—supremely, originally, essentially—**but God. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments**—from a principle of loving faith—believe, and thence love and obey. And this undoubtedly is the way to eternal life. Our Lord, therefore, does not answer ironically, which had been utterly beneath His character; but gives a plain, direct, serious answer to a serious question"—WESLEY.

18, 19. **He saith unto Him, Which?**—meaning, it may be, which kind of commandments, moral or ritual. **Jesus said, Thou shalt do**

no murder, etc.—enumerating the commandments of the second table, and then summing them all up in the one general command, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

20. **The young man**—whose answer, as well as his office of synagogue-ruler, shows that he was not very young—**saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up.** "So he imagined; and perhaps he had, as to the letter, but not as to the spirit, which our Lord immediately shows"—WESLEY. (Comp. Phil. 3. 6.)

What lack I yet? The cry of conscious want, and of a true striving after a better spiritual state,—answered, as we learn from the other Evangelists, by the startling test-words, "One thing thou lackest," etc.; while S. Mark also notes that "Jesus beholding him"—looking intently on him as an open, honest man, "not far from the kingdom of God"—"loved him."

21. **If thou wilt be perfect**—"that is, be a real Christian—**sell what thou hast.** He who reads the heart saw his bosom sin was love of the world; and knew he could not be saved from this, but by literally renouncing it. To him therefore He gave this particular direction, which He never designed for a general rule. For him this was necessary to salvation; to us, it is not so. To sell all was an absolute duty to him; to many of us it would be an absolute sin"—WESLEY.

22. **He went away sorrowful** (S. Luke says "very sorrowful," and S. Mark that "he was sad")—his countenance fell—"and went away grieved." The price was too great. So truly had Jesus read his heart.

23. **Shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven**—not necessarily because he is rich, but because it is so difficult for the owner of great possessions to renounce and keep himself free from the evils to which riches tend. (See 1 Tim. 6. 17–19.)

24. **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle** "(a proverbial expression) **than for a rich man to** go through the strait gate; that is, humanly speaking, it is an absolute impossibility. Rich man, tremble! Feel this impossibility; else thou art lost for ever!"—WESLEY.

25. **Were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?** "If rich men, with all their advantages, cannot. Who? A poor man; a peasant; a beggar; ten thousand of them, sooner than one that is rich"—WESLEY.

26. **Jesus beheld them**—"To compose their hurried spirits. Oh, what a speaking look was there! **Said to them**—with the utmost sweetness—**With men this is impossible.** It is observable, He does not retract what He had said; no, nor soften it in the least degree, but rather strengthens it, by representing the salvation of a rich man as the utmost effort of omnipotence"—WESLEY.

27. **Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee.** We have complied freely with the conditions from which that rich young ruler has so sadly shrunk! Words in every way characteristic of the speaker at his actual stage of spiritual enlightenment, but how different from Peter's estimate of his self-renunciation for Christ's sake at a later period! **What shall we have therefore?** Perhaps thinking of the "treasure in heaven" of which he had just heard, and no doubt assuring himself of that "eternal life" which the ruler had not valued at the worth of his great earthly possessions. It is quite true that they had forsaken their all of worldly advantage, which in some cases was not inconsiderable; but, alas! they had not given up their all of self, for the hope of adequate reward was still prominent and powerful.

28. **In the regeneration**, etc. The full and final import of this promise to the apostles is a mystery to be disclosed only by its fulfilment hereafter. But it has a meaning also, which, if not intelligible to them when the words were spoken, would become sufficiently manifest in the near future. This word "regeneration" itself is to be found in only one other place in the New Testament (Tit. 3. 5), where it is followed by the explanatory phrase, "and renewal of the Holy Ghost." But the doctrine of this passage is the same as that of our Lord on the new and spiritual birth without which no man can "enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3. 3–5), and accords with the whole drift of His teaching with reference to His spiritual Church—"the kingdom of heaven." In its immediate application the term "the regeneration," as here used, is a descriptive designation of the kingdom which He was then setting up by His personal ministry, and which was to be fully constituted after His departure by the perpetual presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Its more mysterious and remote application would probably be to that renewal of the world in righteousness which is variously referred to elsewhere. (Acts 3. 21; Rom. 8.19–21; 2 Pet. 3. 13; Rev. 21. 1.) **Shall sit in the throne of His glory**—the throne of His glorious mediatorial dominion. (Eph. 1. 20–23; Phil. 2. 10, 11; Col. 1. 18; 1 Pet. 3. 22.) **Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones.** This is a repetition of the promise just given in other words to Peter alone, and afterwards extended to the Twelve. It is the promise of authority to "bind" and "loose." Here it is given to them as a complete company, for the throne of Judas would be taken by another. Just before His betrayal our Lord renewed the promise in the same form, but with the word "twelve" omitted. (Luke 22. 33.) **Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** The spiritual Israel in its entirety. "To have authority under Christ in this spiritual Church, to convey immediately from Him its doctrines and laws, to regulate its discipline and its services, to encourage the humble spirits by

promises, to direct the perplexed by counsel, to excite the languid by exhortation, to restrain the vicious by rebukes, to exhibit as the motives to submission and obedience to Christ all the hopes of heaven and all the terrors of future punishment with an authority which they only possessed and continue to possess to this day,—these were to be the rewards of the fishermen and publicans of Galilee, who had left all to follow Christ. And who of mankind have been raised to equal honour and influence? where are the men whose names are so venerable and so often pronounced? where the authority which is so often appealed to on all moral questions? where the writings which lay such hold upon the consciences of men? and where the teachers who have trained up such a host of immortal beings to holiness here and to a blissful immortality?"—R. W.

This promise, peculiar to the apostles, is followed by a promise to all His followers:—

29. **And every one**—in every age and country, not you My apostles only—**that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or wife, or children**—either by giving any of them up, when they could not be retained with a clear conscience, or by willingly refraining from acquiring them—**shall receive an hundredfold**—in value, though not in kind, even in the present world.

30. **But many that are first**—many of those who were first called—**shall be last**—shall have the lowest reward; those who came after them being preferred before them; and yet possibly both the first and the last may be saved, though with different degrees of glory.

CHAPTER XX.

Vers. 1-16. THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD—THE SPIRIT OF TRUE AND ACCEPTABLE SERVICE.—1. **For.** This word connects the parable which follows with the general principle just stated, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first," which it was spoken to illustrate. **The kingdom of heaven is**—in the process of its establishment in the world—**like unto a man that is an householder.** That is, I act in this preparatory stage of My mediatorial work in a manner resembling that of a householder who, having much and important work to be done, **went out**—himself—**early in the morning**—at sunrise—**to hire labourers into his vineyard**; this first set of labourers signifying the apostles, and the vineyard, if it has any distinct meaning, the Jewish people, "the house of Israel." (Isa. 5. 1-7.)

2. "**He agreed with the labourers for a penny a day.** (Ch. 18. 28.) The Roman penny was about sevenpence-halfpenny English. This was then the usual price of a day's labour"—WESLEY.

But the important thing to be noted here is that an express agreement was entered into with these first engaged labourers, perhaps after they had asked Peter's question, "What shall we have?" The answer would be, the full remuneration usually paid for a day's work.

3, 4. **The third hour**—about nine o'clock in the morning. **Standing idle**—that is, unemployed, but ready to be hired. **Whatsoever is right I will give you.** A general promise of fair and adequate recompense without a formal contract, demanding therefore an act of trust in the householder's honourable dealing. **And they went their way**—to do the service appointed to them, thinking only of their work, and aiming to do it in such a manner as their employer might be expected to approve.

5. **The sixth and ninth hour.** Noon and three o'clock in the afternoon, quarters of the day of twelve hours. Many of these details have no distinct spiritual meaning, but are used to give completeness to the picture.

6, 7. **The eleventh hour**—five o'clock—**and found others standing idle.** But whether through any fault of their own or not is not intimated. Their own explanation was that **no man had hired** them. It was strangely late in the day to begin work, but they were willing to do so, and with the general promise of suitable payment, as before, they also went **into the vineyard**—trusting implicitly in their employer's honour and kindness.

8. **When even was come**—six o'clock, when the day ended and wages were usually paid day by day. (Lev. 19. 13; Deut. 24. 15.) **Give them their hire, beginning from the last.** This was important, for if the first hired had been paid first they might have gone away without knowing how the others had been dealt with, and the test of character would have been wanting.

9. **Every man a penny**—the eleventh hour beginners receiving a full day's payment for their single hour's work.

10. **When the first came**—who had seen how liberally the others had been rewarded—**they supposed that they should have received more** than the amount for which they had bargained; but, to their surprise and disappointment, **they likewise received every man a penny**—the sum agreed upon, but no more.

11. **They murmured.** Why? Not because they had been wronged for the benefit of others, but simply because that, through the unlooked-for beneficence of the master, others, perhaps in consideration of their not having had the opportunity of being hired earlier in the day, had received more than they had earned at the rate of payment upon which they had themselves contracted. Thus the spirit in which they had laboured was tested, and made manifest. It was evident that they had thought only of *self;* that though they might have worked honestly under "the burden of the day and the scorching heat" (R.V.), their

governing desire and aim had been, not to accomplish their allotted task satisfactorily to their master, or because they took a pleasure in it for the work's sake, but solely to secure the full amount of a covenanted recompense.

13. **But he answered one of them**—who may be supposed to have been spokesman for the rest (Peter?)—**Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?** Thus quietly intimating that if a formal contract had not been demanded and entered into; if he and his companions hired at the first hour had gone into the vineyard, thankful that, without anxious waiting for hire, they were accepted so soon as they offered themselves for service, and with a readiness to do the work to which they were appointed, in a spirit of simple trust in the householder's justice and bounty, they would have been rewarded as liberally as they had seen those of their fellow-labourers rewarded who went to their work with no other promise of recompense than that of being paid "whatsoever was right."

15. **Is thine eye evil?** (Deut. 15. 9.) "Art thou envious, because I am gracious? There is an evident reference to that malignant aspect which is generally the attendant of a selfish and envious temper"—WESLEY.

16. **So the last,** etc. A repetition of the saying which the parable was introduced to illustrate and confirm. "The last were first, *as equal to the first;* first, *in order of payment;* first, *as superior to the first* (no other being brought into comparison), in that their reward was *more* in proportion to their work, and not marred by a murmuring spirit. The first were last in these same respects"—A.

Thus the parable is an enforcement of that lofty principle of self-renunciation for the sake of others, of which Christ Himself was the great and unapproachable Example (Phil. 2. 4–8), and which He so variously enjoined upon His followers throughout His earthly ministry. It was spoken with reference to Peter's boastful appeal, "Behold, we have forsaken all and have followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" (ch. 19. 27), and was intended to show him and his fellow-apostles how contrary the spirit of these words is to that which befits a professed disciple and imitator of Himself. It is a continuation of the course of teaching which, ever since His promise of pre-eminence to Peter, followed by His first clear prediction of His own approaching sufferings, He had kept most prominently before the minds of His apostles (ch. 16. 24–26). His kingdom, He had told them, could tolerate no struggle for relative greatness, but as they only could enter into it who manifested the humility of a little child, so they, and they only, could be recognised as its subjects who continued to maintain, in their relation to Him and to each other, a child's unconsciousness of self (ch. 18. 1–4); that *eternal life* was not a thing to be acquired by meritorious acts, as the rich young ruler had dreamed, but was to be received as a free *gift* by every man in union with Himself (Rom. 6. 23); that the notion of inherent merit in any act of service or of self-denial was wholly alien to everything called by His name. He would acknowledge as His followers those only in whom self was subdued and hidden, who pleased not themselves, and who in His spirit made it their meat to do the will of God. (John 4. 34.)

Vers. 17–28. OUR LORD'S THIRD ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS SUFFERINGS, AND THE FIRST OF HIS DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION: INCIDENTS OF THE GRACIOUS PROGRESS. (Mark 10. 32–45; Luke 18. 31–34.)—17. **Going up to Jerusalem.** For the mysterious end. The Parable of the Labourers had been spoken while He was yet in Peræa, on the eastern side of the Jordan, where vineyards are said to have been plentiful. Now He and the Twelve had crossed the Jordan for His final journey to Jerusalem, and were on the highroad from Galilee, which was probably at this time thronged with pilgrims passing onward to keep the approaching Passover. **Took the twelve disciples apart in the way.** Then, as stated by S. Mark, He pressed forward "before them," walking alone, with something so unusual and strange in His manner as to arrest their attention and fill them with alarm. "They were amazed"—at signs of oppressive and agitating thought which seemed to have suddenly seized Him—amazed also "at His courage and intrepidity, considering the treatment which He had Himself told them He should meet with there. 'And as they followed they were afraid'—both for Him and themselves. Nevertheless, He judged it best to prepare them, by telling them more particularly what was to ensue"—WESLEY.

"There are few pictures in the Gospel more striking than this of Jesus going forth to His death, and walking alone along the path into the deep valley, while behind Him, in awful reverence and mingled anticipations of dread and hope—their eyes fixed on Him, as with bowed head He preceded them in all the majesty of sorrow—the disciples walked and dared not disturb His meditations"—T.

18, 19. **Behold, we go up to Jerusalem,** etc. "The whole discourse is minutely prophetic, and shows that the scene of His sufferings was constantly, and in all its humiliations and most painful details, before His eyes. What stronger proof can we have that the death of Christ was voluntary? and, if voluntary, it was then vicarious. How many particulars are here predicted! 1. That He should **be betrayed;** 2. Into the hands, not of the Roman governor, but of **the chief priests and scribes,** composing the great Council; 3. That they should **condemn Him to death,** under their law, as a blasphemer; yet, 4. That they should not stone Him, which was the Mosaic punishment,

but should **deliver Him to the Gentiles**, the Romans, **to mock, and to scourge**, and 'to spit upon' (Mark 10. 34), **and to crucify**, all which circumstances were most accurately fulfilled; (5) That on **the third day He** should **rise again**. S. Luke adds, that 'they understood none of these things; and this saying was hidden from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.' They knew the meaning of the words, but probably thought that He was speaking in a kind of parable, and that the expressions carried with them a mystical meaning, to which as yet they had not the key"—R. W.

20. **The mother of Zebedee's children**—the apostles James and John. Her name was Salome. (Ch. 27. 56; comp. Mark 15. 40.) **Worshipping Him**, and falling on her knees before Him, in reverent acknowledgment of His kingly dignity and authority. **Desiring a certain thing of Him.** Her intervention is not mentioned by S. Mark; but it appears from his account that her petition was preceded by the timid and indefinite prayer of her sons themselves that our Lord would do for them something which they desired but shrank from asking.

21. **Grant that these my two sons**, etc. "Considering how He had been just speaking, was ever anything more unreasonable? Perhaps Zebedee himself was dead, or was not a follower of Christ"—WESLEY.

It appears, however, from ch. 4. 21, 22; Mark 1. 19, 20, that when Jesus called his sons to follow Him, he raised no objection to their doing so. Salome was probably the sister of Mary, the mother of Christ (John 19. 25–27; comp. Mark 15. 40, 41), and it has been suggested that the title, "the mother of Zebedee's children," is given to her to intimate that she did not make her request on the ground of kinship. But the more probable explanation is that her deceased husband had been well-known. Her prayer on behalf of her sons is not to be thought of as a mere hard and selfish craving for their pre-eminence, but as also an expression of faith and sympathy and deep affection. It betrays much ignorance and worldly ambition, but it manifests also fervid devotion and the purpose of unflinching fidelity. They would be nearest to their adored Master in all conditions, and would support Him with their presence in the mysterious sorrows and sufferings of which He had just warned them, if only they might share in His triumphs and sit nearest to Him in His glory.

22. **Ye know not what ye ask.** "Ye know not what is implied in being advanced in My kingdom, and necessarily pre-required thereto. All who share in My kingdom must first share in My sufferings. Are you able and willing to do this? Both these expressions, **the cup, the baptism**, are to be understood of His sufferings and death. The like expressions are common among the Jews"—WESLEY.

For examples of the use of the cup, with this meaning, see Ps. 11. 6; Isa. 51. 17; and by our Lord Himself, ch. 26. 39; John 18. 11. For a similar use of the word "baptism," see Luke 12. 50. The "cup" here seems to signify more the *inner* and spiritual bitterness, resembling the agony of the Lord Himself,—the "baptism" more the *outer* accession of persecution and trial.

23. **Ye shall drink indeed of My cup.** "The one of these brethren was the first of the apostles to drink the cup of suffering, and be baptized with the baptism of blood (Acts 12. 1, 2); the other had the longest experience among them of a life of trouble and persecution"—A. **But to sit**, etc. The meaning is that the rewards and honours of the future life will not be bestowed arbitrarily upon any of His followers, but in all cases in conformity with the purposes of perfect equity. (Rev. 3. 21.) "Christ applies to the glories of heaven what His disciples were so stupid as to understand of the glories of earth. But He does not deny that this is His to give. It is His to give in the strictest propriety, both as God and as the Son of Man. He only asserts that He gives it to none but those for whom it is originally prepared, namely, those who endure to the end in the 'faith that worketh by love'"—WESLEY.

24. **Were moved with indignation** (S. Mark, "Were much displeased with James and John")—showing that they were all longing for the same pre-eminence which the two had dared to bespeak.

25–27. **Jesus called them unto Him**—summoned them all before Him, not only to suppress the unholy strife which had so strangely broken out among them at that solemn hour, but to show them again that His kingdom differed essentially in its principles and spirit and aims from all the kingdoms of this world; that, in order to be truly great, they must strive in a forgetfulness of self to serve one another in love. (Luke 22. 24–27.)

28. **To give His life a ransom for many.** (1 Tim. 2. 6; Titus 2. 14.) A plain declaration of the vicarious character of His sufferings and death. "Breaking through the reserve that had held Him, and revealing to them the inmost thoughts which had occupied Him when He had been alone and apart, going before them on the way, He spoke for the first time fully what was the deepest meaning of His life, mission, and death—'to give His life a ransom for many'; to pay with His life-blood the price of their redemption, to lay down His life for them in their room and stead, and for their salvation"—ED. "That which was given by Christ was His *life*, upon that great principle which runs through all the dispensations of revealed religion—that without the shedding of blood there is no remission; that which man had forfeited by his sin was *life*—'for the wages of sin is death'; and

that which alone could free him from this penalty was the substitution of a nobler life in place of his own, to which all the sacrifices of animal life under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations looked forward as instituted types. Christ is said to give His life, which not only intimates that His sufferings and death were voluntarily undergone, but that He had a power over the disposal of His life which no merely human being is invested with. 'I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again,' are words which no man but our Lord ever used; and they prove that His humanity was impersonated in a higher nature, possessing a sovereign authority, and having life and death at command"—R. W. "For many." "No stress is to be laid on this word 'many' here; it is placed in opposition to the one life which is given—the *one* for *many*—and not with any distinction from *all*"—A. (Rom. 5. 19; Heb. 2. 9.)

Vers. 29–34. BLINDNESS CURED NEAR JERICHO. (Mark 10. 46–52; Luke 18. 35–43.)

—29. **From Jericho.** So also S. Mark. S. Luke says, "As He was come nigh unto Jericho." "Many explanations of this unimportant variation have been suggested; but it is enough to note the fact stated by all the Evangelists that the miracle took place *near* Jericho, when our Lord was going up to Jerusalem to pay that price of man's redemption of which He had just spoken"—"to give His life a ransom for many." (Rom. 3. 24; 1 Pet. 1. 19.) Jericho, the city of palm-trees (Deut. 34. 3), was about sixteen miles from Jerusalem. It had passed through many vicissitudes since taken by Joshua, but when visited by our Lord it was a large and beautiful city. **A great multitude followed Him.** These were chiefly pilgrims from Galilee, who were going up to keep the Passover. Many of them must have known Him.

30. **Two blind men sitting by the wayside.** S. Mark and S. Luke mention only one, and add that he was "begging." S. Mark also speaks of him by name—"Blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus." "He was by far the more eminent of the two, and, as it seems, spoke for both"—WESLEY.

S. Mark's account of him "hints that he was a personage well known to Christians" in that Evangelist's time "as a monument of the Lord's miracle, as was probably also Simon the leper; and the designation, 'son of Timæus,' would distinguish him, not only from the father but also from other sons"—L. These blind men were sitting by the side of the highway with many other beggars of all kinds, as was usual with mendicants at the approach of the annual festivals, to appeal for aid to the passing groups of pilgrims. Hearing the stir of the multitude following Christ, they asked what it meant, and being told that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," Bartimæus, speaking for his more retiring companion, as well as for himself, **cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David.** The same title was used by the two blind men in Capernaum (ch. 9. 27). Here its use, immediately after hearing the designation "Jesus of Nazareth," may well remind us of the meaning of this name, the Shoot, as out of the decayed root of a stately tree, as corresponding with His lowly condition as Heir to the throne of David. (See on ch. 2. 23.) It is clear at least that the appeal to Him as the Son of David was meant to be an open recognition of His claims as the true Messiah.

31. **The multitude rebuked them.** "And so they will all who begin to cry after the Son of David; but let those who feel their need of Him cry the more; otherwise they will come short of a cure"—WESLEY.

Happily this interference of the multitude, whether through want of sympathy with them, or on behalf of our Lord, supposing the importunate cry of the beggars to be irksome to Him, only moved them to cry the more earnestly.

32. **And Jesus stood still.** For what appeal to His compassion did He ever disregard? **And called them.** As shown by the vivid account of S. Mark, the people were now suddenly seized with sympathy with them; and they call the blind man, saying unto him, "Be of good comfort; rise, He calleth thee." And, casting aside his outer garment, he sprang to his feet, "and came to Jesus." "An example for every soul which Jesus has called, that it should in like manner lay aside every weight and whatever would hinder it from coming speedily to Him"—T. **What will ye that I shall do unto you?** He well knew what mercy they besought, but He would call forth the definite prayer of faith.

33. **Lord.** In S. Mark (R.V.) "Rabboni," my Master—the highest title of faith, reverence, and humility. (John 20. 16.) **That our eyes may be opened.** We do not solicit alms of Thee, but restored sight.

34. **Touched their eyes.** And, as the other Evangelists record, accompanied the healing touch with the words, "Thy faith hath saved thee. And they followed Him." S. Luke adds, "glorifying God." The narrative is throughout, as has been often pointed out, symbolical of the facts of man's spiritual experience. The blindness; the hope enkindled in the minds of some of the restoration of sight; the knowledge that the Divine Restorer is near; the awakened eagerness to arrest His attention; discouragement from the unsympathising multitude; the greater resoluteness of men really in earnest; the Voice of the compassionate Healer; the consequently more confident appeal, "Lord, that I may receive my sight"; the healing touch in answer to the faith of which He is the direct object; the exclamations of devout thanksgiving, and the immediate act of following the Great Deliverer;—all these points are full of instruction.

CHAPTER XXI.

Vers. 1-10. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM: PALM SUNDAY. (Mark 11. 1-11; Luke 19. 29-40; John 12. 12, 19.)—1. **They drew nigh unto Jerusalem.** This was six days before the Passover (John 12. 1); Friday, the 8th of the month *Nisan*. **Came to Bethphage**, meaning the House of Figs. S. Mark and S. Luke say, "Bethphage" and "Bethany," the House of Dates. "The limits of Bethany reached to the Mount of Olives, and joined to those of Bethphage. Bethphage was part of the suburbs of Jerusalem, and reached from the Mount of Olives to the walls of the city. Our Lord was now come to the place where the boundaries of Bethany and Bethphage met"—WESLEY.

The village of Bethany was on the south-eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, near the highroad from Jericho, and about two miles from Jerusalem. Here our Lord rested on the Sabbath, probably in the house of His friends Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, and the next day, Sunday, Nisan 10,—the day when the paschal lamb was selected (Ex. 12. 3), to be "kept until the fourteenth," He made His royal visit into the city—**sent two disciples**—probably Peter and John.

2. **Ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her.** S. Mark and S. Luke mention the colt only, and add, "whereon never man sat." Not having been used by man being a condition required in the choice of animals to be consecrated to God. (Num. 19. 2; Deut. 21. 38; 1 Sam. 6. 7.) Only the colt was wanted, but the mother would naturally accompany it.

3. **The Lord** (the Master—the Lord Jesus) **hath need of them.** This intimation to the owner seems to imply that he was a disciple of Christ, and would be prepared to recognise His rights. But this inference is not necessary. For as "the tidings of the proximity of Jesus and of His approaching arrival must have spread in the city . . . we can understand how eager questioners would gather about the owners of the colt, there at the cross-roads at Bethphage (S. Mark), just outside Jerusalem; and how, so soon as from the bearing and the peculiar words of the disciples, they understood their purpose, the owners of the ass and colt would grant its use for the solemn entry into the city of the Teacher of Nazareth, whom the multitude was so eagerly expecting; and, lastly, how, as from the gates of Jerusalem tidings spread of what had passed in Bethphage, the multitude would stream forth to meet Jesus"—ED.

4. **That it might be fulfilled.** (See ch. 1. 22.) Referring to "the *Divine counsels*, but *not to the intention of the doers* of the act; for this application of prophecy is in John 12. 16 distinctly said not to have occurred to the *disciples* at the time, but after Jesus was glorified"—A.

5. **The daughter of Sion**—"that is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The first words of the passage are cited from Isa. 62. 11; the rest from Zech. 9. 9. The ancient Jewish doctors were wont to apply these prophecies to the Messiah. **On an ass.** The Prince of Peace did not take a horse, a warlike animal; but He will ride on that by and by (Rev. 19. 11). In the patriarchal ages illustrious persons thought it no disgrace to make use of this animal; but it by no means appears that this opinion prevailed, or this custom continued, till the reign of Tiberius. Was it a mean attitude wherein our Lord then appeared? mean even to contempt? I grant it; I glory in it; it is for the comfort of my soul, for the honour of His humility, and for the utter confusion of all worldly pomp and grandeur"—WESLEY.

7. **Put on them their clothes**—their loose upper garments or cloaks. (2 Kings 9. 13.) **Set Him thereon**—that is, on the garments.

8. **Spread their garments in the way.** "Oriental mark of honour at the reception of kings, on their entrance into cities"—L. **Cut down branches from the trees**—olive, fig, and palm trees—**and strawed them**—as a matting—**in the way.** Also as an honour due to royalty, and in token of their loyalty and gladness. At the same time "much people that were come to the feast"—chiefly the pilgrims from Galilee and Peræa who had come up with Him as far as Bethany, and leaving Him there had gone forward to the houses of their friends in Jerusalem, or to provide accommodation for themselves in the valley outside the city walls—"when they heard that Jesus was coming," cut down branches of palm trees, to carry in their hands and wave in the air, as manifestations of their joy, and to salute and welcome the royal Visitor—"and went forth to meet Him" (John 12. 12, 13).

9. **The multitudes.** When the two companies had met, walked some before and some behind the lowly King, and **cried, saying, Hosanna**—"Save now" (Ps. 118. 25). "Lord, *save us*, was a solemn word in frequent use among the Jews. The meaning is, We sing hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He, the Messiah of the Lord. Save, Thou that art in the highest heavens. Our Lord restrained all public tokens of honour from the people till now, lest the envy of His enemies should interrupt His preaching before the time. But this reason now ceasing, He suffered their acclamations, that they might be a public testimony against their wickedness, who in four or five days after cried out, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him.' The expressions recorded by the other Evangelists are somewhat different from these; but all of them were undoubtedly used by some or others of the multitude"—WESLEY.

"That this riding and entry were *intentional* on the part of our Lord is clear; and also that

He did not thereby mean to give any countenance to the temporal idea of His Messiahship, but solemnly to fulfil the Scriptures respecting Him, and to prepare the way for His sufferings by a public avowal of His mission. The typical meaning also is not to be overlooked. In all probability the evening visit to the Temple was at the very time when the paschal lamb was to be *taken up*—*i.e.* set apart for the sacrifice"—A.

10. **All the city was moved.** The multitudes who had brought Him triumphantly into it were composed chiefly of the pilgrims from a distance, many of whom had been His hearers, some of them subjects of His miraculous acts of healing. To the regular inhabitants of the city the tumultuous enthusiasm they witnessed was a surprise; and they asked, some from curiosity and wonder and some in contempt, **Who is this?**

11. **Jesus the Prophet.** They had just shouted their convictions that "He was the Messiah; but now they say, in reply to the cold and sceptical demand of the proud inhabitants of the city, **This is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth.** What a stumbling-block was this! If He was of Nazareth, He could not be the Messiah. But they who earnestly desired to know the truth would not stumble thereat; for upon inquiry (which such would not fail to make) they would find He was not of Nazareth but Bethlehem"—WESLEY.

From S. Mark we learn that our Lord did not tarry in Jerusalem after having been conducted into it, as all the Evangelists so particularly describe, but that, after the multitude had dispersed, He quietly entered the Temple courts, and "when He had looked round about upon all things"—gazing with holy indignation and distress upon the same scenes of selfish traffic which presented themselves at the opening of His ministry (John 2. 12–17)—"He went out unto Bethany with the Twelve."

Vers. 12-22. CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE AND CURSE OF THE FRUITLESS FIG TREE. (Mark 11. 12–26; Luke 19. 45, 46.)—12. **And Jesus**—on His return to the city, on the second day of the week of His Passion (Monday, Nisan 11)—**went into the Temple of God**—which on the preceding day He visited, but only to cast a glance at scenes of desecration and abuse. **That sold and bought in the Temple** "doves and oxen for sacrifice. He had cast them out three years before (John 2. 14), bidding them 'not make' that 'house an house for merchandise'; upon the repetition of the offence, He uses sharper words. 'In the Temple'—that is, in the outer court of it, where the Gentiles used to worship. **The moneychangers**—the exchangers of foreign money into current coin, which those who came from distant parts might want to offer for the service of the Temple"—WESLEY.

13. **It is written** (Isa. 56. 7; see also 1 Kings 8. 29; Neh. 11. 17), **My house shall be called the house of prayer.** "In referring to this prophecy, our Lord not only reproves the profanity and wicked avarice which had made the house of prayer a bazaar or market-house, but the contempt poured upon the pious Gentiles, or heathen proselytes, who had a right to worship there, and whose court they had invaded so as not only to occupy it with stalls for cattle, seats for them that sold doves, and the tables of moneychangers, but as to fill it with distracting noise and confusion, wholly subversive of its original and gracious intention. Instead of a place for offering up prayer by the pious 'stranger,' whom God had promised to make 'joyful in His house of prayer,' they had **made it a den of thieves**; an expression used probably in allusion to the rocky caves or dens in the mountainous parts of Judea, which were often the receptacles of robbers"—R. W. (Comp. Jer. 7. 11). "'Is this house which is called by My name become a den of robbers in your eyes?' The context of these words is strikingly suggestive—'If ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, and *shed not innocent blood* in this place . . . then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land which I gave to your fathers for ever and ever'"—C. B. "Christ by applying these words here hints in the deepest sense, and that more plainly than the first time (*Destroy this temple!*) at the now almost matured counsel of murder, against His own most sacred Person, which He well knew of; which, therefore, S. Mark (ch. 14. 18) and S. Luke (ch. 22. 47) make immediately to follow"—S.

14. **He healed them.** He had accepted the homage of the multitudes who had openly welcomed Him to the capital as *Messiah the Prince;* He had, in the assertion of His royal rights and authority, expelled the traffickers from His "Father's house," who had made it as a cave of wrangling robbers; and now He repeated those acts of miraculous healing by which His Divine character and mission were to be demonstrated. "And the boys that gathered about their fathers, and looked in turn from their faces of rapt wonderment to the God-like face of the Christ, and then on those healed sufferers, took up the echoes of the welcome on His entrance into Jerusalem"—ED.

15. **The wonderful things that He did.** Not only the miracles of healing by a word or a touch, but the flight of the hardened traders at His authoritative command. **And the children crying in the Temple**—ignorant probably of the true meaning of the words they shouted or sang, but spontaneously echoing strains they had heard chanted on the Mount of Olives the previous day. **They were sore displeased** (R.V. "moved with indignation"), so much so that S. Mark says they sought "how they might destroy Him."

16. **Hearest Thou what these say?**—how

those senseless boys profanely misappropriate sacred words and titles. **Yea, have ye never read?** (Ps. 8. 2; comp. Heb. 2. 6–9; Eph. 1. 22.) They are unconsciously fulfilling the "sure words of prophecy," and are declaring truths in their artless utterances of wonder and adoration which ye proud and boastful men fail to discern. (Ch. 11. 25.)

17. **Went out of the city into Bethany,** but whether to the house of Lazarus and his sisters or not can only be a matter of conjecture. If the *village* of Bethany is meant, it is almost certain that He passed the night with them. But the name may be used for the district, and the meaning may be as given in S. Luke—"He went out and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives"—sleeping "in the open air with His disciples, as is common with Orientals." This statement S. Luke applies directly to the Tuesday and Wednesday nights of this solemn week, but may include Monday night also.

18. **Now in the morning**—that is, of the same day (Monday). The Evangelist here looks back to the incident which, as related by S. Mark, took place in the early morning, in order to bring it, and the lessons which were given upon it the following day, together, so as to present the whole in one view. S. Mark separates the two, recording each, in his characteristic style, as it occurred. **"As He returned into the city**—from the expulsion of the traders from the Temple, as just stated—**He hungered,** for He had probably spent the greater part if not the whole of the night in prayer."

19. **He saw a fig tree in the way.** A single fig tree standing on an eminence; for S. Mark says that He saw it "afar off"; also that it had "leaves." **He came to it, and found nothing thereon.** Nor did He expect to find fruit; for, as S. Mark adds, "the time of figs was not yet." What He found was a fit emblem of a deceitful outward show of spiritual reality—a true and striking image of the spiritual condition of the Jewish people; and He caused it to become a silent prophet of their pending doom. He came to it as a hungry wayfarer might have been beguiled by the attractive foliage of a solitary wayside fruit-bearing tree, "if haply He might find anything thereon," but only to be bitterly disappointed. So on entering the city, and visiting the Temple the previous day, He had found abundant outward signs of fidelity to the Law and of a "zeal toward God." But of the hundreds of thousands gathered into the holy city from all quarters, and of the more favoured regular inhabitants, how few were there who bore the fruits of righteousness. How truly might the whole nation be symbolised by that leafy, fruitless tree, exhibiting at that festive season an imposing show of life and productiveness to those who only saw it *afar off*, but on closer inspection found to be barren and cumbering the ground! "Already, at Luke 13. 6–9, had Christ uttered the parable prepared in the Prophets (Hos. 9. 10; Joel 1. 7), and His present action recalls this to mind. There were *leaves* enough—words and hypocritical works, as if it were really the Israel which it was called to be, the people of God wonderfully ripened earlier than all other nations—but no *fruit!*"—S. He condemned it to destruction, as was necessary in itself, and for the completeness of its symbolical meaning. **And presently**—immediately—**the fig tree withered away.** No other instance of our Lord speaking and putting forth His miraculous power for the purpose of destruction is to be found in the whole Gospel history, and it is to be noted that in this case the thing destroyed was already worthless, and was no man's private property. The act was a prophetic parable, to be soon, alas! fulfilled, by the terrible facts of history. But more than this, our Lord intended "to teach His disciples an awful lesson by an emblem which not only pointed out the doom of a degenerate nation, of whose hypocritical and delusive pretensions the barren fig tree was a sign, but also that of hypocrites and apostates from His religion; for to this event S. Jude appears strikingly to allude when he marks the character and fate of such persons to be 'trees whose fruit withered, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots'"—R. W.

20. **And when the disciples saw it**—"as they went by the next day"—WESLEY. (See Mark 11. 20.)

They marvelled — so essentially different was the miracle from anything they had previously witnessed; and its full significance they could not as yet understand.

21, 22. **If ye have faith,** etc. "He ever leads His own from mere wonderment at the miraculous up to that which is higher. His answer now combined all that they needed to learn. It pointed to the typical lesson of what had taken place—the need of realising, simple faith"—ED. **And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.** "This assurance has occurred before, in ch. 17. 20. That truest and *highest faith*, which implies a mind and will perfectly in unison with that of God, can have been in Him only who spoke these words. And by it, and its elevating power over the functions and laws of inferior natures, were His most notable miracles wrought. It is observable that such a state of mind entirely precludes the idea of an arbitrary exercise of power—none such can therefore be intended in our Lord's assertion. Though we cannot reach this faith in its fulness, yet every approach to it (ver. 21) shall be imbued with some of its wonderful power in obtaining requests from God"—A. Our Lord went on to show His disciples, as His continued instructions are recorded by S. Mark, that the moun-

tain-moving faith of which He was speaking, can be exercised in such prayer only as is poured forth from a loving and forgiving heart —"when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any," etc. "He who so prays believes in God (Mark 11. 22), and loves man; such prayer is not selfish, self-seeking, self-conscious; least of all is it compatible with mindfulness of wrongs, or an unforgiving spirit"—ED. "When a man prays—whatever be his object—he must put away all malice and hatred from his heart, and specially when he would ask for an intervention of God. The presence of a personal feeling of enmity would convert the prayer for miraculous powers into a deadly sin"—S. C. Upon the whole of this weighty passage, it has been tersely said, "Faith, if it be right, will excite prayer; and prayer is not right if it do not spring from faith. This is the condition of our receiving; we must ask *in prayer, believing;* the requests of prayer shall not be denied; the expectations of faith shall not be frustrated. We have many promises to this purpose from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, and all to encourage faith (the principal grace), and prayer (the principal duty of a Christian). It is but, Ask and have; believe and receive; and what would we more?"

OUR LORD'S LAST DAY IN THE TEMPLE.

Vers. 23–32. HIS AUTHORITY QUESTIONED. (Mark 11. 27–33; Luke 20. 1–8.)—23. **And when He was come into the Temple, the chief priests**—"who thought He violated their right —**and the elders of the people came**—probably members of the Sanhedrim, to whom that title most properly belonged; which is the more probable as they were persons under whose cognisance the late action of Christ, in purging the Temple, would naturally fall. These, with the chief priests, seem purposely to have appeared in a considerable company, to give the more weight to what they said, and, if need were, to bear a united testimony against Him. **As He was teaching**—which also they supposed He had no authority to do, being neither priest, nor Levite, nor scribe. Some of the priests (though not as priests), and all the scribes, were authorised teachers. **By what authority doest Thou these things?** —publicly teach the people, and drive out those who had our commission to traffic in the outer court?"—WESLEY.

This was evidently an official deputation from the Sanhedrim, as hastily called together to concert measures against Christ. S. Mark and S. Luke mention that it included "scribes"; and they both intimate that they "came upon" our Lord suddenly, as if to take Him by surprise, when He was "walking in" one of the Temple porches (Mark), "teaching the people and preaching the gospel" (Luke).

24, 25. "**I will ask you one thing**—who have asked Me many. **The baptism**—that is, the whole ministry—**of John, was it from heaven, or from men?** By what authority did he act and teach? Did man or God give him that authority? Was it not God? But, if so, the consequence was clear. For John testified that Jesus was the Christ"—WESLEY.

They reasoned with themselves. They all saw the dilemma in which He had placed them; each laboured to discover some way out of it; then they seem to have gone aside from Him for consultation. **If we shall say, From heaven, He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?**—when he bore witness of Me and My Divine mission. (John 1. 19–34.) **If we shall say, Of men; we fear the people.** S. Mark gives an abrupt turn to the account at this point, which makes it the more striking—"If of men, they feared the people, for all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed." "The hypocrites think only of what they might *say*, and what He would *say*, not of what is right and true in conscience before God"—S.

27. **We cannot tell.** "Thus has He caught them in their own net"—S. **Neither tell I you.** "Not again, in express terms. He had often told them before, and they would not believe Him"—WESLEY.

In effect, He told them now as they must have all felt; so that their plea of ignorance was grossly dishonest. Some of them, moreover, had probably been included in the deputation sent to inquire into John's authority. (John 1. 19.)

28. **But what think ye?** Of yourselves, in your relation to John and his ministry. Our Lord now bases an appeal to their consciences on what He knew to be their secret conviction, that John's mission was truly divine. "He commences that series of parables, in which, as in a glass held up before them, they might see themselves, the impurity of their hearts, their neglect of the charge laid upon them, their contempt of the privileges afforded them, the aggravated guilt of that outrage against Himself which they were meditating in their hearts"—T. **A certain man had two sons** —representing the two classes afterwards mentioned (ver. 32). **Son**—an affectionate call to duty—**go work to-day.** The time is limited; let there be no delay. Repent; turn to God, as exhorted by Him who announces with authority that the "kingdom of heaven is at hand"; and be ready to believe in Him whom he proclaims to be the greater One, who is coming after him. (Acts 19. 4.)

29. **I will not.** A rude refusal, representing the undutiful, reckless spirit of men resolved "to live as they list," many of John's hearers having been at one time of this character. **Afterwards he repented**—changed his mind on reflection—**and went,** in compliance with his father's request; as awakened men come to the baptism of John, "confessing their sins."

30. **I go, sir**—a prompt and courteous promise. **And went not.** "Just so did the scribes and Pharisees: they professed the greatest readiness and zeal in the service of God; but it was bare profession, contradicted by all their actions"—WESLEY.

31. **The first.** They could not avoid the answer, but they were little prepared for the application. **Go into the kingdom of God before you.** A proud, self-righteous spirit is the most formidable of all obstacles to the exercise of the faith of the gospel. (Rom. 10. 3.) "Before you" does not mean that they to whom our Lord was speaking, or that such as they, would ever enter His kingdom, though later than the others, but that even their condition was not hopeless. They too might go into it, but only by taking that narrow path which those penitent sinners were showing them.

32. **For John came unto you in the way of righteousness**—"walking in it, as well as teaching in it. **The publicans and harlots**—the most notorious sinners were reformed, though at first they said, 'I will not.' **And ye, seeing**—the amazing change which was wrought in them, though at first ye said, 'I go sir,' **repented not afterward**—were no more convinced than before. Oh, how is this Scripture fulfilled at this day!"—WESLEY.

Vers. 33–46. THE VINEYARD AND THE EVIL HUSBANDMEN. (Mark 12. 1–12; Luke 20. 9–19.)—33. **Hear another parable.** "I have not done with you yet; I have still another word of warning and rebuke"—T. The Pharisees who had challenged our Lord's authority, and to whom the former parable had been addressed, were retiring from Him in wrath, but, arrested by this call to continued attention, they stood where they were, at a short distance from Him, the people taking their place in the foreground. (Luke 20. 9.) **Planted a vineyard.** Our Lord evidently intended to bring before the minds of His hearers the picture of the vineyard so vividly described in Isa. 5. 1–7; for the imagery is precisely the same. But in Isaiah "the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel"—"the theocracy"; whereas in this parable the vineyard is the Jewish Economy in the abstract—the peculiar spiritual privileges by which the chosen people were distinguished in their covenant relation to God. This vineyard God planted under Moses and Joshua. **And hedged it round about**—by the Law and its institutions. (Num. 23. 9; Eph. 2. 14.) **And digged a winepress in it**—or, as in S. Mark, "a place for the winefat," a receptacle into which the juice of the grapes flowed, probably the Temple, the central scene of spiritual joy and adoration. **And built a tower**, for the watchmen—the "watch-tower" of the prophets (Hab. 2. 1; Isa. 21. 5–8), representing the prophetic office and its functions. **And let it out to husbandmen.** Clearly the authorised rulers and teachers of the Jewish people, the vine being the image of the people themselves. **And went into a far country**; S. Luke adds, "for a long time"—the whole period of their history as a nation, nearly two thousand years. God established them in Canaan, separating them from all other peoples; made complete provision of external arrangements to ensure spiritual productiveness—all such means as might be represented by a well-appointed vineyard, and imposed upon them the responsibility of making such a use of their privileges, under the guidance of their teachers, who are here specially intended, as should cause them to bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

34. **He sent His servants**—"His extraordinary messengers, the prophets (Jer. 44. 4)—**to the husbandmen**—the ordinary preachers or ministers among the Jews"—WESLEY.

That they might receive the fruits—*His* fruits, as owner of the vineyard. "And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6. 8.)

35. **The husbandmen took his servants**—as they came successively (S. Mark and S. Luke, whose statements are more full and detailed). The maltreatment of God's true prophets by the Jewish people and their leaders and representatives, when sent to them with messages from Himself, is frequently referred to in the Scriptures. (1 Kings 18. 4; 19. 10; 22. 24–27; Neh. 9. 26; Acts 7. 52; Heb. 11. 36–38.)

37. **But last of all he sent unto them his son**—in Mark, "Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved son")—**saying, They will reverence my son.** (Comp. Isa. 63. 8.) So it was reasonable to expect, but the result was not so. "The description of this last of the ambassadors as the householder's son, as his only one, his well-beloved, marks as strongly as possible the difference of rank between Christ and the prophets, the worth and dignity of His Person, who only was a Son in the highest sense of the word (Heb. 3. 5, 6); and undoubtedly they who were our Lord's hearers quite understood what He meant, and the honour which in these words He claimed as His own, though they were unable to turn His words against Himself, and to accuse Him on the strength of them of making Himself, as indeed He did, the Son of God"—T.

38. **This is the heir; come, let us kill him.** "The very words (in the Greek version) of Gen. 37. 20, where Joseph's brother expresses a similar resolution; and no doubt used by the Lord in reference to that history, is deeply typical of His rejection and exaltation. This resolution had actually been taken (John 11. 53)"—A. **Let us seize on his inheritance.** "Practically the vineyard was already theirs; by killing the heir, the only claimant to it would be put out of the way, and so the vine-

yard would become in every respect their own. For the husbandmen proceeded on the idea that as the owner was 'in a far country for a long time' he would not personally interfere—an impression strengthened by the circumstance that he had not avenged the former ill-usage of his servants, but only sent others in the hope of influencing them by gentleness"—ED.

41. **They say unto Him**, etc. The other Evangelists give this as our Lord's own answer to His question in the preceding sentence. Probably S. Matthew means that they signified their concurrence in the conclusion to which He was leading them, having failed to perceive the drift of the parable, or pretending to do so. The people, however, to whom our Lord had directly addressed the parable, understood its meaning, and some of them exclaimed, "God forbid" (Luke). "Thus were the scribes and Pharisees made to pass sentence upon themselves. They were the descendants of a race who had persecuted God's servants, the prophets, beating one and stoning another; and now they themselves were conspiring against the life of the Son, the Heir of the vineyard. Their Church privileges were therefore to be abolished, their nation destroyed, and the vineyard **let out to others**, who should **render the fruits in their season**. This was a plain allusion to the calling of the Gentiles"—R. W.

42. **Jesus saith unto them** (S. Luke, "beheld them, and said")—fixed His eyes on them with peculiar solemnity, as He was about to make a startling application to Himself of words which they well understood to refer to the Messiah. He had answered fully their demand on what authority He taught and acted; and here is the one all-inclusive reply, as contained in that very psalm from which first the multitude who celebrated His royal entry into the city, when the boys in the Temple itself had taken the *Hosanna* of welcome, which those scornful Pharisees had heard chanted in His honour as "the Son of David." **Did ye never read in the Scriptures.** (Ps. 118. 22.) One of His continual appeals to prophetic testimony. **The stone which the builders rejected**—as of no value—**the same is become the head of the corner.** Their contemptuous rejection of Him would not defeat the purposes of God. "'The builders'—the scribes and priests whose office it was to build up the Church. 'Is become the head of the corner'—or the chief corner-stone; He is become the foundation of the Church, on which the whole building rests; and its principal corner-stone for uniting the Gentiles to it, as the chief corner-stone of an house supports and links its two sides together"—WESLEY. (Isa. 28. 16; Acts 4. 11; Eph. 2. 20; 1 Pet. 2. 6.)

43. **Therefore**—returning to the parable from which He had departed for this decisive appeal, and now explaining its terrible meaning in plain words—**say I unto you**—who reject and will shortly kill the "Heir, the Beloved Son"—**the kingdom of God**—which has existed among you in its preparatory stage and form (Ps. 22. 27, 28), but the privileges of which you have slighted and abused—**shall be taken from you**—as a people—**and given to another nation.** Not to any particular nation, and not to the Gentiles generally as Gentiles, but to a nation constituted of spiritual men in union with Christ as their Life and Lord—"a holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Pet. 2. 9). (See Ex. 19. 5, 6; Luke 13. 29; Acts 13. 46, 47; Rom. 11. 13–17; 1 Cor. 10. 8; Gal. 4. 29.)

44. **And whosoever shall fall on this stone**—which the builders have rejected, and which through their unbelief has become to them "a stone of stumbling"—**shall be broken**—he who "stumbles at Christ, shall even then receive much hurt. He is said to fall on this stone who hears the gospel and does not believe"—WESLEY.

But on whomsoever it shall fall—from the head of the corner to which it shall be divinely raised, shall be utterly destroyed. "They on whom the stone falls are those who set themselves in distinct and self-conscious opposition against the Lord; who, knowing who He is, do yet to the end oppose themselves to Him and to His kingdom"—T. **It will grind him to powder** (R.V. "scatter him as the dust"). (Dan. 2. 35; 2. Thess. 1. 7–9.)

45, 46. **They perceived that He spake of them.** All the Evangelists record that the chief priests and Pharisees understood fully our Lord's meaning in its general reference to themselves; that they were exasperated by it, and would have laid hands on Him on the spot; but that they feared the people, who at that time **took Him**, if not for the Messiah, yet **for a prophet**. S. Mark adds that His adversaries "went away and left Him."

CHAPTER XXII.

Vers. 1–14. THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.—1. **And Jesus answered**—the signs of wrathful disappointment just shown by the departed deputation from the Sanhedrim, after having signally failed to find ground of accusation against Him.

2. **The kingdom of heaven.** The setting up of which was the special end of our Lord's ministry, and which He had just warned His hearers would be taken from them, as it had existed in its preparatory stage, and be given to a nation which would rightly use its privileges. (Ch. 21. 43.) **Is like unto a certain king**—God Himself, the "householder" of the former parable. **Which made a marriage** (R.V. "marriage feast") **for his son.** "So did God when He brought His First-Begotten into the world"—WESLEY.

The marriage feast consisted of more than one meal, but the principal meal was the supper, and the reference here is to "'the great marriage supper (Rev. 19. 9) of the Son of God,' *i.e.* His full and complete union to His Bride, the Church, in glory, which would be to the guests the ultimate result of accepting the invitation"—A. (Eph. 5. 25–27.)

3. **And sent forth his servants.** Here, not the prophets, as before (ch. 21. 34), but the first gospel messengers, meaning probably John the Baptist, the Apostles, and the Seventy. **To call them that were bidden**—the Jews, the chosen people already invited under the Law, the custom being to send a general preliminary invitation to expected guests, and afterwards summon them with the announcement that all was ready. (Esther 5. 8; 6. 14.) **And they would not come.** A sad example of this had been just before the eyes of our Lord's hearers in the angry withdrawment from Him of the chief priests and Pharisees.

4. **Again, he sent forth other servants**—with a more pressing call. The allusion here must be to the ministry of the apostles and evangelists, such as Stephen and Philip, after our Lord's ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. **Behold, I have prepared my dinner.** Not yet the supper, but the early meal, an image of the spiritual blessings to be realised in Christ even in the present life. **My oxen and my fatlings**—"fatted beasts and fowls"—WESLEY—**are killed, and all things are ready**—for the great evening banquet also. **Come unto the marriage.** Thus the servants are to repeat and explain their message, and to urge the acceptance of an invitation to take part in the feast provided by their king. So gracious and *long-suffering to usward* is He whom this king represents!

5. **But they made light of it.** Not being even at the pains to offer an apology or excuse; but in disregard of an invitation which they might have been expected to accept with thankfulness and joy. **Went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.** "One must mind what he has; another gain what he wants. How many perish by misusing lawful things!"—WESLEY.

6. **And the remnant** (R.V. "the rest")—the property-holders and traders having gone away, and the servants continuing to plead with those who lingered behind them—**took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them**—as literally came to pass in the case of James the brother of John, Stephen, and many more. (Acts 26. 10.)

7. **Sent forth his armies.** "The Roman armies, employed of God for that purpose"—WESLEY.

See, for a similar expression, Isa. 10. 5; Jer. 25. 9; Joel 2. 25. **Burned up their city**—Jerusalem, *their city*, no longer His.

8. **Were not worthy.** As their spirit and conduct had so sadly proved. (Acts 13. 46.)

9. **Go ye therefore into the highways.** "The word properly signifies the byways or turnings of the road"—WESLEY.

"Or it may be the points where different roads meet and branch off, and where people might always be found in large numbers. The persons here invited by the king were evidently those who are ordinarily overlooked and despised, and so their invitation represented the universal call of the gospel to men of all classes and nations, poor as well as rich—publicans, sinners, strangers, and Gentiles; a striking emblem of which was the indiscriminate and promiscuous crowds of people, from every part, who would always be hastening to some populous trading city of Palestine, where might be found not only Jews from distant nations, but Gentiles also, Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Chaldeans, Edomites, and many others. Yet all were bidden to the feast"—R. W.

10. **Both bad and good**—open sinners and men outwardly moral and righteous. All alike were to be invited; **as many** as the messengers found. "The doors of Christ's Church are to be thrown open to all who profess to accept the invitation; but it follows not from this, that no discipline is to be exercised in it before the King comes in 'to see the guests.' But it was not the design of the parable to illustrate this subject; and it is therefore passed over, that deficiency being abundantly supplied by other parts of the New Testament. It is however intimated, as in some other parables, that the Church would, after all, remain in a mixed state, and not be thoroughly purged of formalists and pretenders till the day of judgment. Then, indeed, the King will come 'in to see the guests'; every one of whom must pass the scrutiny of an omniscient eye, from which none can escape in the crowd. That piercing glance, which 'tries the reins and the heart,' will search the whole as though they were but one individual, and each individual of the vast assemblage as though he were alone"—R. W.

11. **The guests**—"the members of the visible Church"—WESLEY.

He saw there a man—one, alas! of the "many" (ver. 14)—**which had not on a wedding garment.** How this was to have been procured, the parable does not indicate. But "as the guests had been travellers, and as the feast was in the king's palace, we cannot be mistaken in supposing that such garments were supplied in the palace itself to all those who sought them. And with this agrees the circumstance, that the man when addressed by the king **was speechless** (*lit.* 'gagged' or 'muzzled'). His conduct argued utter insensibility as regarded that to which he had been called—ignorance of what was due to the king, and what became such a feast"—ED. What, then, is the spiritual meaning of this necessary and available but slighted "wedding gar-

ment"? The answer to this question is to be found in the true idea of "the kingdom of heaven," of the founding, growth, and consummation of which this parable is a miniature picture. It is clearly implied here, as in all our Lord's teaching respecting His kingdom, that it is essentially inward and spiritual. As in the parable which preceded it, the "kingdom of God" was distinguished from Jewish institutions, as represented by the vineyard and its appliances, so in this parable, although it has its visible means and activities, it is itself unseen. "The kingdom of heaven" consists of men who are individually in living union with Christ its Head, and in whom the gracious ends of His manifestation in their nature are being accomplished; who in humble acknowledgment of His kingly authority and rights, and in glad compliance with the "call of His servants," accept thankfully the spiritual blessings provided and offered in His name, and find in these an earnest of the supreme blessedness to be realised in Him hereafter. "The *marriage feast* or *dinner* (the communication of the grace of the gospel in this life) prepares for the 'marriage supper' of the Lamb (Rev. 19. 7–9), the enjoyment of eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory. Now, as without 'holiness, no man can see the Lord,' we may at once perceive what our Lord means by this 'marriage garment'; it is *holiness* of heart and life"—C. "That one word 'holiness,' implying, as it does in the Christian sense, both the regeneration of those who have penitently received Christ as the propitiation for sin, and the maturing of all the graces of their new nature by the same influence of the Holy Ghost, will fully express all that is comprehended by having the wedding or festal robe"—R. W. "It is the righteousness of Christ, first imputed, then implanted"—WESLEY.

Compare the expressions—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3. 5); "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19. 8); "the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3. 9); "put on Christ" (Gal. 3. 27); "put on the new man" (Eph. 4. 24; Col. 3. 18). Also Ps. 132. 9; Isa. 61. 10; Jer. 23. 5, 6; 1 Cor. 1. 20, 21).

12. **Friend**—a term implying great condescension on the part of the king, yet not used in derision—**how camest thou in hither?** By what right art thou found among my guests in thy disqualified condition?

13. **Then said the king to the servants.** Not the same as in vers. 3, 4; evidently angels are to be understood here, as in ch. 13. 39, 49.

14. "**Many are called; few chosen.** (Ch. 20. 16.) Many hear, few believe—yea, many are members of the visible, but few of the invisible, Church"—WESLEY.

Vers. 15–22. QUESTIONS OF HERODIANS: POLITICAL DEVICE. (Mark 12. 13–17; Luke 20. 21–25.)—15. **Then went the Pharisees.** Chiefly no doubt those who had just retired from our Lord discomfited and defeated. **Entangle** (R.V. "ensnare") **Him in His talk.** After consultation they agreed to try the power of skilful artifice.

16. **And they sent out unto Him their disciples**—apparently young, earnest students—**with the Herodians.** S. Luke describes them as "spies which should feign themselves just," or "righteous men," honestly desiring instruction. They came to Him with an assumed simplicity, intimating that they had been discussing a question of public importance on which they respectfully sought His guidance. "**The Herodians** were a set of men peculiarly attached to Herod, and consequently zealous for the interest of the Roman government, which was the main support of the dignity and royalty of his family. **Thou regardest not the person of men**—Thou favourest no man for his riches or greatness"—WESLEY.

We appeal to Thee as true, impartial, and fearless of consequences to Thyself; and know that Thou wilt speak Thy decision without reserve. "Herod Antipas was at this time at Jerusalem, which was the time of the Passover; and the Herodians here mentioned were probably in attendance upon him. The union of these with the disciples of the Pharisees was artfully adapted to the designed plot laid to entrap our Lord. The Pharisees were averse, on religious grounds, to pay tribute to the Romans—that is, to submit to their government; and the feeling of the body of the people was with them. Herod and his party leaned chiefly upon the Roman power, and therefore supported their claims, though more out of fear than affection"—R. W.

17. **Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?** "If He had said, Yes, the Pharisees would have accused Him to the people as a betrayer of the liberties of His country. If He had said, No (Deut. 17. 15), the Herodians would have accused Him to the Roman governor"—WESLEY.

18. **Ye hypocrites**—"pretending a scruple of conscience"—WESLEY.

19. **The tribute money**—"a Roman coin, stamped with the head of Cæsar, which was usually paid in tribute"—WESLEY.

21. "**They say to Him, Cæsar's**—plainly acknowledging, by their having received his coin, that they were under his government. And indeed this is a standing rule. The current coin of every nation shows who is the supreme governor of it. **Render, therefore,** ye Pharisees, **to Cæsar the things which** ye yourselves acknowledge to be **Cæsar's; and,** ye Herodians, while ye are zealous for Cæsar, see that ye **render to God the things that are God's**"—WESLEY.

"God was no longer, as of old, the civil Ruler of His people. They had rejected His authority, and He had given them over to a

foreign power, who reigned and claimed tribute by His ordinance. (Rom. 13. 1, 7.) But God was still, and must ever be, the spiritual Ruler of the world, and to Him now as ever worship and obedience were due. It was a striking comment on this answer when, three days afterwards, Christ declared before Pilate, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' and the chief priests, in demanding His death, declared, 'We have no king but Cæsar'"—S. C.

Vers. 23-33. QUESTION OF SADDUCEES: THEOLOGICAL QUIBBLE. (Mark 12. 18-27; Luke 20. 27-40.)—23. **The same day**—that most memorable day of testing, Tuesday, Nisan 12—**came to Him the Sadducees** (ch. 3. 7), **which say there is no resurrection**, and who also denied the immortality of the soul. (Acts 23. 8.) They were the materialists of that age.

24. **Master, Moses said.** (Deut. 25. 5.) The object of this law was the preservation of families, which had gradually ceased to be important.

25. **Now there were with us seven brethren.** "This story seems to have been a kind of commonplace objection, which no doubt they brought up on all occasions"—WESLEY.

Such a thing might have taken place according to the law, but probably never did happen. The mention of *seven* brethren, when, if the number had been two, the difficulty would have been the same, shows that the question had been framed to make the doctrine of the resurrection appear ridiculous and absurd.

28. **Whose wife shall she be?** etc. "It appears that though the Pharisees held the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, their gross corruption of all spiritual things which so influenced their interpretation of the prophecies respecting the Messiah, and converted the 'kingdom of heaven' into a worldly monarchy, had produced a like darkening effect upon their conceptions of a future state. They allowed of marriage in heaven"—R. W.

29. **Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures**—not rightly understanding even the Books of Moses, which they professed to receive with peculiar confidence.

30. **But are as the angels.** "What God would work was quite other than they imagined; not a mere reawakening, but a transformation. The world to come was not to be a reproduction of that which had passed away—else why should it have passed away—but a regeneration and renovation; and the body with which we were to be clothed would be like that which angels bear"—ED. "Incorruptible and immortal. So is the power of God shown in them. So little need have they of marriage"—WESLEY. (1 Cor. 15. 52.)

When thus calmly reasoning with *Sadducees*, our Lord does not prove the existence of angels, but assumes and affirms it. In S. Luke, "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world"—of purity and spiritual blessedness (Phil. 3. 11)—"are equal unto the angels," even *superior to them* in their privileges. (Heb. 1. 4; 2. 5-8.) Our Lord, not merely to silence His opponents, "but to instruct His followers, draws the veil more fully from before that new and eternal state of being which shall succeed the general resurrection, discloses its exclusive spiritual character, and shuts out for ever those gross conceptions with which imagination has clothed its pagan, pharisaic, and Mohammedan paradises. It does not, however, follow from this exalted view of a future life, that we shall not recognise each other, nor that those tender intellectual affections which bind pious friends and relations to each other on earth shall not there exist. The contrary is indicated in many passages; only we are to recollect that every affection will be purged, not only from sin, but from infirmity"—R. W.

31. **That which was spoken unto you by God.** (Ex. 3. 6, 15, 16.) (S. Mark, "In the Book of Moses"; S. Luke, "Even Moses showed"). They had cited an ordinance of Moses as the ground of their pretended difficulty; our Lord, therefore, appealed to Moses only. Probably they would not have refused to hear the more direct teaching of the Prophets—as Isa. 26. 19; Dan. 12. 2, though they attached less authority to them than to their Lawgiver. But it was enough for our Lord's purpose to refer to the books which "were the great and ultimate appeal for all doctrine," and certain it is that He "brings out in His answer a depth of meaning in the words which without it we could not discover"—A.

32. **I am the God of Abraham.** "The argument runs thus: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for that expression, 'thy God,' implies both benefit from God to man and duty from man to God. But He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; therefore Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead but living. Therefore the soul does not die with the body." "That God should call Himself the God of Abraham implies a relation wholly different from that in which He stands towards the beasts which perish. He is their Maker and Sustainer; but He is not *their* God; for they have no conscious relation towards Him as of a person to a person. That man is capable of a personal relation to God as *his* God, implies faculties and aspirations which cannot meet with their adequate object in this life, and therefore point to a life to come. That a feeling of this kind was present to the mind of Abraham himself, and of others of the patriarchs who confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, is stated in Heb. 11. 16"—S. C. Of course this great truth underlies Divine revelation from beginning to end. "Thus the *burden* of the Law, I AM THE LORD THY GOD, contains in it the

seed of immortality, and the hope of the resurrection"—A.

33. **They were astonished at His doctrine**—"at the clearness and solidity of His answers"—WESLEY.

"They were astonished at the clear and satisfactory manner in which the Teacher sent from God placed the greatest and most important subjects before them; the assured manner in which He spoke of eternal and invisible realities, as one possessing the most intimate knowledge of them; and the ease with which He detected the sophistry, and silenced the cavils, of their most noted doctors and disputants"—R. W.

Vers. 34–40. QUESTION OF A LAWYER: MORAL TEST. (Mark 12. 28–34.)—35. **A lawyer**—that is, an authorised interpreter of the Law of Moses; therefore, what S. Mark calls him, "a scribe"; but a lawyer was more particularly an expounder and teacher of the Law. **Tempting Him**—putting Him to the test. "Not, as it seems, with any ill design; but barely to make a further trial of that wisdom which He had shown in silencing the Sadducees"—WESLEY.

This may be inferred from our Lord's words of commendation. (Mark 12. 34.) But as he had been put forward by the Pharisees when **gathered together** in excited conference after hearing of the defeat of the Sadducees, there can be little doubt that the question was asked with the hope on their part that our Lord would give them ground of accusation against Him.

36. **Which is the great commandment in the Law?** "The positive is here used emphatically, and has therefore the force of the superlative. 'Which is the greatest commandment in the Law'; not the Law of the two tables, but the whole Law, comprehending all the precepts of Moses? On this subject the Jews differed, and warmly disputed, and continued to do so for a long time afterwards, as appears from their writings. As they called some commands 'light,' and others 'weighty,' some 'great,' others 'little,' it followed that some one must be the greatest and weightiest of them all; but on this day they were not agreed. Some contended for the law of the Sabbath, some for sacrifices, some for circumcision, some for the wearing of phylacteries, giving their reasons for each"—R. W. In S. Mark, however, the question has the more specific form, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

37. **Jesus said unto him**—quoting words which every Jew was required to repeat in his devotions twice a day—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6. 4–9) **—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind**; S. Mark adds, "And with all thy strength"—the four terms being used to give force to the command. Taken together, they denote that God is to be loved with all our powers of affection. If each has a meaning of its own, the "heart" includes, with the affections, the will and purpose; the "soul" signifies the perceptive and emotional powers; the "mind," the reasoning faculties; and the "strength," the energy of our whole nature. (Comp. 2 Kings 23. 25.)

38. **This is the first and great commandment.** For love to God constrains to obedience; so that in the Decalogue itself the two things are inseparably combined. "Them that love Me, and keep My commandments" (Ex. 20. 6). (See 1 John 2. 3, 4; 5. 3.)

39. **And the second is like unto it.** (Lev. 19. 18.) For it is the sense of all our duty to one another, as the first includes all our duty to God. "It is like to it," inasmuch as both are *laws of love;* both deduced from the great and highest love; both dependent on, *I am the Lord thy God*"—A. (Rom. 13. 9, 10; Gal. 5. 14.)

40. **Hang all the Law and the Prophets.** This was a Jewish expression, and would be well understood. Love to God and man is the root from which particular acts of obedience naturally spring. S. Mark adds that the lawyer declared his acceptance of this deep instruction of our Lord, and said that to love God supremely, and to love our neighbour as we ought to love ourselves, was "more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices"; perhaps having in his mind 1 Sam. 15. 22; Hos. 6. 6; Micah 6. 6–8. And that our Lord "said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God"—having a true discernment of its spiritual character and requirements. "The love of our neighbour springs from the love of God as its *source;* is found in the love of God as its *principle, pattern, and end;* and the love of God is found in the love of our neighbour, as its effect, representation, and infallible *mark.* This love of our neighbour is a love of *equity, charity, succour, and benevolence.* We owe to our neighbour what we have a right to expect from *him.* This is the religion of Jesus! How happy would society be were these two plain, rational precepts properly observed"—C.

Vers. 41–46. THE PHARISEES BAFFLED: THE SON OF DAVID. (Mark 12. 35–37; Luke 20 41–44.)

41. **While the Pharisees were gathered together.** (Ver. 34.) Astonished at the unlooked-for answers received to their successive questions, Jesus, in His turn becomes questioner—taking advantage, it may be, of a moment's silence.

42. **Saying, What think ye of Christ—the Christ? whose Son is He?** (John 7. 42; Ps. 132. 11; Jer. 23. 5; Micah 5. 2.) "The Pharisees had asked many questions of our Lord; and now, since they were collected about Him in the Temple, in the presence of the multitude, He proposes one to them; designing thereby

to convict them of being in ignorance of the true character of the Messiah, and to leave an impression of His superior nature upon the minds of His disciples, a truth as yet obscurely intimated, but which was soon to receive its strongest demonstration"—R. W.

43. **How then doth David in spirit** (R.V. "in the Spirit"; S. Mark, "by the Holy Ghost"), under Divine inspiration—**call Him Lord?** "If He be merely the Son (or descendant) of David! If He be, as you suppose, a mere man, the Son of Man"—WESLEY.

"How could He be his Lord, who was not to be born until many ages afterwards, and was certainly to have no secular dominion over him? This question the Pharisees could not answer, for indeed it admits of no reply but one, which should acknowledge the Divinity as well as the humanity of Christ; for in no other sense but as God over all could He be David's Lord, his Lord then, even before He was born into the world, and his Lord when He should be born, as ruling over the dead of all past ages, as well as over all living men"—R. W. Our Lord's appeal is to Ps. 110, which the Jews have always held to be messianic, and "which is more frequently cited by the New Testament writers than any other single portion of the ancient Scriptures." (Acts 2. 34, 35; 1 Cor. 15. 25; Heb. 1. 13; 5. 6; 7. 17-21.)

44. **The Lord** (Jehovah) **said unto my Lord** (Adonai, My Sovereign Ruler). "This His dominion, to which David himself was subject, shows both the heavenly majesty of the King, and the nature of His kingdom. **Sit Thou on My right hand**—that is, remain in the highest authority and power"—WESLEY. (Comp. ch. 20. 21.)

Only two days before, our Lord had been openly called the "Son of David," and He had accepted the title as pertaining to Him by right. His hearers could not therefore have mistaken His intention when He referred them to those well-known words.

45. **How is He his Son?** We know the true answer to this question, "He was made of the seed of David after the flesh," or with regard to His human nature, but He was the Son of God, "according to the Spirit of holiness," or according to His Divine nature. He was the God-Man, Son of David, but also *Lord of all.* (Rom. 1. 3.)

46. **No man was able to answer Him a word.** Just as they had been equally baffled when asked to declare whether John the Baptist was a true or a false prophet (ch. 21. 23-27). **Ask Him any more questions**—"by way of ensnaring or tempting Him"—WESLEY.

"And thus our blessed Lord delivered Himself from the intrusion of these captious and cavilling men, and was left to pursue His own great work, without interruption, to the time of His sufferings, which were now approaching; this being the third day before the Passover, on which 'He was sacrificed for us'"—R. W.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Vers. 1-39. OUR LORD'S LAST PUBLIC DISCOURSE.—1. **Then.** "Leaving all converse with His adversaries, whom He now left to the hardness of their hearts"—and whose incompetence as teachers He had demonstrated. The great discourse which follows was spoken to **the multitude** ("the common people") **and to His disciples**, but no doubt within the hearing of some of His discomfited enemies, as when speaking directly to them the people stood as eager listeners around them. It is His last, unsparing, awfully severe, yet most tenderly loving denunciation of the hypocrisy, formality, and pride of the leaders of the people and of the age, mingled with injunctions and warnings for the personal guidance of those who professed to be His followers, and closing with an outburst of compassionate lamentation over the doomed city, whose children He would fain have gathered under His protecting wings.

2. **Sit in Moses' seat**—"that is, read and expound the Law of Moses, and are their appointed teachers"—WESLEY. (Ex. 18. 16; Deut. 17. 9-13.)

The place of authority they occupied was to be duly recognised.

3. **Whatsoever they bid you observe**—"which they read out of the Law, and enforce therefrom"—WESLEY.

That observe and do. (Rom. 2. 21-25.) Not, however, the glosses and traditions which they superadd to the Law in mere human authority. (Ch. 15. 1-6; John 5. 10; also vers. 15-29 below.)

4. **They bind heavy burdens.** (Acts 15. 10.) They so enforce the Law itself as to make its injunctions an intolerable burden to others, evading them for themselves.

5. **All their works they do to be seen of men.** (Ch. 6. 1-16.) All from vanity and self-seeking. **They make broad their phylacteries.** "The Jews, understanding those words literally, 'It shall be as a token upon thy hand, and as frontlets between thine eyes' (Ex. 13. 16), 'And thou shalt bind these words for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes' (Deut. 6. 8), used to wear little scrolls of paper or parchment enclosed in a leather case, and bound on their wrists and foreheads, on which several texts of Scripture were writ. These they supposed, as a kind of charm, would preserve them from danger. And hence they seem to have been called phylacteries, or preservatives"—WESLEY.

"The Pharisees wore these phylacteries, either broader than others, so that more might be written upon them, or they enlarged the case, so as to contain a greater number of sentences, so that they might appear to have

a greater reverence for the Law than others" —R. W. **Enlarge the borders** (fringes) **of their garments**—"which God had enjoined them to wear, to remind them of doing all the commandments. (Num. 15. 38.) These, as well as their phylacteries, the Pharisees affected to wear broader and larger than other men"—R. W.

6. **Love the uppermost rooms.** (Mark 12. 39; Luke 14. 7-11.) The first or most honourable place. (Comp. 1 Sam 9. 22.) **Chief seats in the synagogues.** (Luke 11. 43.) Places in a semi-circle fronting the congregation.

7. **Greetings in the markets.** "These salutations, short and simple among all in ancient times, had become disgustingly long and ceremonious, and especially when a person of superior rank was addressed. They were commenced at a distance, accompanied with various humble gestures, and continued till the parties met. These forms the scribes and Pharisees exacted of their disciples and the common people"—R. W. **To be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi**—that is, "My Master" (John 1. 38). It was a title of honour "used by scholars to their masters, who were never called by their own names by their scholars" —A. It signifies *great one*, and had but recently come into use. Originally it was given only to persons of high civil rank. "So weighty was the duty of respectful salutation by the title Rabbi, that to neglect it would involve the heaviest punishment. Two great rabbis are described as literally complaining that they must have lost the very appearance of learning, since in the market-place they had only been greeted with 'May your peace be great,' without the addition, 'My Masters'" —ED.

8. **Be not ye called Rabbi.** (Jas. 3. 1; 1 Pet. 5. 3; 2 Cor. 1. 24.) "Though the disciples were to be constituted public teachers, this was only as servants conveying the words of their Master to the people, without any mixture of their own. The Jewish teachers assumed an authority to set up tradition above the Law, to pervert its meaning, and to make additions to it, on the sole authority of their own pretended wisdom. But the disciples were only to speak the words of another; and all titles, therefore, complimentary to their own wisdom, and which indicated any authority arising from their personal qualifications, were specially forbidden to them"—R. W.

9, 10. **And call no man your father, etc.** "The Jewish rabbis were also called father and master by their several disciples, whom they required—(1) to believe implicitly what they affirmed, without asking any further reason; (2) to obey implicitly what they enjoined, without seeking further authority. Our Lord, therefore, by forbidding us either to give or receive the title of rabbi, master, or father, forbids us either to receive any such reverence, or to pay any such to any but God" —WESLEY.

12. **Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased.** (Ezek. 21. 26; Luke 1. 52; 1 Pet. 5. 5.) "It is observable that no one sentence of our Lord's is so often repeated as this; it occurs with scarce any variation at least ten times in the Gospels"—WESLEY.

13. **Woe unto you.** (Comp. Isa. 1. 2-23; 5. 8-23.) "Our Lord pronounced eight blessings upon the Mount; He pronounces eight woes here—not as imprecations, but solemn, compassionate declarations of the misery which these stubborn sinners were bringing upon themselves. **Ye go not in**—for ye are not poor in spirit; and ye hinder those that would be so"—WESLEY.

The allusion in the words, **Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven**, is to the key which was presented to a scribe on admission to his office as the symbol of his duties, and the meaning is, Ye falsely interpret the Scriptures which testify of Me and My kingdom. "In Luke 11. 52 it is added, 'Ye have taken away the key of knowledge'—the key being, not the key *of*, i.e. *admitting to* knowledge, but *the knowledge* itself—the true, simple interpretation of Scripture which would have admitted them, and caused them to admit others, into the kingdom of heaven, by the recognition of Him of whom the Scriptures testify; whereas now, by their perverse interpretations, they had shut out both themselves and others from it. See a notable instance of this latter in John 9. 24. They shut the door, as it were, in men's faces who were entering"—A.

14. **Ye devour widows' houses.** (Mark 12. 40; Luke 20. 47; comp. 2 Tim. 3. 6; Tit. 1. 11.) "They made a prey of weak, superstitious women who, being widows, had no protectors, and had property at their own disposal. And this they did under pretence of the greatest sanctity, **making long** and frequent **prayers**, and that so publicly, both in the synagogues and public places, as to be seen and praised of men. Yet, says our Lord, for these long prayers—because they were made for a pretext, in order to carry on covetous and rapacious designs more effectually—**ye shall receive greater**—more extreme—**damnation.** Let it be remarked, that neither is length nor shortness of prayer censured or approved. What Christ condemns is simply the hypocrisy, the **pretence**, or disguise, intended by them. Prayers may be long or short, according to the occasion and circumstances"—R. W.

15. **Ye compass sea and land**—a proverbial expression meaning, ye leave no effort untried —**to make one proselyte**—that is, "one convert." "Proselytes are generally reckoned of two kinds: the first, proselytes of the covenant or of righteousness, who were converts made from the Gentiles to Judaism, submitted to circumcision, and in every respect conformed to the Law. The rule of Moses, with respect

to these was, that they should be 'as those born in the land'; that is, be reckoned as Jews. But many strangers and aliens dwelt among the Jews, on condition of their not practising idolatry, nor worshipping any other God beside Jehovah; and refraining from labour on the Jewish Sabbath; and were permitted to pay their worship to God in the outer court of the Temple, or Court of the Gentiles, but separated from the other courts by a wall of partition. These the later rabbins have called proselytes of the gate, obliged to observe the seven precepts of Noah (which, however, are nowhere to be found but in their writings), but not to conform to the Law generally"—R. W. Probably, however, our Lord does not refer to conversion to Judaism in general, but to the pains taken by the Pharisees to allure wealthy Gentiles into their own party for the sake of gain or greater influence. **Twofold more the child of hell.** (Ch. 5. 22; 11. 23.) For what could a proselyte made by covetous and hypocritical teachers become but a disciple of hypocrisy—neither a sincere heathen nor a sincere Jew! "Perverted proselytes are commonly the greatest bigots; the scholars outdid their masters—(1) in fondness of ceremony; (2) in fury against Christianity"—N.

16. **Blind guides.** (Ch. 15. 14.) "Before, He had styled them hypocrites, from their personal character; now He gives them another title, respecting their influence upon others. Both these appellations are severely put together in the twenty-third and twenty-fifth verses; and this severity rises to the height in the thirty-third verse. **The gold of the Temple**—the treasure kept there"—WESLEY.

More especially gold which has been devoted as a *gift to God*. (Ch. 15. 5, 6.) **He is a debtor**—that is, is bound to keep his oath.

20. **"He that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it and by all things thereon.** Not only by the gift, but by the holy fire and the sacrifice; and, above all, by that God to whom they belong—inasmuch as every oath by a creature is an implicit appeal to God"—WESLEY.

23. **Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin.** (Luke 11. 42.) By the Law a tenth part of the produce of the land and of the flocks and herds was to be set apart for the priesthood. (Lev. 27. 31–33.) "But by this it was not understood that insignificant herbs were included, as not properly coming under that denomination, and being of little value. The Pharisees, however, in their affectation of being more scrupulous in the observance of the Law than others, or seeking to increase the merit of their righteousness by a work of supererogation, gave the title of 'mint,' 'anise,' (rather dill), and 'cummin.' These are mentioned as specimens; for S. Luke adds, 'all manner of herbs'"—R. W. **Omitted the weightier matters of the Law.** (Isa. 1. 27; Hosea 12. 6.) Weightier even than the whole Ceremonial Law—**judgment, mercy, and faith**—fidelity to God, or general faithfulness. "Our Lord in speaking of these as 'the weightier matters of the Law,' probably adverted to their distinguishing the legal precepts into weighty and light. With them the true order was reversed, and moral duties and vital religious affections were postponed to trivial observances. The true order was restored by our great Teacher for the instruction of His disciples in all ages. **These** (weightier matters) **ought ye to have done; and not to have left the other undone.** This last clause, however, is not to be interpreted into a sanction by our Lord of this superstitious and self-righteous payment of a tithe on herbs. It is a concession on their own principles; for to pay tenths of these things was a trifling matter in itself, and might be innocently observed or not, according to the principle which actuated each individual; but allowing them that they ought to do this, **judgment, mercy, and faith** were the duties bound upon their consciences, and which could not be neglected without the highest guilt and danger. Our Lord, in this passage, appears to allude to Micah 6. 6–8, where the superior acceptableness to God of moral habits and acts to sacrifices and offerings themselves, however costly, is forcibly expressed"—R. W.

24. **Ye blind guides**—"Who teach others to do as you do yourselves, to **strain out a gnat**—from the liquor you are going to drink"—WESLEY—(R.V. "strain out the gnat")—**and swallow a camel**—which is not only of immense size but is ceremonially unclean, not dividing the hoof. (Lev. 11. 4.)

25. **Ye make clean,** etc. (Mark 7. 4; Luke 11. 39.) Ye scrupulously observe all religious rites and ceremonies. **Within they are full of** (R.V. "full from"), in consequence of **extortion and excess.** "*Full of rapine and intemperance.* The censure is double, taking intemperance in the vulgar sense. These miserable men procured unjustly what they used intemperately. No wonder tables so furnished prove a snare, as many find by sad experience. Thus luxury punishes fraud, while it feeds disease with the fruits of injustice. But intemperance, in the full sense, takes in not only all kinds of outward intemperance, particularly in eating and drinking, but all intemperate or immoderate desires, whether of honour, gain, or sensual pleasure"—WESLEY.

27. **Whited sepulchres.** Annually, before the Passover, the Jews whitewashed tombs and graves, not merely for ornament, but lest passers-by should come in contact with them unawares, and so contract uncleanness. (Num. 19. 16.) At the time when our Lord was speaking this would have been just done, so that the places would look clean and fresh. "This goes to the root of the mischief at once: your heart is not a temple of the living God,

but a grave of pestilent corruption; not a heaven but a hell. And your religion is but the whitewash, hardly skin deep"—A.

28. **Appear righteous unto men.** "But what will this appearance avail a man, when God sits in judgment upon his soul? Will the fair reputation which he had acquired among men, while his heart was the seat of unrighteousness, screen him from the stroke of that justice which impartially sends all impurity and unholiness into the pit of destruction?"—C.

29. **Ye build the tombs of the prophets.** (Luke 11. 47, 48.) "And that is all; for ye neither observe their sayings nor imitate their actions"—WESLEY.

30. **We would not have been partakers with them.** "So ye make fair professions, as did your fathers"—WESLEY.

31. **The children of them which killed the prophets.** (John 8. 39, 40, 44; Acts 7. 51; 1 Thess. 2. 15.) The word "children" (sons) is used both literally and figuratively: Ye acknowledge your natural descent from the men who killed the prophets, but deny that you inherit their moral character; yet at this moment you are plotting to take away My life.

"Ye testify by your smooth words, as well as devilish actions, that ye are the genuine sons of them who killed the prophets of their own times, while they professed the utmost veneration for those of past ages.

"From the third to the thirtieth verse is exposed everything that commonly passes in the world for religion, whereby the pretenders to it keep both themselves and others from entering into the kingdom of God, from attaining or even seeking after those tempers in which alone true Christianity consists:—As (1) Punctuality in attending on public and private prayer (vers. 4–14); (2) Zeal to make proselytes to our opinion or communion, though they have less of the spirit of religion than before (ver. 15); (3) A superstitious reverence for those consecrated places or things, without any for Him to whom they are consecrated (vers. 16–22); (4) A scrupulous exactness in little observances, though with the neglect of justice, mercy, and faith (vers. 23, 24); (5) A nice cautiousness to cleanse the outward behaviour, but without any regard to inward purity (vers. 25, 26); (6) A specious face of virtue and piety, covering the deepest hypocrisy and villainy (vers. 27, 28); (7) A professed veneration for all good men, except those among whom they live"—WESLEY.

32. **Fill ye up then.** (Gen. 15. 16; Acts 7. 52.) A word not of irony, but of deep sorrow and despair. "As if He had said, I contend with you no longer: I leave you to yourselves: you have conquered: now ye may follow the devices of your own hearts. **The measure of your fathers'** wickedness: ye may now be as wicked as they"—WESLEY.

33. **Ye serpents.** (See ch. 3. 7.) "Our Lord, having now lost all hope of reclaiming these, speaks so as to affright others from the like sins"—WESLEY.

34. **Wherefore**—that it may appear that you are the true children of those murderers, and have a right to have their iniquities visited on you—**behold, I send.** Is not this speaking as one having authority? **Prophets**—men with supernatural credentials. **Wise men**—such as have both natural abilities and experience. **And scribes**—men of learning; but all will not avail. (Acts 5. 40; 7. 59; 12. 2; 23. 19; 26. 11.)

35. **That upon you may come.** "The consequence of which will be, that upon you will come the vengeance of all the **righteous blood shed on earth. Zacharias, the son of Barachias**—termed Jehoiada (2 Chron. 24. 20), where the story is related. **Ye slew**—ye make that murder also of your fathers your own, by imitating it—**between the Temple**—that is, the inner Temple—**and the altar,** which stood in the outer court. Our Lord seems to refer to this instance rather than any other, because He was the last of the prophets on record that were slain by the Jews for reproving their wickedness; and because God's requiring this blood, as well as that of Abel, is particularly taken notice of in Scripture"—WESLEY.

36. **This generation.** Guilty of the crowning sin of rejecting the Christ. (Acts 7. 51, 52.)

37. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.** (Luke 13. 34; 19. 41–44.) "His parting words are no longer denunciations of woe, but the deep wail of a heart wounded because its love has been despised"—M. **As a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.** (Deut. 32. 11; Ps. 17. 8; 36. 7; 57. 1; 61. 4; Isa. 31. 5; Mal. 4. 2.) This image of protection and rest was familiar to our Lord's hearers. Proselytes were spoken of as gathered under the wings of the Shechinah. **Ye would not.** (Isa. 28. 12; 30. 15.) "Every part of this apostrophe is charged with feeling and beauty. The repetition of the word Jerusalem, denoting how intensely the mind was fixed upon an object of interest; the comparison of His own intense desire to save the people of His own nation from these impending calamities, with the restless anxiety of the parent bird to shelter her brood, from birds of prey, under her wings; the frequency of His calls and warnings; and the despairing conclusion—'and ye would not!' are all deeply touching. Nor is this expression of our blessed Saviour's compassion to be confined to the Jews. It is an exhibition of His character instructive to all ages. It was this tender concern for human salvation which brought Him from heaven, and carried Him through His painful course of humiliation, shame, and sorrow; and now every annunciation of His gospel is a call to us to the shelter of His wings from impending danger. He

would gather us together there, and be our eternal refuge from the vengeance which we have so justly provoked; and if we are not saved, this is not only against His intention, but His anxious attempts and most sincere endeavours to bring us, by the use of a variety of means, to a better mind. I *would* and *ye would not*, are words which at once declare the fulness of His grace, and place the sole and aggravated fault of the final destruction of men upon themselves alone"—R. W.

38. **Behold, your house**—"the Temple, which is now your house, not God's—**is left unto you.** Our Lord spake this as He was going out of it for the last time. **Desolate**—forsaken of God and His Christ, and sentenced to utter destruction"—WESLEY.

39. "**Ye**—Jews in general, men of Jerusalem in particular—**shall not see Me from this time**—which includes the short space till His death—**till**—after a long interval of desolation and misery—**ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord**—ye receive Me with joyful and thankful hearts. This also shall be accomplished in its season"—WESLEY. (Deut. 4. 30, 31; Hosea 3. 4, 5; Zech. 12. 10; 14. 8–11.)

"The words contain a remarkable instance of a threatening and a promise; and each is of the most emphatic import, being couched under the same terms. A long and dark interval was to take place in which they should not see Him, have no perception of the truth of His mission, and be separated from His peculiar mercies,—a long night in which they should wander in ignorance and unbelief, denationalised, unchurched, and deserted by God; but still ultimately they shall see Him in all the demonstrations of His divinity and redeeming offices, shall acknowledge Him as the true Christ, and take up that very acclamation of the multitudes in the streets of Jerusalem, at which their fathers were maddened into rage, and cry with them, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord'"—R. W. (Rom. 11. 25, 26.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

Vers. 1–51. FALL OF JERUSALEM AND OUR LORD'S SECOND COMING. (Mark 13. 1–37; Luke 21. 5–36.)—1. **Went out, and departed from the Temple** (R.V. "went out from the Temple, and was going on His way"). After uttering His last and most terrible denunciation of Pharisaism, our Lord passed towards the Court of the Women, and, sitting down in silent sadness on the steps which led into it, "He beheld how the people cast money into the treasury"—that is, into the boxes which stood in the Court of the Women, to receive the freewill contributions of the worshippers for religious and charitable purposes. There He found a beautiful example of real self-denial, in the case of a poor widow who gave her "two mites"; and He called the attention of His apostles to it, in order to impress upon them—by the contrast between her gift and the contributions of the rich "out of their abundance," and between her character and that of the self-seeking men whom He had just so severely condemned—how all important in the sight of God is real self-sacrifice in His service. (Mark 12. 41–44; Luke 21. 1–4.) He was then calmly withdrawing from the Temple for the last time, when **His disciples came to Him**—anxious and perplexed through His prediction of its coming desolation; and one of them "saith to Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here" (Mark), inviting His attention once more to the immensity of the architectural structure they were quitting for ever—the vast area it occupied—and "how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts" (Luke). The Temple proper was small, but the courts, cloisters, and towers by which it was surrounded constituted it one of the most magnificent edifices in the world. Some of its stones are said to have been more than twenty feet long; its rows of Corinthian pillars were cut wholly out of blocks of pure white or variegated marble, and were more than thirty-seven feet high; eight of its gates were overlaid with gold or silver plates, and a ninth, called "The Beautiful Gate," was covered with dazzling Corinthian brass. And this vast and gorgeous fabric was doomed to be shortly destroyed! (Luke 19. 43, 44.)

2. **Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.** "This was most punctually fulfilled; for after the Temple was burned, Titus, the Roman general, ordered the very foundations of it to be dug up; after which the ground on which it stood was ploughed up by Turnus Rufus"—WESLEY.

This is the statement of Josephus, and its correctness has been recently attested by the careful investigations of the Palestine Exploration Society.

3. **As He sat upon the Mount of Olives.** S. Mark adds, with his characteristic observance of graphic details, "over against the Temple." No doubt gazing tenderly upon it as it reposed peacefully in the glorious rays of the setting sun. **The disciples came unto Him privately**—not all of them, but "Peter and James and John and Andrew" (Mark). He seems to have sat apart for a while as if in silent contemplation; but they all longed to know something more of solemn, future events which so deeply affected them, and these, the more confidential apostles, venture to approach Him with the twofold inquiry—**Tell us, when shall these things be?**—the dreadful calamities just foretold—**and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?** Our Lord had intimated that there would be an indefinite interval between the judgment upon the Temple

and the city and His reappearing, when the people who now rejected Him should welcome His return. (Ch. 23. 39.) Whether the apostles so understood Him or not is not clear. But in His answer He now speaks distinctly concerning—"(1) the destruction of the Temple and city, with the signs preceding (vers. 4, etc.; 15, etc.); (2) His own coming, and the end of the world, with the signs thereof (vers. 29–31); (3) the time of the destruction of the Temple (vers. 32, etc.); (4) the time of the end of the world (ver. 36)"—WESLEY.

4. **Take heed that no man deceive you.** Similarly Luke 13. 23, 24. "The caution is more particularly designed for the succeeding Christians, whom the apostles then represented. The first sign of My coming is, the rise of false prophets. But it is highly probable many of these things refer to more important events, which are yet to come"—WESLEY.

5. **For many shall come in My name**—"first, *false Christs*, next, 'false prophets' (ver. 11); at length, both together (ver. 24). And, indeed, never did so many impostors appear in the world, as a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem, undoubtedly because that was the time wherein the Jews in general expected the Messiah"—WESLEY. (See 1 John 2. 18; 4. 3; 2 John 7; Jer. 14. 14; John 5. 43.)

6. **Wars and rumours of wars**—"that is, war actual and war threatened; or 'wars near.' 'Rumours of war'—at a distance. **All these things must come to pass**—as a foundation for lasting tranquillity. **But the end**—concerning which ye inquire—**is not yet.** So far from it, that this is but **the beginning of sorrows**"—WESLEY. (R.V. "Beginning of travail.") "The death-throes of the Jewish state precede the *regeneration* of the universal Christian Church, as the death-throes of this world, the new heavens and new earth"—A. (Rom. 8. 22.)

9. **Then**—during the same time—**shall they deliver you up to be afflicted.** (Acts 4. 3; 5. 17–41; 6. 11–13; 12. 2; 16. 19–39; 25. 23; 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17.) **And ye shall be hated of all nations**—"even of those who tolerate all other sects and parties; but in no nation will the children of the devil tolerate the children of God"—WESLEY. (Acts 28. 22; 1 Pet. 2. 12; 3. 16; 4. 14-16; 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13.)

"Our Lord knew the hearts of men everywhere, and how they would be affected by a religion, simple in its worship, humbling in its doctrines, terrible to sinners in its disclosures of a general judgment and future punishment, rigid in its moral discipline, and holding out to hope few beside spiritual blessings; He knew how the carnal mind, which is naturally enmity to God, would manifest itself when a religion of this character, and pressing upon it with the weight of this authority, should be everywhere introduced; and the event proved the infallibility of His knowledge and the truth of His predictions"—R. W.

10. **Many shall be offended** (R.V. "shall stumble"). This refers to professed believers. Many of them would *fall away* when persecuted. (Ch. 13. 21.) "The difficulties and sufferings of the Christian life in these seasons of persecution would be as stumbling-blocks to many, who would hasten out of so rough and dangerous a path; and such persons would be the first to **betray** others, and deliver them up to their persecutors, and so discover the **hate** which apostates usually feel to the faithful. For nobly as the early Christians, as a body, braved the storms which were excited against them—and truly it was then seen with what sublimity religion invests the human character—there were among them false brethren, who either entirely shunned the cross, or fainted when it began to press heavily"—R. W. (2 Tim. 1. 15; 4. 16.)

11. **False prophets**—that is, false teachers—not false Christs (ver. 5); teachers in Christ's name of that which was *not His gospel;* Judaists, Antinomians, and others, to whom the Apostolic Epistles so often refer. (Acts 20. 30; Gal. 1. 7–9; Rom. 16. 17, 18; Col. 2. 8, 18.)

12. **And because iniquity shall abound.** (2 Thess. 2. 7.) **The love of many**—that is, of *the* many), of the masses of professed believers—**shall wax cold.** "Love to Christ is the only preservative from sin; and especially when all example strongly enforces it, and the public standard of morals is low. When man is not upheld by outward circumstances, he can only be sustained by some inward principle; and that which renders sin most abhorrent to the will is 'the love of God shed abroad' in the heart. But if by little and little, by unwatchfulness and compliance with the example of others in smaller things, the vigour of that affection is suffered to decay, then the more powerful temptations prevail, and the Divine principle of love becomes extinct. For by growing cold, we are not to understand the lukewarm state, but an entirely lapsed condition; the fire is not merely cooled, but gone out"—R. W. "But hold ye fast faith (ver. 11), in spite of 'false prophets'; love, even when iniquity and offences abound (ver. 12); and hope unto the end (ver. 13). He that does so shall be snatched out of the burning. 'The love of many will wax cold'—the generality of those who love God will, like the Church at Ephesus (Rev. 2. 4), leave their first love"—WESLEY.

13. **But he that shall endure unto the end.** In the case of the individual *he*, the end of life. He that shall patiently bear the trials and conflicts to which he may be subject as one of My followers **shall be saved**, eternally. In S. Luke, special Divine aid and protection are also promised.

14. **And this gospel of the kingdom**—which

I commit to you, and for which you will be persecuted (ch. 9. 35)—**shall be preached in all the world.** (Rom. 10. 18; Col. 1. 6, 23; 2 Tim. 4. 17.) "This was necessary, not only as regarded the Gentiles, but to give God's people the Jews, who were scattered among all these nations, the opportunity of receiving or rejecting the preaching of Christ. But, in the wider sense, the words imply that the gospel shall be preached in all the world, literally taken, before this great and final end come"—A. "Here **the end**, specially referred to, is the end of the Temple and of the commonwealth of the Jews. Josephus's *History of the Jewish War* is the best commentary on this chapter. It is a wonderful instance of God's providence, that he, an eye-witness, and one who lived and died a Jew, should, especially in so extraordinary a manner, be preserved to transmit to us a collection of important facts, which so exactly illustrate this glorious prophecy, in almost every circumstance"—WESLEY.

15. **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation.** "Daniel's term is, 'the abomination that maketh desolate' (Dan. 11. 31)—that is, the standard of the desolating legions, on which they bear the abominable images of their idols. **Standing in the holy place.** Not only the Temple, and the mountain on which it stood, but the whole city of Jerusalem, and several furlongs of land round about it, were accounted 'holy'; particularly the Mount on which our Lord now sat, and on which the Romans afterwards planted their ensigns. **He that readeth, let him understand.** Whosoever reads that prophecy of Daniel, let him deeply consider it"—WESLEY. (Comp. **Dan. 9. 27**; 12. 11.)

The parallel passage in S. Luke is, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies" (the armies of Rome, the abominable for its idolatry), "then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." "Which may probably be regarded as a paraphrase, intended to explain to Gentile readers the meaning (or rather the mode of fulfilment) of the obscure prophecy of Daniel"—S. C.

16. **"Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains.** So the Christians did, and were preserved. It is remarkable that after the Romans, under Cestius Gallus, made their first advance toward Jerusalem, they suddenly withdrew again, in a most unexpected and indeed impolitic manner. This the Christians took as a signal to retire, which they did, some to Pella, and others to Mount Libanus"—WESLEY.

17. **Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house.** "It may be remembered, that their stairs used to be on the outside of their houses"—WESLEY.

19. **"Woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck** — because they cannot so readily make their escape"—WESLEY.

20. **But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.** "They did so; and their flight was in the spring. **Neither on the Sabbath**—being on many accounts inconvenient; besides that many would have scrupled to travel far on that day. For the Jews thought it unlawful to walk above two thousand paces (two miles) on the Sabbath day"—WESLEY.

21. **Then shall be great tribulation.** "Have not many things spoken in this chapter, as well as in Mark 13 and Luke 21, a further and much more extensive meaning than has been yet fulfilled?"—WESLEY. (Comp. Dan. 12. 1.)

But taken with reference to the fall of Jerusalem, which our Lord had immediately in view, His words were awfully fulfilled. "The horrors of war and sedition, of famine and pestilence, were such as exceeded all example or conception. The city was densely crowded by the multitudes which had come to the Passover. Pestilence ensued, and famine followed. The commonest instincts of humanity were forgotten. Acts of violence and cruelty were perpetrated without compunction or remorse, and barbarities enacted which cannot be described. Mothers snatched the food from the mouths of their husbands and children, and one actually killed, roasted, and devoured her infant son. (Comp. Lev. 26. 29; Deut. 28. 56, 57.) Dead bodies filled the houses and streets of the city, while cruel assassins rifled and mangled with the exultation of fiends. The besieged devoured even the filth of the streets, and so excessive was the stench that it was necessary to hurl 600,000 corpses over the walls, while 97,000 captives were taken during the war, and more than 1,100,000 perished in the siege"—C. B.

22. **And except those days should be shortened** — by Divine interposition — (S. Mark, "Except the Lord had shortened those days"). "The whole siege by Titus occupied less than five months, and the conduct of the besieged themselves considerably shortened the resistance they might otherwise have made. The seditions which prevailed within the city contributed to hasten its overthrow; and the final abandonment of the strongest part of the fortifications enabled the Romans, as Josephus says, to obtain by fortune what they could not have taken by force. Titus himself indeed confessed that his success in this respect was owing to Divine assistance"—S. C. **For the elect's sake.** For the sake of Christian Jews (Rom. 11. 5-7), some of whom had fled to the mountains at an early period of the siege, as instructed by our Lord (ver. 16), and must have perished there if the siege had been prolonged; others probably had been unable to leave the city.

23, 24. **Then**—during that period, as at "the

beginning of sorrows,"—**if any man shall say unto you**, etc. The repetition of this warning shows how greatly liable Jewish believers would be to take the calamities which came upon them for *signs* of His reappearing, and how readily impostors would take advantage of this weakness for gaining their confidence as divinely sent deliverers. Let those who were truly His followers be peculiarly on their guard against being misled by these seducers. "But the words are not to be limited to this period. Our Lord is speaking with reference to His second as well as His first coming, and warns not only His living disciples, but those who should come after them, that many false Christs would appear in the world before the one and the other coming of the true Christ; perhaps at various times before the latter"—S. C. **Shall show great signs and wonders.** (2 Thess. 2. 9.) **If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.** "But it is not possible that God should suffer the body of Christians to be thus deceived"—WESLEY.

"The *elect* are the Christians, as distinguished from the Jews; and the words express the powerful efforts to deceive made by the seducers, and the great difficulty of succeeding with Christians. This would arise from the abundant evidence they had of the truth of Christ's mission; the witness in themselves, in their own moral experience, of the certainty and excellency of His religion; and from that elevation of the intellect, and that dominion over superstition, which Christianity truly received never fails to produce. Accordingly, we find that the body of Christians remained unmoved by the most plausible of these pretenders. But those that should argue from the words, 'if it were possible,' that the seduction of the elect—that is, of even true Christians—is impossible, forget how solemnly our Lord warns them to 'take heed' and to 'watch' and 'pray,' all which supposes danger, and that of no common kind"—R. W.

26. **Behold, He is in the desert** (Acts 21. 38) —where He expects His followers to gather around Him. **In the secret chambers**—to be consulted in private, or to mature His schemes for your deliverance. **Believe it not**—a solemn charge, spoken to "the very elect."

27. **For as the lightning cometh**—suddenly, swiftly, unmistakably, universally. **So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.** This must refer to our Lord's final coming (Rev. 1. 7). It "shall be as quick as lightning, so that there will not be time for any such previous warning"—WESLEY. (Ver. 27.)

28. **For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.** "Our Lord gives this as a further reason why they should not hearken to any pretended deliverer. As if He had said, Expect not any deliverer of the Jewish nation; for it is devoted to destruction. It is already before God a dead carcase, which the Roman eagles will soon devour"—WESLEY. (Comp. Deut. 28. 49; John 11. 48.)

But the metaphor has also a more extended signification. (Luke 17. 37.) It is used in the Old Testament to denote the inevitableness with which moral corruption will be visited by sudden judgment. (Hab. 1. 8; Hosea 8. 1.) Here our Lord uses it to affirm the truth generally, that sin will ever bring upon itself swift and certain punishment, but with particular reference to His final coming "to execute judgment upon all the ungodly" (Jude 14. 15). (1 Cor. 1. 8, 9.)

29. **Immediately after the tribulation of those days.** "Here our Lord begins to speak of His last coming. But He speaks not so much in the language of man as of God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, one moment. Many of the primitive Christians, not observing this, thought He would come immediately, in the common sense of the word, a mistake which S. Paul labours to remove in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians"—WESLEY.

It may be indeed that the word *immediately* is to be taken in its usual meaning, but with application to other and unknown events in the remote future. For our Lord's words are not "immediately after those days," but "immediately after the tribulation of those days"; or, as given in S. Mark, "in those days after that tribulation." Here the expression "those days" may denote a period of indefinite duration—that of our Lord's kingdom upon earth; the same as "the last days" of the Prophet Joel (Joel 2. 30, 31; Acts 2. 17; Heb. 1. 2)—the period still going on, to which our Lord referred in words omitted by S. Matthew, but supplied by S. Luke, "and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." What the tribulation will be which is to immediately precede His reappearing, the awful event itself only can reveal. **Shall the sun be darkened.** The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars is frequently used in the Old Testament to denote national judgments. (Isa. 5. 30; 13. 10; 34. 4; Jer. 4. 28; Ezek. 32. 7, 8; Amos 8. 9; Micah 3. 6.) Probably this or a similar metaphorical meaning is intended here. But the prophecy will be fulfilled in a literal sense also. (2 Pet. 3. 3, 4, 10.)

30. **And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man.** This has been interpreted from very early times of the appearance of the Cross; but it is enough to know that a sign which the faithful followers of Christ will instantly recognise as His sign will be visible in the heavens. Both S. Mark and S. Luke say, "shall see the Son of Man." Possibly therefore His sign is His own appearance in the kingdom of His glory. **Then shall all**

the tribes of the earth mourn. (Zech. 12. 10-12; Rev. 1. 7.)

31. **Shall send His angels.** (Ch. 13. 39-41, 49; 16. 27.) **Great sound of a trumpet.** Probably spoken with allusion to the silver trumpet which was used to call the people together during the wilderness sojourn. (Num. 10. 2-10.) **And they shall gather together His elect**—"that is, all that have endured to the end in faith which worketh by love"—WESLEY.

32. **Now learn a parable of the fig tree.** (R.V. "Now from the fig tree learn her parable.") Take the fig tree as a symbol, and learn its lesson. You know when you see it bursting into leaf **that summer is nigh.** This illustration would be peculiarly significant to our Lord's apostles in their circumstances at that moment.

33. **When ye shall see all these things.** This, then, is our Lord's answer to the question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming?" With the exception of the great *tribulation*, connected so immediately with His reappearing, the events He had described might be taken as sure indications "that it," that is, as explained by Luke, "the kingdom of God is near, even at the door." Our Lord, having spoken of the signs preceding the two grand events, concerning which the apostles had inquired, begins here to speak of the time of them. And to the question proposed (ver. 3), concerning the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, He answers in ver. 34. Concerning the time of the end of the world He answers in ver. 36.

34. **This generation shall not pass.** (See ch. 16. 28.) The word generation may have the meaning here of "race" or "people"; but even if taken in its more usual sense, for the generation then living, our Lord's meaning is perfectly clear. **Till all these things**—which, although referring immediately to the destruction of Jerusalem, were at the same time signs of His final coming—**be fulfilled**; be done, or accomplished. (Ch. 26. 64.)

36. **But of that day and hour**—of the time of My coming for the judgment of the world. (Ch. 7. 22; Luke 10. 12; 1 Thess. 5. 2; 2 Pet. 3. 10.) **Knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven.** These words imply great remoteness, as well as the absence of knowledge, and, in this respect, place the "time of the end," to which they refer, in striking contrast with the event just spoken of, which was to take place before that generation had passed away. "The twofold application of the previous language is now distinctly shown, and the two events marked off from each other. The earthly kingdom of Christ shall be manifested to this generation; His heavenly kingdom shall come at a time which God only knows"—S. C. The R.V. adds, "Neither the Son," as also Mark 13. 32—"but My Father only." "All attempts to soften or explain this weighty truth must be resisted. . . . In the course of self-humiliation undertaken by the Son, in which He increased in wisdom (Luke 2. 52), learned obedience (Heb. 5. 8), uttered desires in prayer (Luke 6. 12)—*this matter was hidden from Him*"—A. (Comp. ch. 20. 23; 26. 39; John 14. 28, 31.) This may be accepted as the least objectionable theoretical explanation of the profound saying; but it should not be forgotten that "no man knoweth the Son but the Father" (ch. 11. 7). Our Lord goes on to show how uncertainty of the time of His final reappearing should have the effect of keeping His followers in the attitude of constant watchfulness, and in sustained activity and self-denial, and how the ungodly would make it the occasion for greater recklessness.

37. **But as the days of Noe** (Noah) **were.** (Luke 17. 26, 27, 35, 36.) When delay of threatened judgment was allowed to encourage disbelief and practical indifference. **So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.** (2 Pet. 2. 4-10; 3. 10.)

38. **Were eating and drinking,** etc. (Gen. 7. 11-23)—in sceptical security, giving no attention to the warnings of the "preacher of righteousness"; so **that day** would find the world carelessly following its usual pursuits, and would come upon them as a surprise.

40. **Then shall two be in the field**—occupied side by side in the common labours of life—outwardly alike, but essentially different in their spiritual character. **The one shall be taken**—"into God's immediate protection—**and the other left**—to share the common calamities. Our Lord speaks as having the whole transaction present before His eyes." Perhaps more definitely, "the one shall be taken" by the angels "sent forth to gather together the elect"; "the other left," shut out from the kingdom of glory, and left to destruction.

41. **Two women shall be grinding at the mill**—the hand-mill (Ex. 11. 5; Isa. 47. 2), which was worked by women kneeling or seated on the ground, the upper stone having a handle fixed in it by which it was turned upon the lower stone — **the one shall be taken,** etc. These homely illustrations are full of pathetic and admonitory interest as our Lord here uses them. Men and women of the same household, or companions in the same worldly service, externally alike, in their spiritual character widely different, now intimately associated, then to be separated for ever.

42. **Watch therefore.** In consideration of the uncertainty of the time of My coming for the judgment of all, and of the suddenness of which I have warned you, be always ready and vigilant. "Take ye heed, watch and pray" (Mark).

43. **If the good man** (the master) **of the house,** etc. (Obad. 5; 1 Thess. 5. 1-10; 2 Pet. 3. 10; Rev. 3. 5; 16. 15.) If he had

been told that the thief would certainly come at some hour during the night, without being more definitely informed, as you have been told of the coming of "that day," but not of the precise period itself. **He would have watched** — would have kept himself awake and on his guard, hour by hour—**and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.** "Literally, the word signifies 'to be dug through'; because the Eastern houses are generally formed of dry clay, or bricks hardened in the sun, but not burned; and it was the manner of house robbers to enter them by perforating the walls. 'In the dark,' says Job, 'they dig through houses which they have marked in the day-time'"—R. W.

44. **Therefore be ye also ready.** (Luke 21. 34, 35.) Also, like the forewarned master of the house—**for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.** "Christ comes to His people as their Lord; to the unfaithful and secure as a thief in the night; to both as the Son of Man"—S. So He comes to each individual at death, and so He will come "with power and great glory in that day to judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17. 31).

45. **Who then is a faithful and wise servant** (Luke 12. 42, "faithful and wise steward"). Which of you aspires after this character? "Faithful"—every moment retaining the clearest conviction, that all he now has is only entrusted to him as a steward. "Wise"—thinking, speaking, and acting continually in a manner suitable to that conviction"—WESLEY.

The exhortation is addressed immediately to the apostles and all who should be called after them to be "ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4. 1, 2; 2 Tim. 2. 15); but the principle of the words — namely, the greater the trust the greater the responsibility, and the greater the need of watchfulness — is a lesson for all. (Luke 12. 48.) **Made ruler over his household** —appointed steward in recognition of his trustfulness—**to give** to his fellow-servants over whom he is placed during his Lord's absence, **meat in due season**—to dispense to them daily or monthly their allotted provision. "The office and duties of a true minister are by this parable forcibly pointed out. It is of Divine appointment, not of human assumption; it conveys the power to rule in the family, but as a servant responsible to the great common Master; the object of this rule is to promote the service of the Lord in all the duties which may be assigned to each; and in order to this, the food, the wholesome doctrine of Christ by which alone strength for holy labours is imparted, must be administered fully, as out of the abundance which the Master has provided; statedly, according to the rules of the house; and in due season, that there may be nothing deficient in the administration either as to kind, or the circumstances of the servants"—R. W. (See Acts 20. 28; 1 Pet. 5. 2-4; 2 Tim. 2. 15; Heb. 13. 17.)

46, 47. **Blessed is that servant,** etc.—blessed in the testimony of his own conscience in the attested approbation of his Lord, and in his consequent promotion. **For He shall make him ruler over all His goods**—head-steward over His whole estate. "He shall be promoted to a higher honour, who is faithful in the inferior ministrations at first assigned him. His gifts shall be multiplied, his usefulness and influence enlarged, and his reward in eternity shall be heightened"—R. W. (Comp. ch. 25. 21; 1 Tim. 3. 13; Rev. 2. 26; 3. 21), "which last two passages answer to the promise here, that *each* faithful servant shall be over all his Master's goods. That promotion shall not be like earthly promotion, wherein the eminence of one excludes that of another; but rather like the diffusion of love, in which the more each has, the more there is for all"—A.

48, 49. **But and if that evil servant**—"now evil, having *put* away faith and a good conscience"—WESLEY.

Put in the form of a supposition this is a most solemn warning and a call to prayerful vigilance. **Shall say in his heart**—not openly, but by his conduct—**My lord delayeth His coming.** One of many intimations that His reappearing would be long delayed. **And shall begin to smite,** etc. (Eccles. 8. 11.) In his fearful selfishness and pride, assuming tyrannical lordship over God's heritage (1 Pet. 5. 3), neglecting his Master's work, and giving himself up to worldly indulgence and sin.

50, 51. **In a day when he looketh not for Him**—the surprise of His appearing again impressively referred to — **and shall cut him asunder** (*Margin,* "cut him off"). But the punishment of death, in the terrible form which the words express, is no doubt intended, and is but a faint image of the awful reality alluded to in the next clause. (2 Sam. 12. 31; Dan. 2. 5; Heb. 11. 37.) "The image of the parable itself is blended with the reality which the parable signifies; the thought of the human master who can punish his slaves with temporal death passes into that of the Divine Judge, who can punish with spiritual death"—S. C. **His portion with the hypocrites**—"the worst of sinners (Rev. 21. 8)—as upright and sincere as he once was. If ministers are the persons here primarily intended, there is a peculiar propriety in the expression. For no hypocrisy can be baser than to call ourselves ministers of Christ, while we are the slaves of avarice, ambition, or sensuality. Wherever such are found, may God reform them by His grace, or disarm them of that power and influence which they continually abuse to His dishonour, and to their own aggravated damnation"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XXV.

LAST PARABLES AND LAST WORDS IN PUBLIC: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN CONSUMMATED.

Vers. 1-13. THE TEN VIRGINS: SPIRITUAL READINESS.—1. **Then**—that is, at the time of which our Lord was speaking (ch. 24. 42-51), for what follows is a continuation of the same solemn discourse — **shall the kingdom of heaven** — at the sudden reappearing of its Divine Head, when it shall pass from its present state of trial, discipline, and waiting, into its state of everlasting glory and blessedness—**be likened unto ten virgins**, etc. An evident representation of the whole community of professing Christians, the visible Church, as identical, to a certain extent, with the spiritual kingdom, but as comprehending also many whom Christ will finally disown. (Ch. 22. 10, 14.) The bridegroom is supposed to be coming from a great distance accompanied by his friends (John 3. 29); and the "virgins," the bride's "companions" (Ps. 45. 14), are assembled, probably at her dwelling, awaiting the summons to go forth to meet and welcome him, and to conduct him to the bride's house with blazing lamps, music, and other demonstrations of joy.

2. **Five of them were wise.** In the special sense of being prudent or provident. (Ch. 24. 45; Luke 16. 8.) **And five were foolish.** "They are not distinguished into good and bad, but as the hearers at Matt. 7. 25, 27, into 'wise' and 'foolish'; for as a certain degree of goodwill towards the truth is assumed there in the foolish, as evidenced in their willingness to hear, and in the superstructure, however weak, which they raise, so on the part of these in their going forth even with the intention of meeting the bridegroom. We have them described—'the wise' (2 Pet. 1. 5-8), and 'the foolish' (2 Pet. 1. 9)"—T.

3. **They that were foolish took their lamps**—emblems of their professed readiness to do acceptable service for the bridegroom, and of their willingness to wait patiently for his arrival. **And took no oil with them**—whether through oversight, wilful neglect, or a mistaken hope that oil might be procured on demand when it was required, is not indicated. What is to be specially noted is that as each took her own lamp, so each was expected to provide her own oil. Their foolishness consisted in their making an open profession of doing a service for which they omitted to make due personal preparation. "This corresponds to their conduct who, belonging to the Church, neglect the preparation of grace, personal conversion, and holiness, trusting that in the hour of need the oil may be supplied out of the common stock. But they know not, or else heed not, that every one must be personally prepared for meeting the Bridegroom, that the call will be sudden, that the stock of oil is not common, and that the time between His arrival and the shutting of the door will be awfully brief"—ED.

4. **But the wise took oil in their vessels**—"love in their hearts. And they daily sought a fresh supply of spiritual strength till their faith was made perfect"—WESLEY.

The oil in the lamps, which the foolish virgins had as well as the wise, may represent those freely bestowed gifts of grace which come to all men through the mediation of Christ (John 1. 9; Rom. 5. 14-21); together with those enlightening and quickening influences of the Holy Spirit which professing Christians receive under the ministry of the word, and through their connection with the living Church. And the reserve of oil which the wise virgins took in their vessels may symbolise that great change of spiritual character which they only experience who are *in* Christ, and maintain their union with Him by living in conscious fellowship with Him; who have and manifest faith working by love; and unto whom Christ is "made of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

5. **While the bridegroom tarried**—"that is, before they were called to attend him—**they all slumbered and slept**—were easy and quiet, the wise enjoying a true, the foolish a false, peace"—WESLEY.

"The sleep of all the virgins alike is necessary to the imagery of the parable. The Bridegroom is to come suddenly and without notice to all, which would not be the case if some were awake and could see the procession from a distance"—S. C.

6. **At midnight**—"in an hour quite unthought of"—WESLEY.

There was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom! (1 Thess. 4. 16; 5. 2.) "The startling suddenness" of His coming is thus brought into prominence.

7, 8. **Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.** "Whereupon the foolish discovered, to their dismay, that theirs were at the point of expiring, and that they had not wherewith to replenish them. In other words, every one at the last prepares to give an account of his works, inquires into the foundation of his faith, seriously searches whether his life has been one which will have praise, not merely of men, for that he now feels will avail nothing, but also of God. Many put off this trying of the grounds of their faith and hope to the last moment"—T. "There are certain preparations which most persons believe they must make at the approach of death; but, alas! it is often too late. The lamp is defiled, the light almost out, and the oil expended; and what adorning is a wretched sinner, struggling in the agonies of death, capable of preparing for his guilty soul?"—C.

Give us of your oil—as if such a thing were possible! As if the grace of God was transferable from one to another, instead of being received in answer to the prayer of faith, each for himself alone. **For our lamps are gone** (*Margin* and R.V. "going") **out.** "What a time to discover this, whether it means the time of death or of judgment! *Unto which of the saints wilt thou then turn?* Who can help thee in such a season?"—WESLEY.

9. **But the wise answered—Lest there be not enough for us and you**—"beginning the sentence with a beautiful abruptness; such as showed their surprise at the state of these poor wretches, who had so long deceived them, as well as their own souls. 'Lest there be not enough'—it is sure there is not; for no man has more than holiness enough for himself. **Go ye rather to them that sell**—without money and without price; that is, to God, to Christ. **And buy**—if ye can. Oh no! the time is past, and returns no more!"—WESLEY.

"This advice must not be regarded as given in irony. The trait is introduced to point out the proper source of supply—to emphasise that the oil must be their own, and also to prepare for what follows"—ED.

10. **They that were ready went in with him to the marriage**—the marriage-feast—**and the door was shut.** "The instruction impressed by the result of the whole cannot be misunderstood. Heaven is prepared only for those who are rendered meet for it by sanctifying grace; and the shutting of the door denotes the eternal exclusion of all others. Nor can a former profession of discipleship, nor even former experience of any degree of grace, if lost, like the consumed oil of the lamp, avail as a plea for admission, should even such pleas be made"—R. W.

11, 12. **Afterward came also the other virgins.** "Afterwards," to find the door shut! "What door? exclaims the author of an ancient homily on this parable—that which now is open to them coming from the east and from the west, that they may sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven—that door which saith, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' Behold how it is now open, which shall then be closed for evermore. . . . No one's penitence, no one's prayers, no one's groanings, shall any more be admitted"—T. **Verily I say unto you, I know you not.** (Ch. 7. 23.) You have not My likeness, My character; I recognise you not as Mine. "Time was when, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' would have sped well by virtue of that promise, 'Knock, and it shall be opened to you'; but now it comes too late; the sentence, '*I know you not,*' is solemnly bound in with, 'Verily I say unto you,' which amounts to no less than 'swearing in His wrath that they should never enter into His rest.' It speaks *Him* resolved—and *them* silenced by it"—H.

13. **Watch therefore.** "He that watches has not only a burning lamp, but likewise oil in his vessel. And even when he sleepeth, his heart waketh. He is quiet, but not secure"—WESLEY.

Be ready—always personally, consciously ready. "Christ will come when least expected—at midnight—and when the Church, having become accustomed to His long delay, has gone to sleep. So sudden will be His coming that, after the cry of announcement, there will not be time for anything but to go forth to meet Him; and so rapid will be the end that, ere the foolish virgins can return, the door has been for ever closed"—ED.

Vers. 14–30. THE TALENTS: WAITING IN PERSONAL ACTIVITY.—14. **For the kingdom of heaven**—"that is, the King of Heaven, Christ"—WESLEY.

It will be observed that the words, "The kingdom of heaven is," are supplied by the translators (R.V. "For it is as when"). Thus abruptly our Lord passes from the one parable to the other to show their mutual relation to each other. "While the virgins were represented as *waiting* for their lord, we have here the servants *working* for him; there the inward spiritual life of the faithful was described, here his external activity"—T. "There the foolish virgins failed from thinking their part *too easy*—here the wicked servant fails from thinking his *too hard*"—A. **Called his own servants**—that is, his own *bond-servants* or *slaves*. "The emphasis rests on this, that they were his own slaves, and to act for his interests. His property was handed over to them, not for safe custody, but that they might do with it as best they could in the interest of their master"—ED. "Slaves in antiquity were often artisans, or were allowed otherwise to engage freely in business, paying, as it was frequently arranged, a fixed yearly sum to their master, or they had money committed to them wherewith to trade on his account, or with which to enlarge their business, and bring in to him a share of their profits"—T.

15. **To one he gave five talents.** (Ch. 18. 24.) In our use of this word "talents" to denote mental endowments, "there is a clear recognition of the responsibilities which go along with the possession of intellectual gifts and endowments." But the word, as used by our Lord, includes much more than wealth of intellect. "Our influence, our money, our knowledge, our health, our strength, our time, our senses, our memory, our affections, our privileges as members of Christ's Church, our advantages as possessors of the Bible,—all, all are talents. Whence came these things? What hand bestowed them? Why are we what we are? There is only one answer to these questions. All that we have is a loan from God; we are God's stewards"—BISHOP RYLE. "All are to be sanctified to the Lord, and consecrated to His service; and for their

use or abuse the possessors will have to render an account"—T. But these servants are differently entrusted. **Five, two, one—to every man according to his several ability.** "This capacity for work lies not within our own power; but it is in our power to use for Christ whatever we may have"—ED. "And who knows whether, all circumstances considered, there be a greater disproportion than this in the talents of those who have received the most and those who have received the fewest?"—WESLEY.

"The natural gifts are as the vessel, which may be large or may be small, and which receives according to its capacity, but which in each case is, or may be, *filled;* so that we are not to think of him who had received the two talents as incompletely furnished in comparison with him who had received the five, any more than we should affirm a small circle incomplete as compared with a large"—T. (See 1 Cor. 12. 4–31; Eph. 4. 8–12.)

16, 17. **Went and traded**, etc. "As each received according to his ability, so each worked according to his power. If the outward result was different, their labour, devotion, and faithfulness were equal"—ED.

18. **Hid his lord's money.** Thus not only failed to use it himself, but rendered it—not his own money, not that of a stranger, but the money of his lord—a useless, lost thing. "In so doing he was not only unfaithful to his trust, but practically disowned that he was a servant of his lord"—ED. "This servant appears to represent a numerous class of professing Christians, who are so far influenced by the apprehension of Christ's displeasure at last, as to avoid all direct abuse of the talents of various kinds entrusted to them, but are not roused into exertion and zeal either by right views of the danger to which neglect and indifference in the cause of Christ expose them, nor animated by the noble desire of approving themselves to their Lord, and of attaining the honours and larger rewards of the eternal world. They run not for this prize, because they possess not spirituality enough to value it"—R. W. "Reader, art thou doing the same? Art thou hiding the talent God hath lent thee?"

19. **After a long time.** Another intimation that our Lord's coming would be long deferred. "The notice of the long absence of the master not only connects this with the Parable of the Ten Virgins, but is intended to show that the delay might have rendered the servants who traded more careless, while it also increased the guilt of him who all this time had not done anything with his master's money"—ED. **Reckoneth with them.** "Even until the day of final account, the 'reckoning' is delayed. But then it takes place; and here the following circumstances are to be noticed:—(1) That 'every one shall give account of himself to God.' He reckoneth with them severally, one by one; for though the last judgment may not be in its formality particular to any one, it will be so really both from the secret consciousness which each one has, that the Judge is dealing with him according to his merits, and from the exact apportionment of the reward or the penalty. In effect and reality it will be the same as though every individual had a personal and particular trial, and an express decision on his formally stated case: (2) That the account required is exact and strict"—R. W. (Rom. 14. 12; Rev. 22. 11, 12.)

20. **Behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.** "This was successful trading, and is designed to show the abundant increase of good which would be produced in the world by an entire fidelity in the discharge of all the active duties of the Christian life. This is a most animating motive to excite the zeal of Christians, and it is confirmed by fact. The decline of religion in the world has in all ages resulted, not so much from the obstinacy of the wicked as from the slothfulness of Christ's servants"—R. W.

21–23. **Well done**, etc. The same words of commendation are spoken to each of the successful servants, because, as the result showed, they had been equally faithful and diligent. "The gain is according to the talents—five for five, and two for two." These servants put forth no meritorious claim to be rewarded. **Thy talent hath gained.** They were themselves the Lord's property; "the money with which they traded was His; their time, abilities, and activity equally belonged to Him; yet here we see that 'no work of faith or labour of love' shall be forgotten. Commendation from the lips of such a Being, the acceptance of our persons and services by Him whose 'favour is better than life,' and the joys of heaven, must from their nature be, not the reward of merit, but of stupendous grace. They are therefore subjects of promise, to encourage us to fidelity, sustain us against temptation, and to show the regard which God has to all that is benevolent and holy in His creatures, by stamping it with the seal of His munificent bounty"—R. W. **I will make thee ruler over many things.** "The servant is now to be raised into the condition of a 'ruler'; and the few things committed to him on earth, as a laborious and responsible trust, are heightened into 'many things' put into his power to regulate and enjoy"—R. W. **Enter thou into the joy of thy lord.** Come and share My rest and satisfaction and happiness. (Isa. 53. 11; Heb. 12. 2; Rev. 3. 21.)

24. **Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man.** "No, thou knowest Him not. He never knew God who thinks Him an hard Master. **Reaping where thou hast not sown**—that is, requiring more of us than Thou gavest power to perform. So does every obstinate sinner, in one kind or other, lay the blame of his own sins on God"—WESLEY.

25. **And I was afraid.** "Yet this very fear ought to have roused his slothful spirit into exertion; but it was fear without love. So far, however, it operated, that he hid the talent in the earth to keep it safe; he did not misemploy, though he did not employ it; and for this negative virtue, such is the inconsistent reasoning of a deceived heart, he hoped even from him whom he esteemed a hard master to escape punishment"—R. W. "This sets forth the excuse which men are perpetually making of human infirmity and inability to keep God's commands, when they never apply to that grace which may enable them to do so, an excuse, as here, self-convicting and false at heart"—A. **Lo, there thou hast that is thine.** "This is false; for there was his lord's time and his own labour, which was his lord's, to be accounted for"—A.

26. **Thou wicked and slothful servant.** "Wicked"—the plea of timidity is rejected; "wicked," idle, and now false and insolent. **Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not**—"that I require impossibilities! This is not an allowing, but a strong denial of the charge"—WESLEY. (Comp. Luke 19. 21, 22.)

27. **Thou oughtest therefore**—"on that very account, on thine own supposition, to have improved my talent as far as possible"—WESLEY.

To the exchangers (R.V. "the bankers"). This was the least he could have done as an honest and faithful man, afraid, as he pleaded, of trading on his own account, for he would thus have relieved himself of anxiety, and yet have gained something by way of interest for his master.

29. "**To every one that hath shall be given.** (Ch. 13. 12.) So close does God keep to this stated rule, from the beginning to the end of the world"—WESLEY.

"God's gifts are not left unproductive, because one to whom they are intrusted neglects his duty. So far as such gifts are transferable they are often, as a matter of fact, taken away from him who does not use them aright, and given to another. Thus the kingly power which Saul misused was taken from him and given to David"—S. C.

30. "**Cast ye the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.** For what? What had he done? It is true he had not done good. But neither is he charged with doing any harm. Why, for this reason, for barely doing no harm, he is consigned to outer darkness. He is pronounced a wicked, because he was a slothful, an unprofitable, servant. So mere harmlessness, on which many build their hope of salvation, was the cause of his damnation! **There shall be the weeping**—of the careless, thoughtless sinner. **And the gnashing of teeth**—of the proud and stubborn. The same great truth, that there is no such thing as negative goodness, is in this chapter shown three times—(1) In the parable of the virgins; (2) In the still plainer parable of the servants who had received the talents; and (3) In a direct unparabolical declaration of the manner wherein our Lord will proceed at the last day. The several parts of each of these exactly answer each other, only each rises above the preceding"—WESLEY.

Vers. 31–46. THE FINAL JUDGMENT.—31. **When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him.** (Ch. 24. 30; John 5. 27; 17. 5; Dan. 7. 9, 10, 13, 14; 1 Pet. 3. 22; Jude 14.) "With what majesty and grandeur does our Lord here speak of Himself; giving us one of the noblest instances of the true sublime. Indeed, not many descriptions in the sacred writings themselves seem to equal this. Methinks we can hardly read it without imagining ourselves before the awful tribunal it describes"—WESLEY.

We have now reached the end, not only of this great and most important discourse, spoken by our Lord only three days before His sufferings and death, but the terminating point of His whole public ministry. The principle of this solemn closing passage is that of His own words, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (ch. 7. 20). So far it is a statement in express terms of the truth taught in the two foregoing parables by the use of imagery. "The Son of Man" revealed as "the Lord, the righteous Judge" (2 Tim. 4. 8; Acts 17. 31), gathers to Himself and into the kingdom of His glory "His elect from one end of heaven to the other" (ch. 24. 31). The elect are they who are "conformed to His image" (Rom. 8. 29). In the case of the nations to whom He has been made known by the gospel, they are those who have a true, penitent, loving faith in Him, and who show their faith by acts and habits of that self renouncing and self-forgetting love, of which He is the one perfect Example. (Phil. 2. 5-8.) In the case of those to whom He has never been named — His "sheep," though not of the gospel fold—they are those who hear His voice in their consciences and spirits, and who "follow Him" really, though not knowingly and in profession. All these *come* at His gracious call "into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world"; and the rest *depart* at His awful command, "into everlasting fire," not prepared for them, but "for the devil and his angels" (Rom. 2. 6–16). **The throne of His glory**—the throne befitting and manifesting His Divine authority. (Rev. 20. 11, 12.)

32. **And before Him shall be gathered all nations.** "Here is not only an assembled world, but the assembled generations of the world, from the beginning of time, placed at His bar, awaiting His sentence. Merely human writers have nothing so awfully sublime as this; for they have no distinct knowledge of the great facts here described in language so clear and simple as could never have been used but by Him to whom the mysterious solemnities of

the future were all clearly known. **He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd**, etc. This is done with unerring penetration, and with infinite equity,—the vast multitude moving to the right hand or to the left under the influence of His mighty power, the consciousness of each answering to the impulse, and, as to the wicked, withering every effort at resistance. The metaphor is taken from the shepherds of ancient times, who kept the sheep and goats in different flocks, and hastily separated them when they became mingled together. A similar metaphor we have in Ezek. 34. 17, 'Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats'"—R. W. (See ch. 3. 12; 13. 49, 50.)

34. **Then the King say.** Here for the first time our calls Himself by His rightful title, as implied by the term He so continually used, "the kingdom of heaven." **Come, ye blessed of My Father.** (Ch. 5. 3–12; Eph. 1. 3–6; Col. 1. 13.) Ye who have shown by your characters and works that ye lived under His benediction, and that your wills harmonised with His will, whether revealed to you in word or only inwardly. **Inherit the kingdom.** (Rom. 8. 14–17; Eph. 1. 11; 1 Pet. 1. 3–5.)

35, 36. **For I was an hungered**, etc. "After this general sublime description of the pomp and solemnity of the final judgment, our Lord proceeds to give the reason for this public acknowledgment of the righteous, and the equally public disowning of the wicked. These reasons, it is however to be remarked, are not the only ones in either case. Neither are the wicked punished solely because they have been fruitless in works of mercy, nor the righteous rewarded solely because they have abounded in them. They are taken in each case as manifestations of character; and they are specified to show the importance attached to them, and that where religion is not practical it is wholly false and delusive"—R. W. "All these works of outward mercy suppose faith and love, and must needs be accompanied with works of spiritual mercy. But works of this kind the Judge could not mention in the same manner. He could not say, I was in error, and ye recalled Me to the truth; I was in sin, and ye brought Me to repentance. **In prison**—prisoners need to be visited above all others, as they are commonly solitary, and forsaken by the rest of the world"—WESLEY.

37. **Then shall the righteous answer.** "It cannot be that either the righteous or the wicked should answer in these very words. What we learn herefrom is, that neither of them have the same estimation of their own works as the Judge hath"—WESLEY.

"The manner in which the case was put, as though they had ministered to the Lord Himself personally, excites their astonishment; and their modest forgetfulness of their own works, and the total absence of all idea of merit from their minds, rendering what was said more mysterious than it would otherwise have been, are circumstances finely touched; and with infinite skill they are made to give the greater force to the affecting truth, that what is done for the relief and comfort of persons in penury, sickness, and trouble, He regards as done to Himself"—R. W.

40. **One of the least of these My brethren.** (Ch. 10. 40.) Love to Christ where He is known, showing itself in acts of benevolence to His followers who need them; and love like Christ's, where His name has not been heard, manifesting itself in acts of personal service which require the denial of self for the sake of others, are the all-inclusive evidence that they belong to Him. "Those who restrain the term 'brethren' to poor and destitute Christians, have no warrant from the words or from the scope of the discourse. To narrow up the obligations of beneficence to those of our own faith would have been rather in the spirit of Judaism than according to the liberal and expansive genius of Christianity; and it would greatly tend to that were we taught to consider that those acts of mercy which are done 'to the household of faith' are the only works of that kind which shall be noticed and rewarded at the last day. The term 'brethren' is therefore to be taken in its largest sense for all mankind. By taking upon Him our nature, Christ became the Brother of every man, and even in His exalted and glorified state recognised us under that relation"—R. W.

41. **Depart from Me, ye cursed.** Not cursed "of My Father" (ver. 34). "All man's salvation is of God; all His condemnation from himself; there is election to life, but there is no reprobation to death; a 'Book of Life,' but no Book of Death; no hell *for* man—because the blood of Jesus hath purchased life *for all*. But they who will serve the devil must share with him in the end"—A.

44. **When saw we Thee**, etc. "So the endeavour to justify themselves will remain with the wicked even to *that day!*"—WESLEY.

If we had seen and known Thee we would have gladly done the omitted good deeds!

46. **Into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.** (R.V. "eternal punishment . . . eternal life.") "Either therefore the punishment is strictly eternal, or the reward is not; the very same expression being applied to the former as to the latter. The Judge will speak first to the righteous, in the audience of the wicked. The wicked shall then go away into everlasting fire in the view of the righteous. Thus the damned shall see nothing of the everlasting life; but the just will see the punishment of the ungodly. It is not only particularly observable here—(1) that the punishment lasts as long as the reward; but (2) that this punishment is so far from ceasing at the end

of the world, that it does not begin till then"—WESLEY. (See Dan. 12. 2; John 5. 28, 29; Rom 2. 7.)

CHAPTER XXVI.

Vers. 1–5. THE RULERS IN COUNCIL AGAINST CHRIST. (Mark 14. 1, 2; Luke 22. 1, 2.)—1. **Finished all these sayings.** All His discourses as a public Teacher, more especially since His triumphal entry into the city. (Ch. 21. 23–25, 46.) "When He had spoken all He had to speak. Till then He would not enter upon His Passion; then He would delay it no longer"—WESLEY.

He had much precious instruction to give His apostles in private (John 14. 16); but His public teaching was at an end, and He now calmly gave Himself up to die "for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 3). It was now late on Tuesday evening; according to Jewish reckoning Wednesday had already begun; and Jesus was returning with His apostles to His nightly abode on the Mount of Olives (Luke 21. 37), or over Olivet into the village of Bethany.

2. **After two days**—that is, the day after the morrow—**is the feast of the Passover.** The paschal lamb was slain on the fourteenth day of the first month, originally called *Abib*, Ears of Corn (Lev. 23. 5, 6; Num. 28. 16); but now, and ever since the Captivity, called *Nisan* (Neh. 2. 1). **And the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified.** "The solemn mention of these events in this connection is equivalent to a declaration from Himself, if it were needed, of the identity, both of time and meaning, of the two sacrifices"—A. For the history of the institution of this greatest of the festivals, see Ex. 12. 1–14. "The manner wherein it was celebrated gives much light to several circumstances that follow. The master of the family began the feast with a cup of wine which, having solemnly blessed, he divided among the guests (Luke 22. 17). Then the supper began with the unleavened bread and bitter herbs which, when they had all tasted, one of the young persons present, according to Ex. 12. 26, asked the reason of the solemnity. This introduced the showing forth, or declaration of it; in allusion to which we read of 'showing forth the Lord's death' (1 Cor. 11. 26). Then the master rose up, and took another cup, before the lamb was tasted. After supper, he took a thin loaf, or cake, which he broke, and divided to all at the table; and likewise the cup, usually called the cup of thanksgiving, of which he drank first, and then all the guests. It was this bread and this cup which our Lord consecrated to be a standing memorial of His death"—WESLEY.

3. **Then assembled together the chief priests**—the principal actors—**and the scribes, and the elders of the people**—"heads of families. These together constituted the Sanhedrim, or great Council, which had the supreme authority both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs"—WESLEY.

Unto the palace (R.V. "the court") **of the high priest.** It may be inferred from this mention of the place of meeting—the court, or open space, round which the house of the high priest was built, that "this was not a regular session of the Sanhedrim, but probably only a private meeting of some of its members. **Who was called Caiaphas.** He was made high priest by the Roman governor who preceded Pilate. The high priesthood had long ceased to be hereditary in the line of Aaron. Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, had been high priest, and still retained the title. (John 18. 13; Acts 4. 6.)

4. **Take Jesus by subtilty**—as they should find opportunity in the course of events. Even this they had already tried in various forms (ch. 22. 22, 46), and had been openly defeated. Now they are roused to more vigilant and desperate effort.

5. **Not on the feast day**—that is, as in R.V. "not during the feast," meaning the whole succeeding period of seven days—**lest there be an uproar among the people**—a reference chiefly to the multitudes of Galilean pilgrims, whose sympathy with Him they feared. (Luke 22. 2.) "This was the result of human wisdom. But when Judas came they changed their purpose. So the counsel of God took place, and the true Paschal Lamb was offered up on the great day of the paschal solemnity"—WESLEY.

"The whole was overruled by Heaven to accomplish its own purposes; which were, not that Christ should be put to death privately by assassination, or even by regular trial, when there should be comparatively few to witness His death, and the strange signs which accompanied it; but that there should be multitudes of witnesses of this event, that it should take place when many thousands of Jews and proselytes from all parts were assembled at Jerusalem, and that the account both of His crucifixion and resurrection should be transmitted by these means to distant places"—R. W.

Vers. 6–13. THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY. (Mark 14. 3–9; John 12. 1–8.)—6. **Now when Jesus was in Bethany**—namely, as we learn from John, "six days before the Passover." The paragraphs in the beginning of this chapter come in regular sequence. Thus: Jesus announces His approaching Passion; the chief priests, etc., meet and plot His capture, but not during the feast, but "when Jesus was in Bethany, etc., occasion was given for an offer to be made to them, which led to its being effected after all during the feast"—A. Thus we are carried back to the evening of our Lord's last Sabbath on earth, Saturday, Nisan 9. **Simon the leper.** Now of course healed, and probably by our Lord.

7. **A woman**—Mary, the sister of Lazarus, not the woman spoken of in Luke 7. 36-50, though it may be with her example in mind. **An alabaster box**—(R.V. "cruse or flask")—**of very precious ointment.** (Mark and John, "ointment of spikenard, very costly.") "At Alabastron in Egypt there was a manufactory of small vases for holding perfumes, which were made from a stone found in the neighbouring mountains. The Greeks gave to these vases the name of the city from which they came, calling them *alabastrons*. At length the term alabaster was applied without distinction to all perfume vessels of whatever material they consisted. The special kind of ointment named by the Evangelists *nard*, or *spikenard*, was extracted from the blossoms of the Indian and Arabian nard-grass"—C. B. The meaning of the syllable *spike* is uncertain, but is most probably *genuine* or *pure*. **And poured it on His head.** Anointing the head of an honoured guest was not unusual. (Ps. 23. 5; Luke 7. 46.) But John records that "she also anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." "The action was remarkable as done, not by the host, but by Mary the sister of Lazarus, one of the guests, and also from the very valuable kind of unction made use of, and the abundance which she poured, not only on our Lord's sacred head, but also on His feet. The whole was the result of Mary's fervent affection for her Lord and Master"—R. W.

8. **They had indignation.** S. Mark says indefinitely, "some of them"; and S. John, speaking from his personal knowledge and anxious that the unworthy murmuring should be assigned to the right person, says plainly, "Judas Iscariot." Probably the complaint originated with him, and some of the others concurred in it.

9. **Might have been sold for much**—(Mark and John, "For more than three hundred pence")—that is, more than about £10. **And given to the poor.** John adds the sad explanation, "Not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag"—for which the funds of the little company were kept; "and bare"—probably meaning, as suggested in the R.V., "took away," or stole. "The question has been asked why the office which was itself a temptation was assigned to Judas? The answer, so far as an answer can be given, seems to lie in the nature of things. Temptation commonly comes to us through that for which we are naturally fitted. Judas had gifts of management, we may suppose, and so also the trial which comes through that habit of mind. The work gave him the opportunity of self-conquest"—S. C.

10. **When Jesus understood it** (R.V. "Jesus perceiving it"). The words imply that they had aimed to conceal their dissatisfaction from Him. **He said unto them**—not to Judas in particular, whom however He intended more especially to rebuke—**Why trouble ye the woman?**—why disturb her mind by insinuating scruples of right or fitness? **For she hath wrought a good work upon Me.** Thus our Lord indirectly assures her that He graciously accepts her act of devotion, and estimates its value by its motive. S. Mark records the additional words, "She hath done what she could"—(comp. Mark 12. 44)—she has seized the fleeting opportunity to testify her grateful love.

11. **For ye have the poor always with you.** (Deut. 15. 11.) "And whenever ye will, ye may do them good" (Mark). "Such is the wise and gracious providence of God, that ye may have always opportunities of relieving their wants, and so laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven"—WESLEY.

12. **She did it for My burial.** (2 Chron. 16. 14.) (R.V. "to prepare Me for My burial")—"as it were for the embalming of My body. Indeed, this was not her design; but our Lord puts this construction upon it, to confirm thereby what He had before said to His disciples concerning His approaching death"—WESLEY.

It is not improbable, however, that the thought of His burial was actually in her mind, for she must have heard of our Lord's repeated announcement of His approaching death.

13. **Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached,** etc. "The only case in which our Lord has made such a promise. We cannot but be struck with the majesty of this prophetic announcement, introduced with the peculiar and weighty, **Verily I say unto you**—conveying by implication the whole mystery of the good tidings which should go forth from His death as its source; looking forward to the end of time, when it shall have been preached in the whole world, and specifying the fact that this deed should be recorded wherever it is preached"—A. **Told for a memorial of her.** "Hers was in truth an *everlasting deed*, bound up in the immortality and unchanging endurance of the imperishable record in which it is commemorated, not for her sake only, but to show in how benign and condescending a manner our blessed Lord accepts everything which is done from an affectionate regard to Him as our Teacher and Redeemer, and to honour Him in the presence of the world. The lovely picture of simple and elevated piety in Mary stands for ever in the record, for the imitation of all. Docility, attention, spirituality, and affection are its characteristics"—R. W.

Vers. 14-16. THE FIRST DEED OF TREACHERY. (Mark 14. 10, 11; Luke 22. 3-6.)—14. **Then**—probably at the very time of the conference in the court of Caiaphas (vers. 3-5.)—**one of the Twelve, called Judas Iscariot**—(see on ch. 10, 4)—**went unto the chief priests**—when

consulting with the scribes and others how they might take Jesus by stratagem to put Him to death. S. Mark and S. Luke add, "And they were glad." It was of all things what they most desired, since it was an offer to deliver Him into their hands quietly, "in the absence of the multitude."

15. **What will ye give me?** His uppermost thought and feeling at that moment. How much he expected we cannot conjecture; but they suggested, and he agreed to take, a sum the very mention of which ought to have thrilled his soul with horror. **And they covenanted with him** (R.V. "weighed unto him") **thirty pieces of silver.** The term which the Evangelist uses alludes to the ancient custom of paying money in weight, and also to the prophecy of Zechariah. (Zech. 11. 12, 13; comp. Matt. 27. 9.) The sum specified, "thirty silver shekels," less than four pounds of our money, was the price of a slave. (Ex. 21. 32.) "The Lord was, so to speak, paid for out of the Temple money, which was destined for the purchase of sacrifices; and He who took on Him the form of a servant was sold at the legal price of a slave"—ED. S. Luke introduces the account with the words, "Then entered Satan into Judas." "No other expression seems adequately to explain his wickedness. It began in avarice, disappointment, and jealousy; and when he had long weakened his soul by indulgence in these dark besetting sins, the imaginary loss of the three hundred pence of which he would have had the disposal (John 12. 4, 5; Mark 14. 10), the now undisguised announcement of our Lord that He should be not only rejected, but *crucified*, the consequent shattering of all messianic hopes, the growing sense that he was becoming distasteful to his Master and his fellows, the open rebuke which he had drawn on his own head by his hypocritic greed at Bethany (John 12. 6), the rumoured hostility of all the most venerated authorities of the nation,—all these formed the climax of his temptation; and then, at last, the tempting opportunity met the susceptible disposition"—C. B.

Vers. 17-30. THE LAST SUPPER. (Mark 14. 12-26; Luke 22. 3-38.)—17. **Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread.** "Being Thursday, the fourteenth day of the first month (Ex. 12. 6, 15)"—WESLEY.

It began after sunset on Wednesday the 13th. S. Mark adds, "when they killed" (R.V. "sacrificed") "the Passover," and S. Luke, "when the Passover must be killed" (R.V. "sacrificed"). (Comp. 1 Cor. 5. 7, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.") The feast began legally on the 15th (Ex. 12. 18, 19; Lev. 23. 5, 6), and ended on the 21st. But as all leaven was carefully collected and destroyed before noon of the 14th, that came to be popularly called "the first day of unleavened bread." **Where wilt Thou that we prepare?** This would include the killing of the lamb in the court of the Temple, and the procuring of the "unleavened bread," as well as the preparation of the room.

18. **Go into the city to such a man.** This expression is evidently substituted by the Evangelist for our Lord's definite indication, as recorded by the other Evangelists. The man's name is not mentioned, possibly lest Judas should know the place of meeting and inform the members of the Sanhedrim. S. Mark says that our Lord addressed His instructions to "two of His disciples," and S. Luke states that they were "Peter and John," joining these two together as His messengers now for the first time. (Comp. Acts 3. 1.) The chosen two were told that as they entered the city a man would meet them "bearing a pitcher of water"—a thing rarely to be seen in the East, where the carrying of water is the work of women; that they were to follow him into the house into which he entered, and to say "to the goodman of the house, the Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples?"—a form of demand which seems to imply that it had been already bespoken by our Lord; so does also the solemn announcement which probably preceded it. **My time is at hand**—the time of His sufferings and death, though neither the man so addressed, evidently a disciple of Christ, nor the two apostles, could have known the true meaning of the words. **I will keep the Passover at thy house.** Unspeakable distinction! Was it conferred on Joseph of Arimathea or on the father of S. Mark the Evangelist? The latter is highly probable. (See Acts 12. 13, 14.) But we may say with confidence that whoever may have been "the goodman" of that house, his chosen guest-chamber would have, for the apostolic company, the tenderest and deepest sacredness, and would naturally be the upper room in which they spent the ten days of prayer and waiting after the Ascension. (Acts 1. 13, 14.)

20. **Now when the even was come**—a plain indication of the usual time (Ex. 12. 8), namely, considerably after sunset—**He sat down**—reclined: "for the recumbent posture at meals, and even at the paschal supper, had long been introduced, although the Israelites were at first commanded to eat it standing, with staffs in their hands, as persons setting out on a journey. The rabbins justified, and indeed enjoined, this departure from the original institution, on the ground that this recumbent posture was symbolical of that rest in the land of Canaan, to which the Israelites at first were but setting out, but which they had attained. **With the Twelve.** Judas, having transacted his infamous bargain with the chief priests, had taken his place with the rest, little reflecting that he and all his secret negotiations were well under the eye of his omniscient Master"—R. W.

21. **And as they did eat.** This would be when, after the first cup, they had all washed their

hands, as was the invariable usage; and when probably the feet-washing had taken place, as recorded by John (13. 5); when also the first part of the Hallel (*O praise*, Pss. 113, 114) had been sung, the customary account of the institution of the feast had been given (see on ver. 2), and, with this, the instruction on the symbolical washing of the feet (John 13. 12–20). Then Jesus "was troubled in spirit" (John), and said, **Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.**

22. **And they were exceeding sorrowful**—filled with consternation; so much so that, as they gazed on the signs of their Master's grief, they also "looked" involuntarily "one on another" (John)—**and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?**

23. **He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish**—"probably the vessel containing the sauce called Charoseth, made of dates, figs, and other fruits, mixed with vinegar, into which the herbs, bread, and meat"—morsels of the lamb—"at the Passover, were dipped as they were eaten"—S. C. Judas is not yet particularly pointed out. Our Lord's words are to be understood as a general intimation that one who ate with Him as a friend would be His betrayer. S. John reports another answer as whispered to himself in reply to his own whispered inquiry, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it."

24. **The Son of Man goeth**—"through sufferings to glory—**as it is written of Him**—yet this is no excuse for him that betrayeth Him; miserable will that man be. **It had been good for that man if he had not been born.** May not the same be said of every man that finally perishes? But who can reconcile this, if it were true of Judas alone, with the doctrine of universal salvation?"—WESLEY.

Prediction implies predetermination; and S. Luke says, "as it was determined." (Acts 2. 23; 4. 27, 28; Rev. 13. 8.) "It was predicted that He should die, and designed that He should die; but this did not excuse or palliate the acts of the instruments of His death. They followed freely their own will, and gratified their own malignity, and were therefore guilty of the most aggravated crime of religious persecution and murder which ever was or could be committed. Hence our Lord adds with respect to Judas, **But woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!** for the foreknowledge of God cannot any more influence human actions, as foreknowledge, than afterknowledge. To know, is one thing; to influence and compel, another"—R. W.

25. **Then Judas, which betrayed Him**—after having held his peace until he saw that silence might create a suspicion of his guilt—**answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said**—a Hebraism for "It is so as thou hast said." "This was probably spoken in a low voice, so that the rest did not distinctly hear it, like the answer of our Lord to John, when He pointed out the traitor; for, as when Judas went out as soon as he had received the sop, the other disciples thought, because he was the purse-bearer, that he was gone to procure things necessary for the feast; this would have been a most improbable supposition, had the words been uttered in their hearing. For the same reason we may conclude that what our Lord said to John when, upon the suggestion of Peter, he asked who should betray Him, was not only heard by the beloved disciple alone, but kept in His bosom, except that he might intimate it to Peter. That after this Judas should remain, and be present at the celebration of the Eucharist, is highly improbable. From S. John we learn that, as soon as he had received the sop, which was during the eating of the Passover, he went out"—R. W.

26. **And as they were eating**. Our Lord had, on the departure of the traitor, as if suddenly freed from a sense of constraint, burst forth in words of exultation. (John 13. 31, 32.) Then the meal was resumed; the great discourses and prayer in John (ch. 14–17) were spoken, and the third cup, or *cup of blessing*, was drunk. At this point our Lord instituted His own Supper. **Jesus took bread.** "The bread or cake which the master of the family used to divide among them, after they had eaten the Passover. This custom our Lord now transferred to a nobler use. **This** bread **is**—that is, signifies or represents—**My body**, according to the style of the sacred writers. Thus (Gen. 40. 12), 'The three branches are three days.' Thus (Gal. 4. 24) S. Paul, speaking of Sarah and Hagar, says, 'These are the two covenants.' Thus, in the grand type of our Lord (Ex. 12. 11), God says of the paschal lamb, 'This is the Lord's Passover.' Now Christ, substituting the Holy Communion for the Passover, follows the style of the Old Testament, and uses the same expressions the Jews were wont to use in celebrating the Passover"—WESLEY.

"Our Lord did not take the flesh of the paschal lamb and make that an element of His own institution. That was all previously eaten according to the Law, which He who came 'to fulfil all righteousness' was scrupulous to observe. Moreover, this might have appeared indicative that animal sacrifices were to be continued under the new dispensation; whereas His *offering of Himself once for all* abrogated them for ever. He therefore took bread, which, by calling it His *body*—that is, the emblem or sign of His body, GIVEN for us—preserved as explicitly the essential idea of the sacrificial nature of His death as if He had made the flesh of the paschal lamb the instituted sign"—R. W.

S. Luke adds, "Do this in remembrance of Me." S. Paul, who received the account, as he states, "from the Lord" Himself, gives the same words. (1 Cor. 11. 23–26.)

27. **And He took the cup**—"after supper"

(Luke). "The third and fourth cups were both taken after the conclusion of the meal,—the former immediately following the blessing after eating the paschal lamb, and was usually called 'the cup of blessing'"—S. C. (See Luke 22. 20; 1 Cor. 10. 16.)

28. **This is My blood of the new testament** (R.V. "new covenant"). (Acts 3. 25; Heb. 8. 6, 7; 9. 18–23.) This is the sign of My blood, whereby the new testament, or covenant, is confirmed. **Which is shed for many**—"as many as spring from Adam"—WESLEY. (See on ch. 20. 28.)

29. **I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine till I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom**—"that is, I shall taste no more wine till I drink wine of quite another kind in the glorious kingdom of My Father. And of this you shall also partake with Me"—WESLEY.

30. **And when they had sung an hymn**—the usual hymn, the second part of the Hallel (Pss. 115–118)—**He went out into the Mount of Olives**—"as He was wont" (Luke 21. 37) during the whole of that awful week. (See John 18. 2.)

Vers. 31–35. PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD. (Mark 14. 26–31; Luke 22. 32–34.)—31. **Then saith Jesus.** Most probably as they were on their way to Gethsemane. Our Lord had warned Peter of his approaching failure, but without specifying the time, before they left the upper room. (Luke 22. 31; John 13. 38.) Now He repeats the warning, but first speaks of the flight of the whole company. **All ye shall be offended**—or caused to stumble. "Something shall happen to Me which will occasion your falling into sin by forsaking Me"—WESLEY.

For it is written (Zech. 13. 7), **I will smite the Shepherd.** "In the former part of the text quoted by our Lord, He against whom the sword of God is summoned to awake is called My Shepherd, which indeed might apply to any ruler raised up by Him to rule His people the Jews; but when this Shepherd is called THE FELLOW of the Lord of Hosts, no one can be intended but Him who was equal with God, and yet, by becoming Man and a Substitute for guilty men, voluntarily exposed Himself to the sword of the rectoral justice of God, to make atonement for the sins of the world. With the smiting of the Shepherd the prophet connects the scattering of the sheep; and the event, both in time and manner, signally answers to the prophecy—when our Lord was apprehended, all the disciples forsook Him and fled"—R. W.

32. "**But**—notwithstanding this—**after I am risen, I will go before you** (as a shepherd before his sheep) **into Galilee**"—WESLEY.

This allusion to leading like a shepherd (John 10. 4) follows very naturally the words cited. The flock would be scattered, but gathered to the Good Shepherd again. (Ch. 28. 7, 16; Mark 16. 6, 7; 1 Cor. 15. 6.)

33. **Peter answered and said,** etc. "He said this in great sincerity: the genuineness of Peter's attachment to his Master, and the fulness of his conviction that He was the true Messiah, were equally undoubted. But he knew not himself fully, nor the power of strong temptation upon over-confident and unwatchful minds. Judas' sin was deliberate, Peter's a sin of surprise; Judas' the result of an habitual state of heart, Peter's was an act contrary to his habitual feelings and principles. Judas' fall produced nothing upon reflection but despair and horror, all gracious feelings having been extinguished by avarice; but Peter's fall awoke the sorrows of a generous and affectionate nature, which, but in this sad instance of the effect of sudden fear, had never wavered in its clear and simple devotedness to his beloved Master. No characters could be more unlike; as contrary to each other, indeed, as their respective ends"—R. W.

34. **Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice**—"that is, before three in the morning, the usual time of cock-crowing; although one cock was heard to crow once after Peter's first denial of his Lord"—WESLEY.

S. Mark says, giving the words of our Lord more exactly, "This day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice." "The Jews, in reckoning their days, began with the evenings, according to the Mosaic computation, which called the evening and the morning the first day (Gen 1. 5). And so that which, after sunset, is here called 'this night,' is (Mark 14. 30) called *to-day*. The expression there is peculiarly significant: 'Verily I say to thee, that thou' thyself, confident as thou art, 'to-day,' even within four-and-twenty hours; yea, 'this night,' or ever the sun be risen; nay, 'before the cock crow twice,' before three in the morning, 'wilt deny Me thrice.' Our Lord doubtless spake so determinately, as knowing a cock would crow once before the usual time of cock-crowing. By Mark 13. 35, it appears that the third watch of the night, ending at three in the morning, was commonly styled the cock-crowing"—WESLEY.

35. **Though I should die with Thee** (S. Mark, "he spake the more vehemently")—probably in vivid remembrance of the warning given to him so specially and tenderly before the departure from the upper chamber (Luke 22. 31, 32)—**Yet will I not deny Thee. Likewise also said all His disciples.** "But such was the tenderness of our Lord that He would not aggravate their sin by making any reply"—WESLEY.

Vers. 36–46. THE AGONY: MIDNIGHT. (Mark 14. 32–42; Luke 22. 39–46.)

36. **A place** (R.V. *Margin*, "or enclosed piece of ground") **called Gethsemane**—that is, oil-press. S. John describes it as "a garden" over the brook, or ravine, usually dry, called Kedron; and adds, that Judas "knew the place, for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with

His disciples" (ch. 18. 2). It was a secluded olive-orchard, containing a press to crush the berry and express the oil, probably belonging to some disciple of Christ. "He might retire to this private place, not only for the advantage of secret devotion, but also that the people might not be alarmed at His apprehension; nor attempt, in the first sallies of their zeal, to rescue Him in a tumultuous manner. Kedron was (as the name signifies) a dark, shady valley, on the east side of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives; through which a little brook ran, which took its name from it. It was this brook which David, a type of Christ, went over, with the people weeping, in his flight from Absalom"—WESLEY.

Saith unto the disciples (eight of them), **Sit ye here**—at the entrance to the garden, as if to watch, and give timely notice of the approach of conspirators.

37. **And he took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee**—James and John. These who had been witnesses of the peculiar manifestations of His glory are now to witness some signs of His unknown anguish. **And began to be sorrowful** (S. Mark, "to be sore amazed") **and very heavy.** "The former word in the original properly signifies, to be penetrated with the most exquisite sorrow; the latter, to be quite depressed, and almost overwhelmed with the load"—WESLEY.

38. **My soul**—the seat of human affections, of man's inward joys and sorrows, as distinguished from the spirit—man's higher spiritual being, and the seat of religious affections. Our Lord's appropriation of this term is a declaration of His complete oneness with our nature. He had used it only once previously, and then in anticipation of the terror and anguish which had now seized Him (John 12. 27). **Is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death**—meaning most certainly, that His "soul was crushed down even to death by the weight of that anguish which lay upon Him, and that *literally;* so that He (as regards His humanity) *would have died* had not strength (*bodily* strength, upholding the human frame) been manifested from on high by an angel"—A. **Tarry ye here, and watch with Me.** These three were His few most trusted friends, and, feeble and faithless though they were, He would have them near Him for the comfort and support which their presence as His friends would afford. Observe His charge to them is, "*Watch* with Me"; He could not add, and *pray* with Me. For He must "tread the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Him" (Isa. 63. 3). "The prospect of death could not cause Him to suffer thus, when He knew that in less than three days He was to be restored to life, and to be brought into an eternity of blessedness. His agony and distress can receive no consistent explanation but on this ground—He SUFFERED, *the* JUST *for the* UNJUST, *that He might bring* US *to* GOD. O glorious truth! O infinitely meritorious suffering! And O, above all, the eternal love, that caused Him to undergo such sufferings for the sake of sinners!"—C.

39. **And He went a little farther**—(S. Luke, "about a stone's cast"), so that He was still within sight and hearing of the three; and—first, "He kneeled down" (Luke)—then **fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father**—the only occasion on which He ever thus used the personal pronoun, "My" Father—**if it be possible, let this cup** (ch. 20. 22; John 18. 11) **pass from Me.** He does not pray that the cup of death might be withheld or averted, but that "this cup," then put into His hands, that which He was then drinking, "might pass away from Him." "S. Mark expresses the same thing without a figure. 'He prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him,' clearly meaning that the duration of His sufferings might be shortened. And S. Luke, still uttering precisely the same idea in somewhat varied phrase, states the prayer of Jesus to be, 'If Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me.' Mightily as He had been strengthened to suffer, He was sinking under a deadly anguish, and prayed that, 'if it were possible,' if it were consistent with the Divine purpose, if it could be done without impairing the efficacy of His atonement and vicarious undertaking, that bitter cup, that cup of trembling and horror, might pass away from Him, yet with entire submission, leaving it to His Father to judge of the fitness of the request"—R. W. "And it did pass away from Him quickly. When He 'cried unto God with strong cries and tears, He was heard in that He feared.' God did take away the terror and severity of that inward conflict"—WESLEY.

For S. Luke adds, "There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him"—as after the temptation in the wilderness (ch. 4. 11). Of course, bodily support only is intended.) "And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"—added with reference to the entire struggle, and as if to account for the visit of the angel.

40, 41. **Saith unto Peter**—addressing him, as mentioned by S. Mark, by his proper name, "Simon"; for he did not show himself to be a "Peter" now—**What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?** Possibly an expression of disappointment, and a gentle chiding, but more probably an utterance of affection and pity; for He added—**The spirit indeed is willing**—"your spirit; ye yourselves—**but the flesh**—your nature. How gentle a rebuke was this, and how kind an apology, especially at a time when our Lord's own mind was so weighed down with sorrow"—WESLEY.

42. **If this cup may not pass away.** Words of composure and meek resignation. Some part of the anguish had already passed away.

43. **And He came and found them asleep**

again. S. Luke adds the explanation, "sleeping for sorrow." "They knew not the full extent of His griefs: He separated Himself from them, but they could not be unobservant of His trouble; and He might not be so far distant but that in the stillness of the night they might hear His 'strong crying,' and when He returned to them after each part of the mighty conflict, might observe His 'tears.' They at least so far knew the moving and mysterious cause as to partake so deeply of His sorrows that their animal spirits were exhausted, through the mixed and painful emotions which oppressed them, and they were thus the more readily overpowered with sleep. All this He knew; and a kind excuse seemed to be called for, by a fault into which they were in part led by the strength of their affection for their Master"—R. W.

45. **Sleep on now.** I have need no longer of your wakefulness. The period of conflict is passed. **Behold, the hour is at hand**—that supreme hour of which He had so often spoken; as if Judas and the band had at that moment come into sight. **The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.** Not here "sinners of the Gentiles." The sinners were those who had dared to oppose themselves to His holy character and gracious ministry.

Vers. 47–56. THE BETRAYAL (1 A.M.) (Mark 14. 43–50; Luke 22. 47–53; John 18. 3–11.)—47. **Lo, Judas, one of the Twelve.** So also the other Evangelists speak of him, as if with a shudder of horror. **With him a great multitude**—which was composed of Roman soldiers, Jewish guards of the Temple, with their captain, certain members of the Sanhedrim, with their servants, and others. (John 18. 3; Luke 22. 52.) **With swords and staves.** S. John mentions also "lanterns and torches," although the moon was full, as though with desperate determination to provide against any possibility of concealment. They clearly had some vague expectation of having to meet with resistance, attempt to escape, or, it may be, some show of superhuman power.

48. **Gave them a sign.** S. Mark, "had given them a sign" previously; little anticipating that their Victim would come forward in meek majesty to meet them. **Saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss**—the customary token of friendship and of homage. (Prov. 24. 26; Ps. 2. 12.) This would be agreed upon for the guidance of the Roman soldiers more especially, for the Jewish officials and chief priests would probably know Him personally. **That same is He: hold Him fast**—words of caution, which imply an apprehension of flight, or the putting forth of marvellous power in some such manner as Judas would have in vivid remembrance.

49. **Hail, Master** (R.V. "Hail, Rabbi"), **and kissed Him.** The Greek word is emphatic, meaning, as given in the margin of the R.V. "kissed Him much," or fervently (hypocrisy, as usual, overacting its part).

50. **Friend**—or "companion," as in ch. 20. 13; 22. 12—**wherefore art thou come?** And against whom? "Against Him whom thou hast acknowledged as thy Master and Lord, followed as His disciple, receiving the benefit of His instructions, and by whom thou hast been placed among the number of His friends, and raised to the rank of an apostle; art *thou* come against HIM?"—R. W. (S. Luke, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?") This reproachful appeal seems to have suddenly roused in the traitor a sense of guilt and shame, and he shrank back into the ranks of the multitude he led. Then Jesus, confronting them with calm dignity, "said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him" (using His popular designation at the time), "Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He." "The heroic behaviour of the blessed Jesus, in the whole period of His sufferings, will be observed by every attentive eye, and felt by every pious heart; although the sacred historians, according to their usual but wonderful simplicity, make no encomiums upon it. With what composure does He go forth to meet the traitor! With what calmness receive that malignant kiss! With what dignity does He deliver Himself into the hands of His enemies; yet plainly showing His superiority over them, and even then 'leading,' as it were, 'captivity captive'!"—WESLEY.

This unlooked-for self-surrender and meek boldness filled them with profound veneration and awe. "As soon," S. John continues, "as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground." They retreated from Him as by an involuntary impulse, then fell in deepest reverence at His feet. (Job 1. 20.) Cowered and perplexed, they rose and stood before Him, and "Judas stood with them"; and in order to restore their confidence, He repeated the question, "Whom seek ye? And they said" (not Thee, as might have been expected, but again), "Jesus of Nazareth." And now, His poor people and terrified apostles gathering near to Him, He added, as He serenely confronted the somewhat quailed but resolute company of captors, "I have told you that I am He; if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." Was it for the purpose of shielding them that He had advanced alone to meet His foes? Or was it to show them how entirely the act of giving Himself up was the act of His own holy will and purpose? (John 10. 18.) The Apostle John finds in it a fulfilment of the saying, spoken only an hour or two previously, "Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none" (ch. 17. 12). This was "one fulfilment, but neither the only nor the chief fulfilment, of what the Lord had said of His effective guardianship of those given to Him"—S. C. "In its deepest sense, this saying, in which He devotes Himself, and sets us free, shadows out the entire significance of the atoning sufferings;

He, and He alone, is made the Victim, that we may go free"—S.

51. **One of them which were with Jesus**—namely, as might have been conjectured, "Simon Peter" (John)—**struck a servant of the high priest's**—whose "name was Malchus" (John)—"probably the person that seized Jesus first—**and smote off his ear**—aiming, it seems, to cleave his head; but that, by a secret providence interposing, the blow was turned aside"—WESLEY.

From S. Luke we learn that Jesus "touched his ear," which may not have been completely cut away, "and healed him." This appears to have been our Lord's last miracle.

52. **All they that take the sword**—"without God's giving it them; without sufficient authority"—WESLEY.

Shall perish with the sword. (Rev. 13. 10.) A general saying, with particular application to Peter. His life, had not our Lord interposed by an act of miraculous healing, would have been forfeited, and might have perished "by the sword." "But our Lord manifestly designed to teach that injuries for the sake of religion are not to be repelled by retaliative violence, but submitted to with patience; and that His cause was not to be maintained or promoted by the strifes of an earthly warfare, or by civil coercion: 'If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight'; words which show that such as is the nature of the kingdom are the means by which it is appropriately upheld and maintained. In both these views the lesson was most important. The doom of persecuting churches and persecutors is here forewritten by Him who, from the first, disclaimed such officious disciples, even when so far sincere as to believe they were 'doing God service.' 'They that take the sword shall perish with the sword'; by the awakened vengeance, often, of injured communities debarred of the rights of conscience, or the slower but still certain vengeance of Him who especially abhors all zeal which is not animated by the mild flame of charity"—R. W.

53. **Shall presently** (R.V. "even now") **give Me more than twelve legions of angels.** The number "twelve" may possibly have alluded to Himself and the eleven apostles. A legion consisted of about six thousand men.

54. **That thus it must be.** (Isa. 53. 7; Luke 24. 25–46; Heb. 2. 10.) How strangely different was the true tenor of Old Testament teaching concerning the Messiah, from that of pharisaic traditionalism! John records another of our Lord's sublime sayings on this occasion, manifesting the same union of Divine majesty with perfect submission and patience; showing also by an allusion to His prayer in the agony—"O My Father, let this cup pass from Me"—how perfectly His will and that of the Father was one. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

55. **Said Jesus to the multitudes**—directing His appeal more particularly to "the chief priests, and captains of the Temple, and the elders" (Luke), who appeared to have now only presented themselves when their Victim had been securely captured, and danger was no longer to be apprehended—**Are ye come out as against a thief?** (R.V. "a robber")—a brigand who sought concealment from justice, and was ready to defend himself with violence.

56. **That the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.** It appears from S. Mark's briefer record, "But the Scripture must be fulfilled," that this was a continuation of our Lord's address to the chief priests. S. Luke gives the additional words, "But now is your hour and the power of darkness." A short and illusive triumph! **Then all the disciples**—including even Peter and John, though they followed at a distance—**forsook Him and fled.** So soon did He realise that which was distinctly before Him when He said, "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come . . . when ye shall . . . leave Me alone—and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

Vers. 57–68. BEFORE ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS (2 A.M.). (Mark 14. 53–65; Luke 22. 54; John 18. 12–14; 19. 1–23.)—57. **Led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest.** S. John says, "To Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas;" and that the aged and sagacious ex-high priest subjected Him to an informal examination respecting His disciples and His teaching. Annas, though deposed from the office of high priest, retained all the authority of the office, and probably continued to preside over the Sanhedrim. (Acts 4 6.) The result of a private preliminary inquiry before him would necessarily have a powerful influence on the decision of the council, which was then hastily coming together. S. John, who was present at this audience (ch. 18. 15), is the only one of the Evangelists who gives any account of it. "Annas," he says, "sent Jesus," after this unofficial examination, "bound unto Caiaphas; where"—in whose chamber—"the scribes and the elders were assembled." S. Mark mentions "the chief priests" also; and that, although it was deep night, and the meeting was quite irregular, the Sanhedrim was present in its completeness. Virtually, this was the trial of our Lord before the Jewish authorities, and the more regular trial which followed at daybreak (ch. 27. 1; Luke 22. 66–71) only gave form and validity to its decisions.

58. **Peter followed Him afar off.** S. John adds, "And so did another disciple" (no doubt John himself). After the general panic Peter so far regained his self-possession that, accompanied by his friend, he ventured to follow at a distance. "Variously agitated by conflicting passions: love constrained him to follow his Master; fear made him follow afar off"—WESLEY.

Unto the high priest's palace (R.V. "Unto

the court of the high priest"). The open quadrangular court surrounded by chambers. "We may suppose that in this court was the entrance to the room in which our Lord was examined before Annas, and also into that in which Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim met"—S. C. The entrance from the street was through a passage or **porch** (ver. 71). (Mark 14. 68.) Annas and Caiaphas probably resided in different parts of the same large building.

59. **Sought false witness against Jesus.** Notwithstanding that, according to the *Talmuds*, or authorised collections of rabbinical rules and traditions, to procure false witnesses was a capital crime, and even *to seek* witnesses at all was unlawful. **To put Him to death.** To supply a ground of condemnation to death, the execution of the sentence being left to the Roman governor. (John 18. 31.)

60. **But found none**—"on whose evidence they could condemn Him to die. **At the last came two false witnesses.** Such they were, although part of what they said was true; because our Lord did not speak some of those words at all, nor any of them in this sense"—WESLEY.

61. **I am able to destroy the temple of God** (S. Mark, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands"). It is clear from this definite reference to the material Temple that they intentionally misrepresented our Lord's words (John 2. 19), and that they aimed to convict Him of having spoken slightingly of the Temple, which they held to be constructive blasphemy (Acts 6. 13); and to have asserted superhuman power, which was also blasphemous. Yet, that His real meaning was generally understood may be sufficiently inferred from the representation to Pilate after His death. (Ch. 27. 63.)

63. **But Jesus held His peace.** He would say nothing in reply to an accusation which the judges and witnesses alike secretly felt to be insincere. "He knew that the wisdom of God had appointed that He should be found guilty upon a charge which was in fact the great truth by which He was glorified, namely, that He professed to be the Son of God; and His silence wholly baffled the intention of the high priest, who evidently was not quite bold enough to pronounce sentence upon so vague a charge without fortifying it by what he might draw forth from our Lord Himself. To that charge therefore our Lord answered nothing; and the high priest wholly quits it in order to question Him upon a higher and graver matter"—R. W. **I adjure Thee by the living God.** This was the formula used for putting witnesses on their oath; and the only allowable answer was, Yea, or Nay. **That Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.** (Ch. 14. 33; 16. 16; comp. Ps. 2. 7.) The latter term, affirming His personal dignity, was the great foundation of the charge of blasphemy.

64. **Thou hast said** (S. Mark, "I am"), **Hereafter** (R.V. "Henceforth") **shall ye see the Son of Man.** "He speaks in the third person, modestly, and yet plainly. Our Lord looked very unlike the Person represented by Daniel (ch. 7. 13, 14) now; but nothing could be more awful, more majestic and becoming, than such an admonition in such circumstances"—WESLEY. (Comp. ch. 16. 27; 24. 30; 25. 31.)

"The words refer more especially to our Lord's final coming, but include all that is implied in His 'coming in His kingdom' from the day of His ascension. Indeed, His glorification is 'said by Himself to begin with His betrayal' (John 13. 31). 'Henceforth'—from this time—from the accomplishment of this trial now proceeding. In what follows, the whole process of the triumph of the Lord Jesus even till the end is contained. **Shall ye see**—ye, the representatives of the chosen people so soon to be judged by Him to whom all judgment is committed; **sitting**—even as they now sat to judge Him—**on the right hand of power**—in contrast to His present weakness—**and coming in the clouds of heaven**—looks onward to the awful time of the end when every eye shall see Him"—A.

65. **Then the high priest rent his clothes.** "Though the high priest was forbidden to rend his clothes (that is, his upper garment) in some cases where others were allowed to do it (Lev. 21. 10); yet in case of blasphemy, or any public calamity, it was thought allowable. Caiaphas hereby expressed, in the most artful manner, his horror at hearing such grievous blasphemy"—WESLEY.

66. **He is guilty of death.** We concur in thy decision; His life is forfeited to the law. He was not now condemned in regular form, but from this moment He was looked upon as sentenced to death. **Then**—"after He had declared He was the Son of God, the Sanhedrim doubtless ordered Him to be carried out, while they were consulting what to do. And then it was that the soldiers who kept Him began these insults upon Him"—WESLEY.

This may be inferred from the record of S. Luke, "The men that held Jesus" (in custody) "mocked Him," etc. But S. Matthew gives no indication of who they were who inflicted the insults he describes, and S. Mark uses only the vague term "some." It is certain, however, that they acted with the full permission and approval of the council. **Spit in His face**—an expression of extreme contempt. (Num. 12. 14; Deut. 25. 9; comp. Isa. 50. 6.) **Buffeted Him**—struck Him with the fist. **Smote Him with the palms of their hands**—probably also with rods or sticks.

68. **Prophesy unto us, Thou Christ**—after having "blindfolded Him" (Luke)—**Who is he that smote Thee?** Such is the first affecting scene of our Lord's humiliation and passion. "One word, and His smiters might have been

laid low in death. But as He had begun and continued, He would end—as self-restrained in the use of His awful powers on His own behalf as if He had been the most helpless of men—Divine patience and infinite love knew no wearying."

Vers. 69-75. PETER'S THREEFOLD DENIAL (between 2 and 5 A.M.) (Mark 14. 66–72; Luke 22. 55–62; John 18. 15–18, and 25–27.)

69. **Now Peter sat without in the palace** (R.V. "in the court"). (See on ver. 58.) "The first three Evangelists give the denials of Peter in a continuous narrative, which, as being distinct from, though contemporaneous with, the trial of our Lord, was a matter of indifference. It was also, as Macknight observes, optional whether it was related before or after our Lord's trial. The first two Evangelists narrate it after, S. Luke before; but 'S. John has preserved the exact order of the proceedings, beginning with the first denial, which happened immediately after Peter entered the court of the high priest's house, then giving the history of the trial as the principal fact, and concluding with the subsequent denials'"—R. W. S. John states that he himself gained admission into the court through his acquaintance with the high priest, and that Peter was admitted at his request; that it was cold, that "the servants" of the high priest, and the "officers" or Levitical guard, "kindled a fire," and that "Peter stood with them and warmed himself." **And a damsel**—"one of the maids of the high priest" (Mark), "earnestly looking upon him" (Luke)—**came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.** Peter was thus taken by surprise. He became confused and distracted; his attention was divided between himself and his revered Master, standing at that moment before Annas and Caiaphas in the raised chamber opening upon the court; and he probably saw that the eyes of the men among whom he stood at the fire were turned sharply upon him as the woman put her startling question.

70. **But He denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.** But the woman refused to accept his professed ignorance of her meaning. She repeated her charge more emphatically, and said, now addressing the men who stood or sat by the fire, "This man was also with Him. And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not" (Luke). Miserably disconcerted, in dread of other questionings or charges, and at a loss how to support his false declarations, he quietly crept away, and stole towards the entrance, anxious perhaps, if he found the opportunity, to escape from the place altogether.

71. **And when he was gone out into the porch**—hesitating, perhaps, whether to go forward through the arched gateway into the lonely and silent street, or to linger a little longer in the embarrassing place and company in which he so distressingly found himself—just at that moment a neighbouring "cock crew" (Mark); which, if he heard and heeded it, must have added greatly to his perplexity. There also **another maid saw him**—a fellow-servant, no doubt, of the porteress who had admitted him, and with whom she had probably been gossiping—**and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.** The recognition, or fancied recognition, now became general; and "after a little while" (Luke), when Peter had ventured to creep back to the fire (John), one of the men said to him, "Thou also art one of them" (Luke); and another, "Art not thou also one of His disciples?" (John).

72. **And again he denied with an oath**—"to which possibly he was not unaccustomed before our Lord called him"—WESLEY.

73. **And after a while.** So also S. Mark. S. Luke says, "About the space of an hour after, came unto him they that stood by"—amongst them being a kinsman of Malchus, who identified him (John). **And said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.** The inquiries before Annas and Caiaphas being prolonged, and as no regular meeting of the Sanhedrim could take place before the early dawn, Peter had probably sought to divert attention from himself by entering with as much apparent composure as possible into conversation with the group around the fire. But he thus unwittingly supplied them with further means of detection. His speech proved him to be a Galilean, and confirmed them in the belief that he was one of the chosen followers of the Prisoner.

74. **Then began he to curse**—to invoke curses from heaven upon him if he did not speak the truth—**and to swear**—in the name of God—"having now quite lost the reins, the government of himself"—WESLEY.

And immediately the cock crew (S. Mark, "And the second time the cock crew"). "And at the fulfilment of this signal, we learn from S. Luke that 'the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.' The interior of the vestibule or hall in which our Lord was enduring His trial was within view of those who were in the court, so distant that they could not hear distinctly what was said, but near enough for our Lord to convey by His look to Peter that He knew what had occurred, that He felt that he had committed the sin against which He had warned him, and to fix his attention upon the crowing of the cock as the accomplishment of His prediction"—R. W.

75. **He went out**—smitten to the heart. "Overwhelmed by remorse and shame, he left the place, going out of the court, probably into some secret place. **And wept bitterly**—the depth of his sorrow, and the abundance of his tears, poured forth from a truly broken and a contrite spirit, answering to the greatness of his offence. S. Mark has expressed this with inimitable pathos and simplicity: 'And when he thought thereon, he wept'"—R. W.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Vers. 1, 2. GIVEN OVER TO PILATE. (Mark 15. 1; Luke 22. 66–71.)—1. **When the morning was come** (S. Mark, "Straightway in the morning"; S. Luke, "As soon as it was day") —about 5 A.M., the earliest hour at which the great council could be legally convened. Virtually the main purpose of their meeting was accomplished. They had already, in the residence of Caiaphas, informally but unanimously pronounced our Lord *guilty of death*. But as "the Sanhedrim met in one of the courts of the Temple, which was never opened in the night, they were forced to stay till the morning, before they could proceed regularly in the resolution they had taken to put Him to death"—WESLEY.

"Two things had to be done. One was to obtain the confirmation of their sentence from Pilate; the other, so to mix up charges of seditious designs against the Roman power with the pretended offence against their religion, as to engage the Roman governor to take His execution upon himself, and to carry it into effect in the Roman mode by crucifixion"—R. W. **All the chief priests and elders of the people.** S. Mark and S. Luke include the scribes, and designate the meeting as that of the "whole council."

2. **And when they had bound Him**—for the third time (John 18. 12, 24); now to signify that His guilt had been proved; or "to secure Him from any danger of an escape as He passed through the streets of Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

They led Him away—as a criminal, "followed by the whole multitude" (Luke)—**and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor**—as His judge, to be dealt with as they, His ignorant and prejudiced "kinsmen after the flesh," should maliciously dictate! The usual residence of the governor was in Cæsarea (Acts 23. 33; 25. 1, 4, 6, 13); but during the great festivals he was present with soldiers in Jerusalem. Where he resided then is not quite certain. "Formerly the general opinion was that when the Roman procurator visited Jerusalem he took up his quarters in the castle of Antonia, at the north-west of the Temple enclosure. . . . At present the prevalent view is that the Prætorium (the official residence) was the magnificent palace which had been lately erected or rebuilt by Herod near the gate of Jaffa, on the north-west of Mount Zion. . . . It must also be admitted that this view suggests thoughts of exceeding interest. As our Lord's first trial had taken place in the palace of the high priest—His own representative—and the second trial in His father's house, so the third and last was on the site of the castle of David, His great earthly ancestor, and in the presence of a multitude representing all classes of His own people"—S. C. The Sanhedrim had no power at this period to inflict the punishment of death; and therefore, having found our Lord guilty, as they alleged, of a capital crime, they conducted Him in bonds, as a condemned criminal, and, according to an old tradition, with a cord round His neck, to the heathen governor or procurator, who had full judicial authority, in the expectation that he would at once recognise their competency to deal with the case, and, on hearing from them the grounds of their accusations, comply with their requests. But Pilate, weak, cruel, and selfish as he was, knew too well the duties and responsibilities of his office to condemn the great Accused without a personal hearing (Acts 25. 16), though he ultimately pronounced the awful sentence in violation of his own convictions of truth and justice.

Vers. 3–10. REMORSE AND DEATH OF JUDAS (*peculiar to Matthew*).—3. **Then Judas**—after the regular meeting of the Sanhedrim—**when he saw** his Master conducted in dismal procession, headed by the rulers, to Pilate, and knew therefore **that He was condemned** to die, **repented himself.** "He had obtained the cursed pelf, the hope of which had blinded his judgment and stifled the struggles of his better feelings; and, the infatuating prize being in possession, the passion had subsided, reason had resumed her functions, the whole extent of his baseness and guilt flashed upon his soul, with the fears of the righteous retribution which awaited him. He 'repented himself,' indeed; he would probably have parted with the world for the moment, avaricious as he was, if the foul, the damning deed could have been undone; but the result proved that, strong and agonising as this feeling was, it was not 'godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation'; it was the repentance of the damned at the day of judgment, when the gate of mercy is for ever shut; for the *woe* was upon him, the woe of Him whom he had basely betrayed. Still, before he was permitted to execute upon himself that last act which was to seal his eternal destiny, his remorse was so overruled as to force from even him a public declaration of the blameless character of the Master of whom he had been so unworthy and false a disciple; a testimony which was to be perpetuated by the purchase of a field, and the imposition of a new name upon it, arising out of the circumstance of its purchase, which should render it a public monument for time to come, both of the truth of the fact and the evidence it affords to the innocency of our Lord and the malice of His unjust judges"—R. W.

4. **They said, What is that to us? see thou to that.** "As though they were not equally guilty who used a wicked instrument to accomplish an unjust purpose, as the instrument himself; and as though they were not bound to receive this evidence of a repenting traitor in His favour, and give it its due weight in their representation of the case to the Roman governor. Thus the judges, by proclaiming

their own guilt, demonstrated by their sanguinary obduracy, as fully as Judas by his remorse, the triumphant innocence of our blessed Lord of everything which could render Him, according to their unjust sentence, 'guilty of death'"—R. W.

5. **In the Temple** (properly, as in the R.V. "Into the sanctuary," the holy place). The name may be used here to include the court of the priests; and Judas may have stood at the entrance and flung in the silver pieces, or indeed he may have entered the court in his own right, for there is nothing to preclude the supposition that he was himself a priest. **Hanged himself.** "This is quite reconcilable with the account in Acts 1. 18, which implies that he fell headlong, whether from a hastily erected pole or the branch of a tree"—S. C.

6. **It is not lawful,** etc.—alluding probably to Deut 23. 18. "Thus they verified our Lord's words, 'Straining out the gnat, and swallowing a camel,' purchasing innocent blood with the money, and yet scrupling to deposit it in a sacred place; but thus tacitly and unintentionally declaring that it had been the wages of iniquity, and was itself polluted by the unholy purpose to which it had been appropriated"—R. W.

7. **The potter's field**—"well known, it seems, by that name. This was a small price for a field so near Jerusalem; but the earth had probably been digged for potters' vessels, so that it was now neither fit for tillage nor pasture, and consequently of small value"—WESLEY.

To bury strangers in—foreign Jews and proselytes.

8. **Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood**—"Aceldama" (Acts 1. 19). "Not, we may well conjecture, from the imposition of that name upon it by the chief priests, but by popular and habitual designation. Thus it remained marked with this new and expressive name, both as a proof of the fact, if it should be hereafter questioned, and a memorial of that remorse of Judas for his treachery, which afforded so striking a proof of the guiltlessness of his betrayed Master"—R. W. **Unto this day**—the time when S. Matthew wrote this Gospel, which must have been some years after the event. This is important; for as the Evangelist "could not relate a fact so notorious to all the inhabitants without being contradicted, if not truly stated, so, the fact being established, the history with which it stood connected was confirmed by a durable and visible monument"—R. W. It was situated in the valley of Hinnom, and was used as a burial-place for centuries.

9. **Then was fulfilled**—"what was figuratively represented of old was now accomplished—**by Jeremy the prophet.** The word Jeremy, which was added to the text in later copies, and thence received into many translations, is evidently a mistake; for he who spoke what S. Matthew here cites, or rather paraphrases, was not Jeremy, but Zechariah"—WESLEY. (Zech. 11. 12.)

Vers. 11–26. TRIAL BEFORE PILATE. (Mark 15. 2–15; Luke 23. 1–24; John 18. 29–19. 16.)

11. **And Jesus stood before the governor.** (Ver. 2.) After having been led into his official residence, the "Prætorium" (Mark 15. 16); or, as the same word is variously rendered, "the judgment hall" (John 18. 28), and in Matt. 27. 27, "the common hall." Pilate had been made to feel that the case was one of extraordinary importance—first, by the application to him the preceding evening for a detachment of soldiers to accompany the guards of the Temple in their midnight expedition in search of our Lord, and now by the whole Sanhedrim presenting Him before the imperial tribunal at the earliest moment at which a Roman court could be held. He was therefore quite prepared to give prompt and careful attention to their representations. From S. John we learn that he met them courteously in the open space at the entrance of his residence, "the Prætorium,' and demanded a formal accusation of their Prisoner, which they hesitated to give, having, as they proudly intimated, tried Him, and found Him guilty themselves—"If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee." But Pilate refused to recognise their judicial authority, and they then brought forward their threefold charge of "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King" (Luke). This was not said in His presence, for the soldiers had already conducted Him "into the judgment hall" (John 18. 28–33), His accusers scrupulously standing without. "Then Pilate"—taking up the third part of the charge—"entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus"—to stand before his judgment seat—"and said unto Him"—with evident signs of pity and surprise—"Art Thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest." (Ch. 26. 25.) "Jesus before Caiaphas avows Himself to be the Christ (ch. 26. 64); before Pilate to be a King; clearly showing thereby that His answering no more was not owing to fear"—WESLEY.

"Our Lord without hesitation declared that He was the King of the Jews, but showed that He knew the authors of the charge of sedition thus suggested by asking, 'Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?' At the same time He takes care that Pilate should not proceed in ignorance upon the malicious suggestions of the priests, that He had professed to be the King of the Jews politically, by explaining His meaning, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' it is not a civil but a spiritual reign; and this was done that Pilate might know that Cæsar had nothing to fear from Him. There was great artifice in preferring so dangerous a charge against Him before the Roman governor"—R. W. See the

detailed account of this private examination in John 18. 32–38. It is called by S. Paul our Lord's "good confession." (1 Tim. 6. 13.)

12. **And when He was accused of the chief priests and elders.** After Pilate had returned to them and declared his conviction that the charge of sedition was groundless ("I find no fault in this man," Luke 23. 4; John 18. 31), **He answered nothing** (Isa. 53. 7). He might have instantly put His enemies to shame; and Pilate would have been glad to hear their accusations refuted, and to have acquitted the Object of their misrepresentations: but that would have been contrary to His own mysterious purpose. *His hour was come* (John 12. 23–28; 13. 1).

13. **Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee?**—an expression of impatience. He could not undertake the defence of the innocent One, but he had hoped to hear something from His lips which might ostensibly justify His release. What "things they witnessed against Him" are stated by S. Luke, who adds that the mob crowded around them "became the more fierce"; and that Pilate gathering from their clamour that He was a Galilean, "and that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, sent Him to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time," thus striving to escape from further embarrassment and responsibility. (Luke 23. 6–13.) But Herod also became satisfied that the charges brought against the great Prisoner were fictitious, and after subjecting Him to cruelly contemptuous treatment, sent Him back to Pilate. During the pause in the proceedings before the governor another expedient suggested itself, which he now resolved to try.

15. **Now, at that feast**—the Passover—**the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would**—an act which, whenever it may have originated, was evidently meant to gratify their pride, and soften their prejudices against the hated Roman rule. Pilate then would resort to this. It might be successful, and if it failed, it would at least make more clear the popular will, and relieve his own burdened conscience.

16. **A notable prisoner, called Barabbas.** S. John marks him as a man of violence, "a robber"; and S. Mark and S. Luke say that he had committed murder in an insurrection.

17. **Therefore when they were gathered together**—"called together" by Pilate (Luke), after our Lord had been sent back to the Prætorium by Herod (probably about 7 A.M.). They had lingered around the palace in excited groups while Jesus was being led, guarded by soldiers, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod, arrayed in a "gorgeous robe" to excite the derision of the mob, back to Pilate. The popular interest had become intense, and people of all ranks thronged up to the governor's residence in ever-increasing numbers to see and hear all that was possible. **Pilate said unto them**—appealing to the populace, the immense moving crowd, rather than to the Sanhedrim, as their representatives—**Whom will ye that I release unto you?**—as an act of grace, placing the falsely and the truly accused on the same level—**Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?**

18. **For he knew that for envy they had delivered Him.** "As well as from malice and revenge: they envied Him because the people magnified Him"—WESLEY.

19. **When he was set down.** "For he had stood and delivered a formal speech (Luke 23. 14–16) before he appealed to the crowd to declare their choice; and in his agitation seems to have involuntarily stood and sat by turns. **On the judgment seat**—probably an extemporised or moveable tribunal, which was placed on an elevated and conspicuous spot 'called the Pavement,' on account of a beautiful piece of mosaic work with which the floor was adorned"—WESLEY.

"But in the Hebrew, Gabbatha" (John)—that is, high place, or ridge. **His wife sent unto him.** She had probably heard before retiring to rest of the application made to him by the Jewish authorities for a company of his soldiers to arrest Jesus; she had some knowledge of His history and character, as her message implies; and the thought of His being apprehended and put upon His trial may have caused her sleep to be imperfect and broken by frightful dreams. **Have thou nothing to do with that just Man.** "Thus Judas, by his confession; the false witnesses, by their disagreement; the judges, by their violence, manifest injustice, and the vagueness of their charges; Pilate's wife, by her message to her lord; and Pilate himself—all proclaimed the perfect innocence of the Victim, who was nevertheless yielded up to the clamours of His persecutors. How strange are these events; and yet how perfectly they accord with the true character and design of our Saviour's passion and death!"—R. W.

20. **But the chief priests and elders persuaded**—(S. Mark says, "moved"—instigated—"the multitude")—appealing to their prejudices and worst passions. This would be while Pilate, staggered and awe-stricken by the mysterious message from his wife, was labouring to understand the requirements of his situation in mute perplexity. Little as the members of the council mixed with the common people or regarded their wishes ordinarily, they now went familiarly among them, and used all their arts of persuasion to induce them to raise their voices on behalf of Barabbas—their imprisoned friend—the man who had shown himself ready at all personal risks to deliver them from oppression! As for Jesus, the Galilean, was it not enough to know that He had been fairly tried and condemned by their recognised national authorities? If He had not been proved to be a malefactor, would

He have been delivered up to the detested Roman judge? Not improbably at this stage Barabbas was brought out and made to stand by the side of Jesus. Then, recovering his self-confidence,

21. **The governor answered and said unto them**—appealing once more to the frenzied throng for a declaration of their choice—**Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?** "Look here, on this picture, and on this!" And despite the contrary advice of your Sanhedrim, will you not accept my offer to release this calm and dignified, because, as I have found, innocent Man? **They said**—with one voice (the voice, not of reason, but of their excited feelings and prejudices)— **Barabbas!** "Then cried they all again, saying, Not this Man, but Barabbas" (John). (See Acts 3. 14, 15.)

22. **What shall I do then with Jesus?** He saw with alarm how serious a mistake he made when he appealed for guidance to a fanatical and excited mob. Barabbas should be set at liberty, since this was their demand. But would they not consent to the release of Jesus also, if by an act of extraordinary clemency this could be done? This may have been suggested seriously, or with disdain and in desperation. **They all say unto him**—the chief priests no doubt starting the cry—**Let Him be crucified.** "The punishment which Barabbas had deserved; and this probably made them think of it. But in their malice they forgot with how dangerous a precedent they furnished the Roman governor. And indeed, within the compass of a few years, it turned dreadfully upon themselves"—WESLEY.

23. **Why, what evil hath He done?** This question he now repeats for "the third time," and S. Luke says that he added to it the declaration, "I have found no cause of death in Him," and proposed to inflict chastisement, "and let Him go" (Luke 23. 22). **But they cried out the more**—fiercely, *with loud voices* —**Let Him be crucified.**

24. **When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing**—an unheard-of example of weakness on the part of a Roman ruler—**but that rather a tumult was made**—which he could not suppress or resist (Luke)—**he took water, and washed his hands.** (Deut. 21. 6; Ps. 26. 6.) "A custom frequently used among the heathen, as well as among the Jews, in token of innocency"—WESLEY.

Saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person—whom nevertheless he had offered to scourge as a criminal—**see ye to it.** "Pilate reasoned as ill as he acted. He vainly hoped to transfer the guilt from himself to the Jews; and because he had attempted in vain to persuade them to desist from their purpose, thought himself excused in yielding to the difficulties to which their violence and threats exposed him. He washed his hands; but his conscience was still left black with the very guilt which he declared would be upon the Jews—the guilt of innocent blood"—R. W.

25. **His blood be on us, and on our children.** "As this imprecation was dreadfully answered in the ruin so quickly brought on the Jewish nation, and the calamities which have ever since pursued that wretched people, so it was peculiarly fulfilled by Titus, the Roman general, on the Jews whom he took during the siege of Jerusalem. So many, after having been scourged in a terrible manner, were crucified all round the city, that in a while there was not room near the walls for the crosses to stand by each other. Probably this befel some of those who now joined in this cry, as it certainly did many of their children: the very finger of God thus pointing out their crime in crucifying His Son"—WESLEY.

26. **Then released he Barabbas**—the convicted murderer—**unto them**; and "with full consciousness of the injustice, in cowardly compliance with their will"—(S. C.)—he **delivered** that absolutely "just Person," as he felt constrained to pronounce Him, echoing the epithet used by his wife, **to be crucified.** Not, however, without another attempt to save Him. He **scourged Jesus.** This was the usual preliminary to crucifixion, but Pilate cherished some faint hope that in this case the ignominious and cruel torture of the lash might suffice, and that thus he might gain the assent of the people to our Lord's release. If this did not move them to pity, he must give up the case as lost. "The unhappy sufferer was publicly stripped, was tied by the hands in a bent position to a pillar, and then, on the tense, quivering nerves of the naked back, the blows were inflicted with leathern thongs, weighted with jagged edges of bone and lead; sometimes even the blows fell by accident—sometimes, with terrible barbarity, were purposely struck—on the face and eyes. It was a punishment so hideous that, under its lacerating agony, the victim generally fainted, often died. And this awful cruelty, on which we dare not dwell—this cruelty which makes the heart shudder and grow cold—was followed immediately by the third (Luke 22. 63–65; 23. 21, 22) and bitterest derision, the derision of Christ as King"—F.

27. **Then**—immediately after the scourging which took place in public in front of the tribunal—**the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall**—the "Prætorium" (Mark)—**and gathered unto Him**—in one of its principal courts—**the whole band** —that is, the whole cohort, at least two hundred men; it may be many more.

28. **And they stripped Him**—probably of that "gorgeous robe," or white festal mantle in which, after He had been "set at nought by Herod and his men of war," He had been sent back to Pilate (Luke 23. 11). This which they had thrown over Him after the scourging

they now removed; and in place of it, **put on him a scarlet robe**—"such as kings and generals wore; probably an old tattered one"—WESLEY.

29, 30. **A crown of thorns**—in mock imitation of the diadem worn by Jewish kings, or of the laurel wreath of the emperors. **A reed in His right hand**—to represent a kingly sceptre. **And they bowed the knee before Him**—in feigned homage—**saying, Hail, King of the Jews**—Thou who hast weakly claimed the title. "In that vast royal hall some hundreds of soldiers passed in procession saluting Him as 'King of the Jews'; till, as their excitement increased, they spat upon Him, following the example of the chief priests (ch. 26. 67), and, taking the sceptre from His hand, smote Him on the head repeatedly"—S. C. And now occurred that unspeakably pathetic scene, in which Pilate made his last desperate attempt to liberate his great Prisoner. The mocking, like the previous scourging, had taken place in his presence, but within his palace. He will now lead Him forth to them, with the hope that when they saw Him exhausted, bleeding, horribly insulted, and degraded, yet so calm and patient, the spectacle would go to their hearts, and cause them to exclaim, *Enough. Let Him be released.* "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man" (John). Will not this suffice? But the only answer was the same hateful, monotonous demand, "Let Him be crucified."

31. **Led Him away to crucify Him.** "The person crucified was nailed to the cross as it lay on the ground, through each hand, extended to the utmost stretch, and through both the feet together. Then the cross was raised up, and the foot of it thrust with a violent shock into a hole in the ground prepared for it. Excepting the support afforded by a short projecting piece of wood in the principal beam, the whole weight of the body hung upon the nails, till the person expired through mere dint of pain. This kind of death was used only by the Romans, and by them inflicted only on slaves and the vilest criminals"—WESLEY.

Vers. 32-66. THE CRUCIFIXION (9 A.M.). (Mark 15. 21-41; Luke 23. 16-56; John 19. 17-42.)—32. **As they came out**—from the city gate. Criminals usually bore the cross on which they were to suffer for themselves, and our Lord bore His until they were "without the gate." (Heb. 13. 12.) **They found a man of Cyrene.** "Our Saviour, probably exhausted by previous ill-usage, appears to have sunk under the weight of His burden; so that, meeting Simon, a Cyrenian, coming, says S. Mark, out of the country, **him they compelled to bear His cross**—they *pressed* him into this service, as the word imports. He was of Cyrene, a city of Lybia, where many Jews were located, but was now probably a resident at Jerusalem, and was returning thence from the country. It is not unlikely that he was singled out at the instigation of the Jews as a favourer of Christ; for, S. Mark adds, he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, both celebrated among the first Christians"—R. W. S. Luke records that "there followed Him a great company of people and of women," who showed signs of sympathy and sorrow, and that our Lord, who had borne in silence the hideous indignities inflicted upon Him by priests and soldiers, quickly answered their lamentations with words of deepest tenderness. Also that two malefactors were "led with Him to be put to death."

33. **Golgotha** (S. Luke, "Calvary"), which is the same name in Latin, signifying, **a place of a skull.** Why so called, and where it was situated, is uncertain. "It was nigh to the city" (John), probably on a thoroughfare (Luke); "and in the place there was a garden" (John). These facts we know; and we may infer from the name that the spot was slightly raised; but it is nowhere called a hill.

34. **They gave Him vinegar** (R. V. "wine") **to drink mingled with gall** (S. Mark, "wine mingled with myrrh"). This "vinegar" was the sharp common wine usually drunk by the Roman soldiers. "This wine was often mixed with certain bitter herbs, to impart to it an intoxicating quality, and was given to criminals before their execution. It was a custom for the honourable women of Jerusalem to prepare wine of this kind, and to give it freely to those about to suffer death, to render them less sensible of pain. We have no intimation that our Lord experienced this attention from this class of women, but some of His friends might thus minister to Him; but **when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink**, resolved to sustain the whole weight of His sufferings, and not to submit to have His senses or reason dulled by any stupefying draught"—R. W.

35. **And they crucified Him.** Probably it was at this awful moment, when He lay stretched upon the cross, and the soldiers were driving ragged nails through the palms of His hands, that He prayed, "Father, forgive them"—the great example and enforcement of His own precept (ch. 5. 44)—"for they know not what they do." This simple and most gracious petition referred immediately to His actual executioners, but also to their masters, to the Jewish people, whose agents they were, and to the world of sinners, whom they may be truly said to have represented. (Isa. 53. 12.) "Our Lord passed most of the time on the cross in silence; yet seven sentences which He spoke thereon are recorded by the four Evangelists, though no one Evangelist has recorded them all. Hence it appears, that the four Gospels are as it were four parts, which, joined together, make one symphony; sometimes one of these only, sometimes two or three, some-

times all, sound together. 'Father'—so He speaks both in the beginning and at the end of His sufferings on the cross—'forgive them.' How striking is this passage! While they are actually nailing Him to the cross, He seems to feel the injury they did to their own souls, more than the wounds they gave Him; and, as it were, to forget His own anguish out of a concern for their own salvation"—WESLEY.

And parted His garments. S. John describes this act in minute detail (19. 23, 24). "The garments of the crucified by Roman custom belonged to the executioners; in this case, to the four soldiers who crucified our Lord"—S. C. **Casting lots.** This was for the vest, or closely-fitting inner tunic. The large outer garment was easily torn into four parts, and so distributed "to every soldier a part." But the inner "coat was without seam, woven, from the top throughout." Worked for Him, perhaps, by His mother. "They said among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be" (John). **That it might be fulfilled** (Ps. 22. 18). "In this scripture, as in many others, the prophet seems to have been thrown into a preternatural ecstasy, wherein, personating the Messiah, he spoke barely what the Spirit dictated, without any regard to himself"—WESLEY.

The same Psalm is cited in vers. 39, 43, and 46. "Several MSS. and versions wanting this quotation, it has been supposed that the words were written in the margin from S. John's Gospel, where they are unquestionably found. Still it may be observed, that it is quite in the manner of S. Matthew to notice, for the conviction of the Jews, the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies respecting the Messiah, and especially those which are expressed in a particular and minute manner. The whole Psalm from which this quotation is made, must be understood of Messiah."

36. **They watched Him there**—kept guard, as was usual, to prevent any attempt to take Him down from the cross.

37. **And set up over His head His accusation written**—as was customary with the Romans in extraordinary cases. This was a white tablet, stating the name and crime of the Sufferer. It was suspended from His neck and carried before Him, on His way to the place of death, and nailed up over His head when on the cross. This was written by Pilate, "in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin" (John). "In Latin; for the majesty of the Roman empire; in Hebrew, because it was the language of the nation; and in Greek, for the information of the foreign Jews who spoke that language, and came in great numbers to the feast"—WESLEY.

THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. The four Evangelists give this superscription, but each of them in a slightly different form,—Mark, "The King of the Jews"; Luke, "This is the King of the Jews"; John, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Probably the wording varied to suit the three different languages, and that the Evangelists give the sense rather than the exact words. S. Matthew's is a combination of the three. It will be observed that neither of them is an accusation. S. John states that the chief priests attempted to get the inscription altered, so as to affirm that the crime was the usurpation of kingly rights, but that Pilate obstinately refused to comply with their wishes. "The Christian Fathers were neither weak nor superstitious in noticing Pilate's last formal if unconscious testimony to the truth"—S. C.

38. **Two thieves** (R.V. "robbers"). They were led out to Calvary with our Lord (Luke), and appear to have been crucified at the same time as He, by separate quaternions of soldiers. "Here, too, another signal accomplishment of prophecy may be noticed, which is stated by S. Mark, 'And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors' (Isa. 53. 12). It is remarkable also, that our Lord, some time before this, applied this prophecy to Himself"—R. W. (Luke 22. 37.)

39–43. **And they that passed by**—on the adjoining highway. At this Passover season these would be numerous, many of them no doubt going in that direction for the purpose of witnessing the revolting scene. **Reviled Him** (R.V. "Railed at Him"). The word used by the first two Evangelists is very strong, "They blasphemed Him." "The words of reviling show what charges had been urged most successfully by the chief priests"—S. C. (John 19. 7.) **Wagging their heads.** "A usual mark of malevolent derision and exultation; but, in this, unconsciously fulfilling the words of the Psalm above quoted, which prophetically describes the sufferings of Messiah: 'All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head' (Ps. 22. 7). To this sarcastic mockery and contempt was our Saviour exposed from the common people, who taunted Him, according to the perverted testimony of the false witnesses, on His trial, with His threat of destroying **the temple in three days**, and bade Him, if such was His power, to save Himself, and if He was **the Son of God**, to **come down from the cross**; nor could the **chief priests**, and **scribes**, and **elders**, restrain themselves from this brutal mockery, but joined in the insults; but this also was signally overruled for the fulfilment of another portion of the same prophetic Psalm; for in nearly the words of that sacred composition they said, **He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him.** Thus they undesignedly applied the prophecy to our Lord, and themselves fulfilled it. **For He said, I am the Son of God.** It is to be remarked that the Jews mainly reproach Christ, not with the crime for which He was actually put to death by Pilate, a seditious

assertion of sovereignty in opposition to the Roman power, for which, notwithstanding their hypocritical pretence of respect for the rights of Cæsar, they would have honoured Him, but for the very profession on which their own council had condemned Him—'For He said, I am the Son of God,' thus confessing that they had urged upon Pilate a false pretence, and that the ground of their hatred to Him was His assumption of a Divine character, and the spirituality of His kingdom"—R. W.

44. **Cast the same in His teeth** (R.V. "Cast upon Him the same reproaches"). At first they both did this,—perhaps to win the favour of the "chief priests, and scribes, and elders," who were leading the raillery by a pretended zeal for the Law; or it may be because they found a morbid gratification in seeing that another was the object of popular blame and indignation rather than themselves. For the beautiful and instructive story of the conversion of one of them, and our Lord's second saying from the cross, see Luke 23. 39–43; and for the precious words spoken about the same time to His mother and the Apostle John—the third saying—see John 19. 26, 27.

45. **Now from the sixth hour**—noon; after our Lord had hung upon the cross about three hours (Mark 15. 25)—**there was darkness over all the land.** "Insomuch, that even a heathen philosopher seeing it, and knowing it could not be a natural eclipse, because it was at the time of the full moon, and continued three hours together, cried out, 'Either the God of nature suffers, or the frame of the world is dissolved'"—WESLEY.

"This was the first of the miraculous events which accompanied the crucifixion of our Saviour. The great Sacrifice for the sins of the world was now offering; and as on great occasions God had been wont to show His acceptance of sacrifices by some visible token and preternatural phenomena, so on this, the greatest, the most solemn, and most important, the Father testifies from heaven that a more than ordinary death was undergoing, to mark which, the sun itself was darkened, and the face of heaven veiled"—R. W.

46. **And about the ninth hour** (3 P.M.)—after three hours of supernatural darkness, during which He suffered in silence, "what was unutterable. **My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?** "Our Lord hereby at once expresses His trust in God, and a most distressing sense of the letting loose of the powers of darkness upon Him, withdrawing the comfortable discoveries of His presence, and filling His soul with a terrible sense of the wrath due to the sins which He was bearing"—WESLEY.

"It was a deeper anguish which extorted this mournful cry than that produced by corporal suffering, which the doctrine of the atonement can alone account for, although it is a mystery which none can explain. They are not the words of complaint, as implying reluctance to suffer, but as expressive of deep internal agony, internal desertion of sensible support and consolation; in a word, the completion of what was begun in the garden, the drinking of the last dregs of bitterness out of the cup of wrath, when He, having placed Himself voluntarily in the room and stead of the guilty, was dealt with as though He were really such. Yet was there no distrust in God, for He almost immediately adds, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit'"—R. W. "It is certain that the words would not have been ascribed to Him had they not been distinctly uttered; they would be irreconcilable with all that we read of our Lord's demeanour from the moment of His arrest, were they not explained by truths revealed afterwards to Christians. The *why*, indeed, proposes a question not to be answered save by reference to the highest doctrines; to answer it the Christian has the words of Gethsemane and the teaching of the Spirit to guide him; the atonement depended on the complete fulfilment of the will of God by the Son accepting the only commensurate punishment of sin"—S. C. "The mysteries of those hours of darkness, when with the sufferings of the agonised body mingled the sufferings of the sacred soul, the struggles with sinking nature, the accumulating presence of the burden of a world's sin, the momently more and more bitter foretastings of that which was its wages and its penalty, the clinging desperation of the last assaults of Satan and his mustered hosts, the withdrawal and darkening of the Paternal Presence,—mysteries such as these, so deep and so dread, it was not meet that even the tongues of apostles should be moved to speak of, or the pen of evangelists to record"—E. For the true and only satisfactory explanation of them we must ponder in penitence and prayer such sayings as these: Isa. 53. 4–6, 12; Gal. 3. 13; Rom. 3. 24–27; 4. 25; 1 Cor. 15. 2; 2 Cor. 3. 14–19; 1 Pet. 3. 18; 1 John 4. 10.

47. **This Man calleth for Elias.** "This arose from our Lord having used the term **Eli**, or **Eloi, My God.** Either the Hellenistic Jews, who were not familiar with the language, mistook the word, or in the crowd some heard indistinctly, or, what is more probable, the whole was a continuance of the raillery exercised upon His claim as the Messiah; for a common notion among the Jews was that Elias would precede the Messiah"—R. W.

48. **And straightway one of them**—he must have been a soldier, or he would not have had access to the wine—**ran and took a spunge.** Our Lord had just cried, in utter exhaustion, "I thirst" (John 19. 18). This was His fifth saying, and the only one of the seven which referred to His bodily suffering. **Filled it with vinegar**—that is, sour wine and water, the usual drink of Roman soldiers—**and put it on a reed** (John, "upon hyssop")—a reed or stalk of hyssop two or three feet long; for it is evident

from all that took place around the cross that it was comparatively low, probably not raised more than twelve or eighteen inches above the ground—**and gave Him to drink.** (Ps. 69. 21; John 19. 28.) This was an instinctive act of compassion, yet even this was not unmixed with a continuance of real or assumed contempt, expressed in words of cruel mockery.

49. **The rest said, Let be.** Perhaps addressed to some who objected to His receiving this small relief. Let this be done, and let it suffice. But there was even, so understood, an undertone of bitter jesting. **Let us see whether Elias will come to save Him.** He expects Elijah to help Him; this will contribute to keep Him alive till Elijah comes! "According to S. Mark, the man himself cries, 'Let be'; according to S. Matthew, the others cry out thus to him as he offers the drink; according to S. John, several ('they') filled the spunge with the sour wine. Combining the statements together, we have a natural picture of the excitement caused by the loud cry"—C. B.

50. **Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice.** (S. John, "When Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished.") This was His sixth word from the cross—a single word in the original—spoken with a "loud voice"—calmly exclaimed by the great Sufferer as His word of triumph. Immediately after this He uttered His seventh and last saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." (Ps. 31. 5; 1 Pet. 2. 23; comp. Ps. 22. 22–31.) **Yielded up the ghost**—surrendered His spirit. "When all was accomplished, when the work of atonement was perfected, when the foundations of the kingdom of evil had been overthrown, then, and not till then, the Lord of Life yielded up His spirit to the Father"—S. C. It is to be specially noted that each of the Evangelists speaks of our Lord's death as an act of His own will, it may be with allusion to His repeated prayer in the garden (ch. 26. 42), and to show how perfectly His will and the will of the Father were one; but more especially with reference to His own peculiar saying, "No man taketh it—My life—from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John 10. 18); and in harmony with the uniform testimony of His apostles. (Gal. 2. 20; Eph. 5. 2; 1 Pet. 2. 24.) To say this, however, is only to say how freely He gave Himself up to the necessary consequences of the extremity of anguish through which He passed; how literally He "was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2. 8).

Vers. 51–56. SIGNS FOLLOWING THE DEATH. (Mark 15. 38–41; Luke 23. 46, 47–49.)—51. **And, behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain.** This was the inner veil. (Ex. 26. 31; Heb. 9. 2, 3.) It "separated the holy of holies from the court of the priests, and though made of the richest and strongest tapestry, **was rent in two, from the top to the bottom.** So that while the priest was ministering at the golden altar, it being the time of the sacrifice, the sacred oracle, by an invisible power, was laid open to full view; God thereby signifying the speedy removal of the veil of the Jewish ceremonies, the casting down the partition wall, so that the Jews and Gentiles were now admitted to equal privileges, and the opening a way through the veil of His flesh for all believers into the most holy place"—WESLEY.

The earth did quake. Earthquakes are frequent in Jerusalem. But this was not a mere coincidence at this moment; nor did it result from natural causes, but from the interposition of Divine power. Its "symbolical import was probably the destruction of the Jewish state; for as the rending of the veil intimated the abolition of the religion of the Jews, by the bringing in of a 'better hope,' and the opening of a 'new way to God,' so as earthquakes, in prophetic language, signify the subversion of kingdoms, this shaking of the earth was a real symbol of those convulsions which should entirely destroy their civil polity, and overwhelm them in inevitable destruction"—R. W. **And the rocks rent**—the natural effect of the earthquake.

52, 53. **And the graves were opened**—that is, the natural rock-tombs, or such as had been excavated in the rocks. These were "shattered and laid *open* by the earthquake; and while they continued unclosed (and they must have stood open all the Sabbath, seeing the Law would not allow any attempt to close them), **many bodies of holy men were raised**—perhaps Simeon, Zacharias, John the Baptist, and others who had believed in Christ, and were known to many in Jerusalem. **And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, went into the holy city**—Jerusalem—**and appeared to many**—who had probably known them before. God thereby signifying, that Christ had conquered death, and would raise all His saints in due season"—WESLEY. (1 Cor. 15. 20–23.)

"This was the most extraordinary prodigy of all, and the moral is equally obvious: the death of Christ gives life to the very dead, and the first-fruits of the general resurrection appear visibly among men! That the earthquake was the instrument employed in opening the sepulchres is clear from the narrative; that it could not give life to the bodies contained in them is certain; so that in this we have another instance of the direct employment of the power of God, marking the death of His Son with such events as never occurred at the death of a mere mortal, or the holiest martyr, or the most useful apostle. . . . To the question, What became of them? there is no reasonable reply; but that as our Lord existed in secret until His ascension, so were they also hidden; and that they returned with Him to heaven, and are there as the pledges, to angels and to us, that the general resurrection

of all the saints shall most certainly take place in the fulness of time"—R. W.

54. "**The centurion**—the officer who commanded the guard—**and they that were with him feared, saying, Truly this was the Son of God**—referring to the words of the chief priests and scribes (ver. 43), 'He said, I am the Son of God'"—WESLEY.

Probably also to the impatient appeal of His accusers to Pilate (John 19. 7). "According to S. Luke, the centurion's words were, 'Certainly this was a righteous Man.' He might, and probably did, use both expressions, as it is not likely that he restrained his strong emotions unto one exclamation; and the one implied the other. If Christ was the Son of God incarnate, He was also a righteous Man, innocent of all guilt; and if a righteous Man, He was then the Son of God, because He professed Himself to be so, which, in the sense in which our Lord used the term, no mere man could profess and be righteous"—R. W.

55, 56. **And many women were there beholding afar off.** (Comp. Luke 8. 1–3.) There may be an allusion in the words "afar off" to Ps. 38. 11; but "very near approach was not permitted by the soldiers, but the ridge on which the holy women sat was not so far distant as to prevent their hearing our Lord's words. S. Luke states, further, that 'all His acquaintance were there' (comp. Luke 2. 44), a fact not mentioned by S. Matthew and S. Mark. What struck them specially was that women, contrary to all usage, should be present"—S. C. "These heroic women had followed Him out of Galilee, and some of them were in opulent circumstances; they ministered to Him, and by their grateful benevolence He appears to have been chiefly supported during the latter period of His ministry. So dependent did the Lord of all voluntarily render Himself! These beheld **afar off**, as prevented by delicacy or fear from mingling with the multitude. The mother of Jesus stood by the cross, with S. John; she being, no doubt, treated with some respect from natural pity, and S. John being regarded in the light of her protector. Encouraged by the presence of these two, some of these *women*, who at first stood at a distance, seem afterwards to have approached nearer: of these was **Mary Magdalene**, or Mary of Magdala, a respectable woman, out of whom our Lord had cast seven devils, whose power over her was her affliction, not crime"—R. W. **Mary the mother of James.** Called by S. Mark "James the less"—"to distinguish him from the other James, the brother of S. John; probably because he was less in stature"—WESLEY.

Vers. 57–66. THE BURIAL. (Mark 15. 42–47; Luke 23. 50–56; John 19. 38–42.)—57. **When the even was come**—that is, towards sunset, when the Sabbath began, before which the bodies had to be removed. (Deut. 21. 23.) S. Mark explains that it was "the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath." **There came**—apparently to the place of execution, where the disciples just mentioned were grouped together—**a rich man**—(S. Mark, "an honourable counsellor"—that is, a member of the Sanhedrim)—**of Arimathea**—probably Ramathaim, the birthplace of Samuel. (1 Sam. 1. 1.) S. Luke describes him as "a good man and a just," and says that he had not consented to the decision "and deed" of the rest, in putting Christ to death. **Named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple.** (S. John says, "But secretly, for fear of the Jews.")

58. **He went to Pilate.** (S. Mark says, "went in boldly unto Pilate.") His natural timidity conquered by his Lord's last sayings and acts, and by the supernatural occurrences which followed His death. Only a man of wealth and rank could have had access to Pilate; even in his case the application was an act of daring. Pilate was surprised to hear of His death, for crucified persons sometimes lingered two or three days on the cross; and sent for the centurion in charge to confirm the statement (Mark). **Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered**—without a bribe; in ready recognition of Joseph's station and character, and probably from reverence for Christ Himself.

59. **And when Joseph had taken the body**—with the aid of Nicodemus, as mentioned by S. John, and after the soldiers had taken down the cross and removed the nails—**he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.** "Doubtless after the last usual rites, the ablution, the last kiss impressed on the lips by mother and dearest friends. The head was then covered with the kerchief, and the body wrapped in broad bands of finest linen. These rites may have been rendered hastily, and the last formal enfolding of the body in the bands with aromatic spices delayed until the Sabbath was past; but no long time would be required, the tomb being close at hand, within two hundred yards"—S. C.

60. **His own new tomb**—(Isa. 53. 9)—**hewn out**—no doubt at great expense, not downwards, as with us, but almost horizontally—**in the rock.** "In front of a tomb belonging to a rich family there was generally a vestibule, open to the air; then a low entrance—sometimes, as in this case, on the side of a rock—leading into a square chamber of moderate dimensions, on one side of which was a place for the body, either cut, some seven feet into the rock, or lengthways, three feet deep, with a low arch over it"—S. C.

61. **The other Mary.** (S. Mark, "The mother of James the less"), ver. 56. Mary, the mother of Jesus, had been taken home by S. John.

62. **Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation.** "The day of preparation was the day before the Sabbath, whereon they were to prepare for the celebration of it. The next day then was the Sabbath, according

to the Jews. But the Evangelist seems to express it by this circumlocution to show the Jewish Sabbath was then abolished"—WESLEY.

63. **That deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.** "We do not find that He had ever said this to them, unless when 'He spoke of the temple of His body' (John 2. 19, 21). And if they here refer to what He then said, how perverse and iniquitous was their construction on these words when He was on His trial before the council! (Matt. 26. 61). Then they seemed not to understand them"—WESLEY.

65. **Ye have a watch**—an expression of consent; given in the *Margin* of the R.V. "Take a guard."

66. **Make the sepulchre sure.** "They set Pilate's signet, or the public seal of the Sanhedrim, upon a fastening which they had put on the stone. And all this uncommon caution was overruled by the providence of God, to give the strongest proofs of Christ's ensuing resurrection, since there could be no room for the least suspicion of deceit when it should be found that His body was raised out of a new tomb, where there was no other corpse; and this tomb hewn out of a rock, the mouth of which was secured by a great stone, under a seal, and a guard of soldiers"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Vers. 1-15. THE RESURRECTION (Mark 16. 1-8; Luke 24. 1-12; John 20. 1-10.)—1. **In the end of the Sabbath**—about sunset on Saturday evening, when the Jewish Sabbath ended—**as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.** The whole period of darkness being "regarded as anticipatory of the dawn. (Comp. Luke 23. 54.) Hence the Jews sometimes called the evening of Friday, 'the daybreak'"—C. B. **Came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.** These two faithful women had lingered lovingly and pensively at the sacred spot after all others appeared to have withdrawn. They had spent the Sabbath in quiet meditation (Luke); and so soon as the Sabbath closed, they characteristically hastened back. **To see the sepulchre.** Finding all as they expected, they returned into the city; and in company with Salome, they "brought sweet spices" (Mark), and "perfumes" (Luke), for the embalming which Joseph and Nicodemus began on Friday evening but left incomplete, because the "Sabbath drew on." The hours of darkness slowly passed away, and "very early in the morning," of Sunday (Luke)—"when it was yet dark" (John), these three, and probably others with them, set out afresh for their pious work. Mary Magdalene, as we learn from S. John, pressed forward in advance of the rest, and was the first to arrive at the spot (probably about 5.30 A.M.). Startled and alarmed to find the sepulchre open, she ran back to inform Peter and John; but as she probably took another and nearer route into the city, she did not meet her companions, who continued to walk together towards the tomb. "There is no discrepancy in the different narratives, although, as we might have expected, they are fragmentary, and seem to reflect the varied and tumultuous emotions of those who were the first to see the Lord. The Easter music, as Lange says, is not a *monotonous chorale*, but an impassioned fugue"—C. B.

2. **And, behold, there was**—shortly before any of the women arrived—**a great earthquake**—probably quite local, but evidently supernatural. On their way they had said anxiously one to another, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (Mark). But on their arrival they found in dismay that the supposed difficulty did not exist. "**An angel of the Lord had rolled away the stone, and sat upon it.** S. Luke and S. John speak of two angels that appeared, but it seems as if only one of them had appeared sitting on the stone without the sepulchre; and then, going into it, was seen with another angel, sitting, one where the head, the other where the feet, of the body had lain"—WESLEY.

3. **His countenance** (R.V. "his appearance") **was like lightning** — in intense brightness. (Dan. 10. 6.)

5. **Fear not ye.** "The holy women saw at once that the entrance of the tomb was open, and on entering the vestibule found the angel sitting on the great stone which had been rolled back. They started back in terror, not convulsed, like the soldiers on guard, then lying prostrate before the angel, but they were at once consoled by his words, 'Fear not ye.' *You* have no cause for fear; for I know the piety and love which brought you hither"—S. C.

6. **He is risen, as He said**—a mild intimation that they ought to have understood and remembered this. (Ch. 16. 21; 17. 23.)

7. **And go quickly, and tell His disciples.** (S. Mark, "and Peter"—probably the most disquieted and despondent of the whole sorrowing company.) **There shall ye see Him**—"in His solemn appearance to them all together. But their gracious Lord would not be absent so long; He appeared to them several times before then. **Lo, I have told you**—a solemn confirmation of what He had said"—WESLEY. (Ch. 26. 32; Mark 14. 28.)

8. **And they departed quickly.** (S. Mark adds, "For they trembled and were sore amazed.") Their alarmed and distracted state of feeling, their confused impressions and their hasty movements, should be specially noted. From the narrative of Luke (24. 10) we may infer that this Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, had no sooner ran from the spot after having inspected the vacant tomb, than another party of women, including *Joanna*, arrived. They also saw a vision of angels, who informed

them of the great event as the fulfilment of our Lord's pre-announced purpose (Luke 24. 7–9), and bade them return immediately and convey the joyful tidings to the apostles. Then it was, probably, that Mary Magdalene returned, bringing with her Peter and John; and after their departure, as she lingered on the ground, and "stood without at the sepulchre weeping," Jesus made His first appearance. (John 20. 11–18; Mark 16. 9.)

9. **Behold, Jesus met them.** The foregoing clause, **as they went to tell His disciples,** is omitted from the R.V. It is no doubt spurious. The fact to be understood is, that after having conveyed their message to the apostles, and when they were again on their way to the sepulchre, **Jesus met them, saying, All hail**—Rejoice! A word of friendly salutation, spoken to inspire confidence and joy. **They came**—came near to Him. **Held Him by the feet.** "An action which expressed the deepest reverence, mingled with the strongest affection. By embracing His feet they were also assured that it was not a phantom which they beheld, but the body of the real Jesus. **And worshipped Him.** Although the original word will not of itself prove that this was an act of Divine worship, who can reasonably doubt it, when His resurrection had indeed demonstrated Him to be the SON OF GOD, a title to which all the Jews attached ideas of Divinity? Nor did Jesus, after His resurrection, prescribe that proper worship which we know the disciples publicly and constantly paid to Him after His ascension; because it followed of course from His being thus proved to be what He had professed, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD"—R. W.

10. **Go tell My brethren.** So He had just previously called them in His commission to Mary. (John 20. 17.) Our Lord never applied this term in a direct form, at least, to His disciples before His death. It indicates the beginning of a higher and more intimate spiritual fellowship than had been hitherto possible to them. (Comp. Heb. 2. 11, 12.)

11. **Some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.** "This was the only course open to them. What they would report would, of course, be that, after a shock of earthquake, such as was common, especially after a previous shock, they had seen a vision of dazzling brightness, and that the stone was rolled away"—S. C.

12. **And when they were assembled, with the elders.** "This was a meeting of the Sanhedrim, but surely hardly an official and open one; does not the form of the narrative rather imply that it was a secret compact between those (the majority) who were bitterly hostile to Jesus? The circumstance that Joseph had taken no part in their council before leads us to think that others may have withdrawn themselves from the meeting, *e.g.* Gamaliel, who could hardly have consented to such a measure as this"—A.

13. **Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.** "Is it possible that any man of sense should digest this poor, shallow inconsistency? If ye were awake, why did you let the disciples steal Him? If asleep, how do you know they did?" —WESLEY.

"We must take into account that they were men judicially given up by God to the blind and malevolent passions of their own bad hearts. That they were guilty of both a wicked and a clumsy fiction is seen from this, that afterwards they manifestly appear to have been ashamed of avowing it, and that it was adopted in haste as a temporary expedient. Of this we have a striking, though an incidental, proof in the words of Gamaliel, in this very council, who, when Peter and the other apostles were brought before them for preaching the very fact of Christ's resurrection, and they were disposed to put them to death, said, 'If this counsel and work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it' (Acts 5. 38, 39);—words which presupposed that the resurrection might be true, and which could not have been uttered had the council continued to maintain the story they taught to the Roman soldiers. Still, it was something that they had originated a tale which ignorance and prejudice made long current among the vulgar; for the Evangelist adds, **And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day**"—R. W.

Vers. 16–20. THE APPEARANCE IN GALILEE, AND THE GREAT COMMISSION.—16. **Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee**—not immediately; not until He had made several distinct appearances to them, and had definitely established the fact of His resurrection in their minds. As yet He had revealed Himself only (1) to Mary Magdalene, and (2) to the little company of women on their way to the tomb; in the course of that Day of days (3) to Peter (Luke 24. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 5); towards the evening (4) to the two disciples walking in sadness, full of depressing thoughts of the failure of their expectations, to the village of Emmaus (Luke 24. 13, 35), probably somewhat late in the evening; (5) to the assembled apostles in the absence of Thomas (John 20. 19; Mark 16. 14; Luke 24. 36). After the expiration of a week, He appeared again (6) to the Eleven in Jerusalem. His next recorded appearance was (7) to seven disciples "at the sea of Tiberias" (John 21. 1–23). All these appearances, except the first two, S. Matthew passes over in silence, and hastens to this, the long foreordained, specially promised, and repeatedly referred to manifestation in Galilee, in which the designs of the whole wondrous history are centred and summed up. This, to which we are now brought, was not His final appearance. (8) "After this He was seen of James" (the

Lord's brother), then, at the ascension (9), "of all the apostles." (1 Cor. 15. 7.) Thus, including this, with which S. Matthew's Gospel so triumphantly ends, ten separate manifestations of the Risen Lord are specially recorded. But it is certain on many grounds that there were other occasions when "He showed Himself alive after His passion—unto the apostles whom He had chosen—being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." A hint to this effect is implied in the clause which follows. **Into a mountain**—"the" mountain **where Jesus had appointed them**—as though the appointed place of meeting had been previously mentioned. The expression implies that the appointment was made at some interview with His disciples, perhaps before they left Jerusalem, which is not on record. Where this mountain was can only be conjectured, but we naturally think of the neighbourhood of Capernaum, where our Lord's followers had been most numerous.

17. **And when they saw Him they worshipped Him**—prostrated themselves before Him in humble and devout adoration. "It is characteristic of S. Matthew's Gospel that this word, which indicates the homage and prostration before a king, should occur twelve times, whereas it is found twice only in each of the other Synoptics"—C. D. **But some doubted.** "Not some of the apostles, but of the disciples then with them; for now our Lord fulfilled His promise to appear to His disciples generally in Galilee; and this was probably the time when He was seen of 'five hundred brethren at once'"—R. W. When He first became visible at a distance from the place where they were assembled in the expectation of seeing Him, some failed to identify Him.

18. **And Jesus came**—came near—**and spake to them**—and with His approach, and within hearing of His voice, doubt was quickly scattered—**saying, All power** (R.V. "authority") **is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.** Thus has the Divine King come into full possession of the kingdom of His grace, in glorious fulfilment of the purposes of His self-humiliation. "The kingdom of God has come with power." "Every creature, through the wide realms of space, is subjected to the rule of THE GOD-MAN-MEDIATOR; all are made subservient to the working out of His grand design, the restoration of our world from sin and misery, rendered wretched by sin; and the manifestation, through successive ages, of His own rectoral justice, boundless mercy, and infinite wisdom. And this His authority shall, in the fulness of time, be acknowledged even by those who have most rebelliously struggled against it. By the conquests of grace or power all shall be subdued"—R. W. (Dan. 7. 13, 14; Eph. 1. 20, 21; Phil. 2. 8, 9; Col. 2. 10; 1 Pet. 3. 22; comp. Acts 2. 24, 36.)

19. **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.** (Literally, as in R.V. "make disciples of all the nations.") Since I am rightful "Lord of all"; since, in virtue of My having redeemed all the nations to God with My blood, I have authority to claim the subjection of the world to My dominion, Go ye, and proclaim My character, My rights, and My gospel of reconciliation to all the nations, and thus make them My disciples. "This includes the whole design of Christ's commission. Baptizing and teaching are the two great branches of that general design. And these were to be determined by the circumstances of things; which made it necessary in baptizing adult Jews or heathens, to teach them before they were baptized; in disciplining their children, to baptize them before they were taught; as the Jewish children, in all ages, were first circumcised, and after taught to do all God had commanded them"—WESLEY.

Baptizing them in—into—**the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.** Thus baptism is the open declaration of a covenant, and is to be administered and received in the recognition of personal and most sacred spiritual relations to God. **Baptizing them into**—not in, as if to be a mere declaration of the authority with which they acted—**into the name**—not the *names*—**of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.** It may be confidently assumed that during the forty days since His resurrection, when our Lord so frequently appeared to His apostles, and taught them "the things concerning the kingdom of God," He gave them more definite instruction than He could possibly have given to them previously respecting the tri-personal nature of God, and thus prepared them for this most significant and peculiar form of words. And as they now had some conception, however dim, of this mysterious truth, they would quickly apprehend what He meant by administering the rite which they understood to be the symbol of purity, as the means of bringing believing men, expressly and formally, as they had themselves already come actually, into the deepest sacred connection with that awful name. They knew that the name of God represented His glorious Being and character, as revealed in the covenant engagement He had made with their fathers. They knew that when the high priest pronounced the prescribed form of benediction which from time to time renewed that covenant, —"Jehovah bless thee and keep thee; Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; Jehovah lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace,"—he was said to have regularly "put the name of God upon the children of Israel" (Num. 6. 24-27). They knew that to put the name of God upon a place was to set it apart formally as a place consecrated to His service (Deut. 12. 5); that to call the name of the Lord upon a people was to assert His supreme authority over them as "a holy people," and to declare

His presence with them as their Ruler and Guardian (Isa. 63. 19; Jer. 7. 10, 11; 14. 9). And knowing all this, how naturally would they understand that to baptize a penitent believer in Jesus into the name of the Triune God would be to declare that he had come into covenant allegiance to God, to assure him of being a partaker of covenant rights, and at the same time to pledge him to a faithful fulfilment of covenant requirements.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

S. MARK.

THE BOOK AND ITS AUTHOR.

THE AUTHOR.

THE Author of this Gospel has been universally believed to be John, whose surname was Mark. (Acts 12. 12.) John (*the grace of God*) was his Jewish name, which gradually gave place to his Latin surname Marcus, which may mean "Manly." The places in the New Testament enable us to trace the steps which led to the change. The John Mark of Acts 12. 12, 25, and the John of Acts 13. 5, 13, becomes Mark only in Acts 15. 39; Col. 4. 10; 2 Tim. 4. 11; Philem. 24. The change of John to Mark is analogous to that of Saul to Paul. The change was natural when he came to preach chiefly among the Gentiles in the Roman Empire. Of his father we know nothing. His mother was a certain Mary, a Jewish matron of some position, who dwelt at Jerusalem (Acts 12. 12), and was probably born of an Hellenistic family in that city, *i.e.* a Jewish family who had adopted the Greek civilisation. Mark was cousin to Barnabas of Cyprus, the great friend of S. Paul. (Col. 4. 10.) "His mother would seem to have been intimately acquainted with S. Peter, and it was to her house, as to a familiar home, that the apostle repaired (A.D. 44) after his deliverance from prison. This accounts for S. Mark's intimate acquaintance with the apostle, to whom also he probably owed his conversion, for S. Paul calls him his son (1 Pet. 5. 13)"—CAMBRIDGE BIBLE. An event of the night of our Lord's betrayal, related by S. Mark alone, is a page of his own life, many have thought. "There followed Him a certain young man having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him, and he fled" (Mark 14. 51, 52). Other Evangelists introduce themselves in the same unobtrusive manner. We hear of S. Mark for the first time in Acts 12. 12, in connection with his mother's house. Then soon after, in Acts 12. 25, where we find him accompanying Paul and Barnabas on their return from Jerusalem to Antioch (A.D. 45). Next, on the occasion of the earliest missionary journey of the same apostles (A.D. 48), [when he joined them as their minister (Acts 13. 5), their lay-helper, to provide for their personal wants when travelling. "For some unrecorded reason, possibly want of courage, or home-sickness, or over-anxious care about the mother whom he had left at Jerusalem, he drew back at Perga in Pamphylia from the work to which they were sent, and returned home (Acts 13. 13)"—PLUMPTRE. Afterwards, he nobly redeemed his reputation, and was restored to the favour both of Barnabas and Paul. "We find him by S. Paul's side during his first imprisonment at Rome (A.D. 61–63); and he is acknowledged by him as one of his few fellow-labourers who had been a comfort to him during the weary hours of his imprisonment (Col. 4. 10, 11; Philem. 24). We next have traces of him in 1 Pet. 5. 13: 'The Church that is at Babylon saluteth you, and so doth Marcus my son.' From this we infer that he joined his spiritual father, the great friend of his mother, at Babylon, then, and for some hundred years afterwards, one of the chief seats of Jewish culture. From Babylon he would seem to have returned to Asia Minor; for during his second imprisonment (A.D. 68) S. Paul, writing to Timothy, charges him to bring S. Mark with him to Rome, on the ground that he

was profitable unto him for the ministry (2 Tim. 4. 11). From this point we gain no further information from the New Testament respecting the Evangelist. It is not improbable, however, that He did join the apostle at Rome. After the martyrdom of S. Peter and S. Paul, ecclesiastical tradition affirms that S. Mark visited Egypt, founded the Church of Alexandria, and died by martyrdom"—CAMBRIDGE BIBLE.

THE BOOK.

Nothing certain beyond possibility of doubt can be stated as to the date, for the Gospel itself affords no information. Irenæus says it was written after the deaths of the apostles S. Peter and S. Paul, and therefore not before A.D. 63. "Again we may as certainly conclude that it was not written after the destruction of Jerusalem, for it is not likely that he would have omitted to record so remarkable a fulfilment of our Lord's predictions. Hence, A.D. 63–70 become our limits, but nearer than this we cannot go"—MACLEAR. The weight of testimony is in favour of the belief that this Gospel was written and published at Rome. In this, Clement, Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, all agree. The Gospel was written in Greek, then the literary language of the world. It was written for the Gentile Christians, and especially for the Romans. All reference to the Jewish Law is omitted. Words are explained which could not be understood by Gentile readers. Jewish usages are illustrated, and genealogical notices of our Lord's descent omitted. The testimony of the Early Church is unanimous that the Evangelist composed his Gospel under the eye and direction of S. Peter. "S. Mark's is especially the Gospel for the Romans, and those of Roman characteristics. For the Roman, the mighty worker and conqueror of the world, Jesus is held up as the Divine Almighty Worker and Victor, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It presents the Divine power and activity of our Lord, and views His career as one of conflict and conquest, ending in the universal sway of the Kingdom of God"—PROF. GREGORY. It is in some respects unlike the other three Gospels. It tells us nothing about the birth and early life of our Lord Jesus Christ. It contains comparatively few of His sayings and discourses. It is terse, brief, and graphic. Of all the four inspired histories, this is the shortest.

IT CONTAINS:

"I. The beginning of the Gospel—	
a. John prepares the way, ...	Chap. i. 1–8.
b. Baptizes Jesus, who is proclaimed the Son of God, .	,, ,, 9–11.
c. Tempted of Satan; served by Angels, . .	,, ,, 12–13.
II. The Gospel itself—	
A. In Galilee: where we may observe three periods—	
a. After John was cast into prison:	
In general—	
1. The place and matter of His preaching, .	,, ,, 14–15.
2. The calling of several of the Apostles, . .	,, ,, 16–20.
In particular—	
1. Actions not censured by His adversaries—	
(1) He teaches with authority, . . .	,, ,, 21–22.
(2) Cures the Demoniac, ...	,, ,, 23–28.
(3) Heals many sick, ...	,, ,, 29–34.
(4) Prays, ...	,, ,, 35.
(5) Teaches everywhere, ...	,, ,, 36–39.
(6) Cleanses the Leper, ...	,, ,, 40–45.
2. Actions censured by them: Here occur—	
(1) The Paralytic forgiven and healed, . .	,, ii. 1–12.
(2) The Call of Levi, and eating with Publicans and Sinners, ...	,, ,, 13–17.
(3) The question concerning fasting answered, .	,, ,, 18–22.
(4) The ears of corn plucked, . . .	,, ,, 23–28.
(5) The withered hand restored; snares laid, .	,, iii. 1–6.

3. Our Lord's retirement—
   (1) At the sea, ... Chap. iii. 7–12.
   (2) In the mountain, where the Apostles are called, ... ,, ,, 13–19.
   (3) In the house; where, after refuting the blasphemy of the Pharisees, He shows who are His mother and His brethren, . ,, ,, 20–35.
   (4) In the ship; various Parables, . . ,, iv. 1–34.
   (5) On the sea, and beyond it, . . . ,, ,, 35–41.
   ,, v. 1–20.
   (6) On this side the sea, again; Jairus, and the woman with the flux of blood, . . ,, ,, 21–43.
   (7) At Nazareth; His countrymen offended, . ,, vi. 1– 6.
   (8) The Apostles sent forth, . . . ,, ,, 7–13.

b. After John was put to death—
   1. Herod's hearing of Jesus, and judgment of Him, ,, ,, 14–29.
   2. Christ's retiring with His Apostles, now returned, ... ,, ,, 30–32.
   3. The earnestness of the people; Christ's compassion; Five Thousand fed, . . ,, ,, 33–44.
   4. His walking on the sea, . . . ,, ,, 45–52.
   5. He heals many in the land of Gennesaret, . ,, ,, 53–56.
   6. And teaches what defiles a man, . . ,, vii. 1–23.
   7. A devil cast out in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, ,, ,, 24–30.
   8. At the Sea of Galilee, the deaf and dumb healed, ,, ,, 31–37.
   Four Thousand fed, ... ,, viii. 1– 9.
   9. He comes into the parts of Dalmanutha, and answers concerning the sign from heaven, . ,, ,, 10–13.
   10. In the ship; He warns them of evil leaven, . ,, ,, 14–21.
   11. At Bethsaida; heals the sick, . . . ,, ,, 22–26.

c. After He was acknowledged to be the Son of God—
   1. Peter confessing Him, He enjoins His disciples silence; foretells His Passion; reproves Peter; exhorts to follow Him, . . . ,, ,, 27–38.
   ix. 1.
   2. Is transfigured; casts out a devil; foretells His Passion, ... ,, ,, 2–32.
   3. Reproves and instructs His disciples, . . ,, ,, 33–50.

B. In Judea—
a. In the borders, ... ,, x. 1.
   1. He treats of divorce, ... ,, ,, 2–12.
   2. Of little children, ... ,, ,, 13–16.
   3. Of entering into life, and of the danger of riches, ,, ,, 17–31.
b. In His way to the city—
   1. He foretells His Passion a third time, . . ,, ,, 32–34.
   2. Answers James and John, and instructs them all, ,, ,, 35–45.
   3. At Jericho; gives sight to Bartimæus, . ,, ,, 46–52.
   4. At Jerusalem, ... ,, xi. 1.
      a. His royal entry, ... ,, ,, 2–11.
      b. The day after, the fig-tree cursed, . ,, ,, 12–14.
      the Temple purged, . ,, ,, 15–19.

c. The day after that—

1. Near the fig tree, He shows the power of Faith, ... Chap. xi. 20–26.
2. In the Temple—
   (1) His authority vindicated, . ,, ,, 27–33.
   (2) The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, . . . ,, xii. 1–12.
   (3) Of paying Tribute to Cæsar, . ,, ,, 13–17.
   (4) Of the Resurrection, . . ,, ,, 18–27.
   (5) Of the Great Commandment, . ,, ,, 28–34.
   (6) Of David's Lord, . . ,, ,, 35–37.
   (7) He warns the People of the Scribes, ,, ,, 38–40.
   (8) Commends the Poor Widow, . ,, ,, 41–44.
3. On Mount Olivet, He foretells the destruction of the City and Temple, and the end of the world, . . ,, xiii. 1–37.

d. Two days before the Passover; His enemies bargain with Judas, . . . ,, xiv. 1–11.

e. On the first day of Unleavened Bread—

1. The Passover prepared, . . ,, ,, 12–16.
2. The Lord's Supper instituted, . ,, ,, 17–25.
3. After the hymn, the offence of the disciples, and Peter's denial foretold, ,, ,, 26–31.
4. In Gethsemane:
   Jesus prays; Wakes His disciples, . ,, ,, 32–42.
   Is betrayed; taken; forsaken of all, . ,, ,, 43–52.
5. In the High Priest's Palace:
   He is condemned to death, . . ,, ,, 53–65.
   Denied by Peter, . . . ,, ,, 66–72.

f. Friday—

What was done:

1. In Pilate's Palace, . . . ,, xv. 1–20.
2. In the way, ... ,, ,, 21.
3. At Golgotha, ... ,, ,, 22.
   (1) The wine and myrrh offered, . ,, ,, 23.
   (2) The Crucifixion; His garments parted, . . . ,, ,, 24–25.
   (3) The title, . . . ,, ,, 26.
   (4) The two malefactors, . . ,, ,, 27–28.
   (5) Revilings, . . . ,, ,, 29–32.
   (6) The darkness; the cry of Jesus; the scoff; the vinegar; His Death; the veil rent, . . ,, ,, 33–38.
   (7) The saying of the Centurion; the women looking on, . . ,, ,, 39–41.
4. In the evening, the burial, . . ,, ,, 42–47.

g. Sunday—

Our Lord's Resurrection declared:

1. By an Angel, ... ,, xvi. 1–8.
2. By Himself—
   To Mary Magdalene, . . . ,, ,, 9–11.
   To two going into the country, . ,, ,, 12–13.
   To the eleven sitting at meat, . ,, ,, 14.

III. The Gospel—

1. Committed by Christ to His Apostles, after His Resurrection, ... Chap. xvi. 15–18.
2. And confirmed after His Ascension, . . . „ „ 19–20."
—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1–8. PREPARING THE WAY.—"The object of S. Mark being to relate *the official life and ministry* of our Lord, he begins with His *baptism*, and as a necessary introduction to it, with the preaching of John the Baptist"—ALFORD. "S. Mark's 'beginning' is not 'the beginning.' Behind this Gospel there are these events:—

The Word (John 1. 1–18).
Preface to Luke's Gospel (Luke 1. 1–4).
The Forerunner announced (Luke 1. 5–25).
The Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1. 26–38).
The Magnificat (Luke 1. 46–55).
Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1. 56–80).
Birth of Jesus and Song of Angels (Luke 2. 1–20).
Presentation at the Temple (Luke 2. 21–39).
Visit of Wise Men from the East (Matt. 2. 1–12).
Massacre of the Innocents and Flight into Egypt (Matt. 2. 13–18).
Childhood of Jesus (Luke 2. 40–52).

"The ministry of John the Baptist is the beginning of the manifestation of Jesus. He is His forerunner. The meaning of the word translated Gospel is 'good news.' In the New Testament it always bears a special significance, 'the news of salvation.' Eastern conquerors were accustomed to send a herald before them to call the people of the countries through which they passed to prepare for their coming. On such an occasion, to make a 'king's highway' valleys had to be filled, hills levelled, byepaths straightened. Modern travellers tell us that to-day Eastern countries are so destitute of roads, that if you come to a passable piece you are sure to be told that it was built for the Prince of Wales, or the Empress Eugenie, or the Khedive, or Napoleon the Great. In a moral and spiritual sense John the Baptist came to prepare the way. 'Every unregenerate human heart is a wilderness abounding in obstacles to the coming of its King; mountains of selfishness and pride and prejudice, and sins of every kind, are to be levelled; crooked places of wrong-living, and wrong-doing, and bad habits are to be made straight; many a sin of omission and neglect is to be filled up, and many a rough place of temper, of manner, and of heart, is to be made smooth'"—PELOUBET. The New Testament idea of repentance is that of a change of mind, of purpose, a change of conduct certainly, but first of all a change of disposition.

1. **The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.** "The Evangelist speaks with strict propriety, for the beginning of the Gospel is, in the account of John the Baptist, contained in the first paragraph; the Gospel itself in the rest of the book"—WESLEY.

4. **Preaching the baptism of repentance**—"that is, preaching repentance, and baptizing as a sign and means of it"—WESLEY.

7. **The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose**—"that is, to do Him the very meanest service"—WESLEY.

9–11. BAPTISM OF JESUS. (See on Matt. 3. 13–17; Luke 3. 21, 22.)

12, 13. THE TEMPTATION. (See on Matt. 4. 1–11; Luke 4. 1–13.)

12. **And immediately the Spirit thrusteth Him out into the wilderness.** "So, in all the children of God, extraordinary manifestations of His favour are wont to be followed by extraordinary temptations"—WESLEY.

13. **And He was there forty days tempted by Satan**—"invisibly. After this followed the temptation by him in a visible shape, related by S. Matthew. **And He was with the wild beasts**—though they had no power to hurt Him. S. Mark not only gives us a compendium of S. Matthew's Gospel, but likewise several valuable particulars which the other Evangelists have omitted"—WESLEY.

14–20. CHRIST BEGINS HIS GALILEAN MINISTRY. (See on Matt. 4. 12–22.)

15. **The time is fulfilled**—"the time of My kingdom, foretold by Daniel, expected by you, is fully come"—WESLEY.

18. **Straightway leaving their nets, they followed Him.** "From this time they forsook their employ, and constantly attended Him. Happy they who follow Christ at the first call!"—WESLEY.

21–39. MIRACLES OF HEALING—*The Man with an unclean spirit* (vers. 21–28).—23. **A man with an unclean spirit**—"in an unclean spirit," as Wyclif rendered it; Tyndale and Cranmer paraphrased it, "vexed with." In the power, under the influence of an unclean spirit. **Jesus rebuked him.** Old translators have "reproved, threatened." **Hold thy peace**—"be muzzled."

The wisest will acknowledge that he who knows the most knows but little of demoniac possession. There were such of old; probably are such still. But how far possession is explainable as diseases are—how far unexplainable—where the natural and the supernatural meet and part, we cannot tell. Silence is here the loftiest speech; and a frank confession of ignorance the wisest wisdom. The universe is large. There are many things in heaven and earth. Christ is Lord of all.

26. **A loud noise**—"for he was forbidden to

speak. Christ would neither suffer those evil spirits to speak in opposition, nor yet in favour of Him. He needed not their testimony, nor would encourage it, lest any should infer that He acted in concert with them"—WESLEY.

Ver. 31 is full of graphic touches. He went to the sufferer. He took her by the hand. He lifted her up. The fever quitted her; and she began to minister unto them. **When the sun did set.** It was a religion with the Jews to do as little as possible on the Sabbath. **Suffered not the demons to speak.** He would not be indebted to evil. S. Matthew connects the cures now wrought with the prophecy of Isaiah—Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.

The Cure of Peter's Wife's Mother (vers. 29–31).—Our Lord had been to church. (See ver. 21 *seq.*) Note that He attended church everywhere—in the small town of Nazareth and the large city of Capernaum. Capernaum was the meeting-place of nations, the centre of commerce, like London, Liverpool, and Glasgow. A city church differs from a country church. Many young people who are devout worshippers in the village neglect to enter the church when they come to the town. Here Christ is our Example. Where is He not? From the church He goes to the home. He sanctified all places, honoured all relations. The house of Simon and Andrew in Capernaum was to our Lord what the house of Mary and Martha was in Bethany. He had no home of His own. On the Sabbath, after worship and work in the synagogue, He went to the apostle's house to eat bread. There He found sickness, and in His presence it fled. Disease could not exist in the presence of the Lord of Life. The description of the healing is very graphic. **He went to the sufferer. He took her by the hand. He lifted her up. The fever quitted her. She began to minister unto them**

A City's Sick (vers. 32–34).—All three Evangelists carefully record that it was not till the sun was setting, or had actually set, that these sick were brought to Jesus. The reason of this probably was—(1) either that they waited till the mid-day heat was past, and the cool of the evening was come; or (2) the day being the Sabbath (Mark 1. 29–32), they were unwilling to violate the sacred rest of the day, and so waited till it was ended. What a crowd of sick! You can judge the size of a city by the number of its hospitals and infirmaries. Those who are dependent upon the hospitals of London are the same in number as the population of Wolverhampton. Amongst the many reasons for the miracles of Jesus there is this: they enable us to see the miracles of common life. We understand the miracle of the annual harvest when we read the feeding of the five thousand. We see the mercy of God in medical skill when we watch the healing of a crowd of sick folk. These healed ones are unnamed. Their cures are not detailed. S. John, in his language of metaphor, wrote, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

Solitary Prayer (ver. 35).—From work to worship our Lord went. "A remarkable feature of the Lake of Gennesaret," Dean STANLEY writes, "was that it was closely surrounded with desert solitudes. These desert places, thus close at hand on the tablelands or in the ravines of the eastern and western ranges, give opportunities of retirement for rest or prayer. Rising up early in the morning while it was yet dark, or passing over to the other side in a boat, He sought these solitudes sometimes alone, sometimes with His disciples. The Lake in this double aspect is thus a reflex of that union of energy and rest, of active labour and deep devotion, which is the essence of Christianity, as it was of the life of Him in whom that union was first taught and shown."

32. **When the sun was set**—"and, consequently, the Sabbath was ended, which they reckoned from sunset to sunset"—WESLEY.

33. **And the whole city was gathered together at the door.** "Oh what a fair prospect was here! Who could then have imagined that all these blossoms would die away without fruit?"—WESLEY.

34. **He suffered not the devils to say that they knew Him**—"that is, according to Dr. Mead's hypothesis (that the scriptural demoniacs were only diseased persons), 'He suffered not the diseases to say that they knew Him!'"—WESLEY.

35. **Rising a great while before day**—"so did He labour for us both day and night"—WESLEY.

The Home Missionary (vers. 36–39).—His heart was wide as the world. Every man He called brother. Whosoever has gone to church and come away without a deeper sense of his relations to his fellows, has gone to church in vain. Christ belonged to all. His gospel is designed for all.

The Incurable Cured (vers. 40–45).—The most terrible of all maladies was leprosy. It was a living death, a slow decay of every limb. It was death's own mark. But Christ is Lord of All. Nothing is impossible to God. (See on Matt. 8. 1–4; Luke 5. 12–16.)

44. **See thou say nothing to any man.** "But our blessed Lord gives no such charge to us. If He has made us clean from our leprosy of sin, we are not commanded to conceal it. On the contrary, it is our duty to publish it abroad, both for the honour of our Benefactor, and that others who are sick of sin may be encouraged to ask and hope for the same benefit. **But go, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing what Moses commanded for a testimony to them.** The priests seeing him, pronouncing him clean

(Lev. 13. 17, 23, 28, 37), and accordingly allowing him to offer as Moses commanded (Lev. 14. 2–7), was such a proof against them, that they durst never say the leper was not cleansed; which, out of envy or malice against our Saviour, they might have been ready to say, upon his presenting himself to be viewed, according to the Law, if, by the cleansed person's talking much about his cure, the account of it had reached their ears before he came in person. This is one great reason why our Lord commanded this man to say nothing" —WESLEY.

45. **So that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city.** "It was also to prevent this inconvenience that our Lord had enjoined him silence"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1–12. HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC. (See on Matt. 9. 1–8; Luke 5. 17–26.)—*A Great Crowd* (vers. 1, 2).—Some knowledge of Eastern life and architecture is necessary to picture the scene. Fortunately, Eastern travellers are so numerous, we are placed in the position of those who attend a panorama, and see, cast upon the sheet, cities and provinces they have never visited. "If we may judge from the ruins on the site of the town," says GEIKIE, "the house was only a single storey high, with a flat roof, reached by a stairway from the yard or court, and Jesus may have stood near the door, in such a position as to be able to address the crowd outside, as well as those in the chamber. Possibly, however, there were two storeys in this particular house, as there must have been in some in the town, and in that case the upper one would likely be a large room—the upper and best chamber—such as was often used elsewhere by rabbis for reading and expounding the Law to their disciples, and Jesus may have stood near the open window, so as to be heard both outside and within." All the avenues of approach to the house were blocked, and the courtyard or vestibule was filled. Houses of the better sort were built around a four-sided court—an interior space frequently paved. Into this area a passage from the street led. The materials still employed in the construction of roofs are beams placed about three feet apart, across which sticks are arranged close together, and covered with a thickly-matted thorn-bush; over this is placed a coat of thick mortar, and above that, marl or earth. To the crowd He preached. The healthy were attracted to the Teacher; the sick to the Healer. All found some point of contact in Jesus Christ. It is so still. He does not belong to this class or that; He belongs to none, because He belongs to all. He is the Saviour of the poor; but is He not the Saviour of the rich? The children of the well-to-do need His virtue not less than the children of the gutter and the alley. Let teachers emphasise this. So much is said to-day of the need of religion for the masses —the residuum, the outcasts—we are in danger of forgetting that the classes—the wealthy, the refined, the aristocrats—cannot save themselves. Jesus dominated the city of Capernaum. When will He dominate the cities of London, Manchester, Liverpool, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, New York, Sydney, Calcutta? Is He not the Saviour still?

A Great Sufferer (vers. 3–5).—In its worst forms the palsy was miserable; in any form it was a serious drain upon the springs of life. The man had need of help, but the difficulties were many. He could not bring himself. His friends could not carry him through the crowd. But they were resourceful. They dug through the roof. Having ascended, they broke up the tiling or thin stone slabs, as some suppose; or if the roof was made of earth and matted thorn-bush only, as others imagine (for both methods are still adopted), they tore them up and let down their precious burden into the midst of the astonished crowd. Never was a patient so introduced before. Shall we name it Triumph over Hindrances? Our Lord marked their faith especially. Their act showed this. They believed that if they brought the sufferer to the sympathising Saviour, it would not be in vain. What does the incident mean to-day? We can help and bless each other. A scholar can speak a loving word to another who may be angry, or poor, or in pain. A teacher may pray for those she teaches. A wife may bring a husband to Christ, and a parent may direct a child's conscience. Sometimes it may be necessary for parent, teacher, friend, and minister—like the four friends of the narrative —to carry the need and sin and shame and sorrow of some one to God. It has been noted that in this story of healing each one gets what he goes after—the sick man obtains forgiveness and health; the four gain the blessing they sought for their neighbour; the critics and fault-finders see the faults which they came to find. You may have seen two pictures entitled "THE ROCK OF AGES." In one a person is clinging with both hands to a cross on a rock in the stormy sea. In the other, with one hand the saved person is clinging to the cross, with the other she is reaching out and drawing another drowning one from the raging waves to the safety of the cross on the rock.

A Great Doubt (vers. 6, 7).—Christ spoke His great word, **Thy sins be forgiven thee.** A startling word indeed. Prophets had wrought miracles, but they had not forgiven sins. This was the prerogative of God only. Sins are against God, and therefore only God can forgive them. Perhaps the listeners recalled the penitent prayer of their celebrated king—"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight; that Thou mayest be justified when

Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." The claim to forgive sins implied a claim to distinct equality with God in respect to one of His most incommunicable attributes. These thoughts, and thoughts like these, were in the minds of the listening Pharisees and lawyers. Could this Rabbi be from God? Was He greater than Abraham, Elijah, Jonah? They did not forgive men's sins. These thoughts were unspoken. Our word "dialogue" comes from the original of this word "reasoning." They spake, held a dialogue in the inner world of their thoughts. And what a world that is! How many thoughts we think but dare not speak. God knows our thoughts. The Lord Christ saw the reasonings of the scribes just as He had seen the faith of the bearers, and the penitence of him whom they carried. "Thou God seest me" is a wide text. God is the All-seer; the One who sees everything and misses nothing. Now and again we catch ourselves saying, "No one saw me," and instantly we reflect—"Yes, One." And that One is THE ONE. Remember the Eye of God to make you careful; remember the Eye of God to make you bold: careful not to do wrong, bold in doing right. For God's watchfulness is loving watchfulness. He delighteth in our goodness. All His commandments—positive and negative—are for our good—always to keep us.

A Great Challenge (vers. 8, 9).—Observe, our Lord does not say, Whether is it easier to forgive sins or to heal? The possibility of forgiveness was the point in dispute. But He says, Whether is it easier to *say* this or that; to claim these powers. It would be easier to claim the power to forgive because that could not be demonstrated. To claim the power to heal would be more difficult, because they would say, "Show us the man healed." So that our Lord says, I will prove My right to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," by saying, **Arise, and walk**, and the latter miracle wrought before your eyes will lead you to ask whether there may reside in Me the power to forgive. The Bible compares God's forgiving love to the sea, which buries all in its great depths. When the burden fell from the back of Bunyan's Pilgrim, he leaped for joy. The forgiven live a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in His holy ways.

A Great Victory (vers. 10–12).—The man's faith was tested by the word of command, **Arise, take up thy bed, and go.** How could helplessness rise and weakness carry? Power went with the word. God's "do" always includes "I will help thee." He went forth at the bidding of the Christ of God. And EDERSHEIM, being himself a Jew, and finding points of contact between the Old Testament and the New, which we Gentiles might overlook, says: "The wrath of these scribes praised God, and the remainder of wrath did He restrain. As the healed man slowly rose, and, still silent, rolled up his pallet, a way was made for him between this multitude which followed him with wondering eyes. Then, as first mingled wonderment and fear fell on Israel on Mount Carmel, when the fire had leaped from heaven, devoured the sacrifice, licked up the water in the trench, and even consumed the stones of the altar, and then all fell prostrate, and the shout rose to heaven, 'Jehovah, He is the Elohim!' so now, in view of this manifestation of the Divine Presence among them. The amazement of fear fell on them in this Presence, and they glorified God, and they said, **We have never seen it on this wise.**"

1. **And again**—"after having been in desert places for some time, He returned privately to the city. **In the house**—in Peter's house"—WESLEY.

2. **And many were gathered together.** "Hitherto continued the general impression on their hearts. Hitherto, even at Capernaum, all who heard received the word with joy"—WESLEY.

4. **They uncovered the roof**—"or, took up the covering, the lattice or trap-door which was on all their houses, being flat-roofed; and, finding it not wide enough, broke the passage wider to let down the couch"—WESLEY.

6. **But certain of the scribes.** "See whence the first offence cometh! As yet not one of the plain unlettered people were offended. They all rejoiced in the light, till these men of learning came to put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Woe to all such blind guides! Good had it been for these if they had never been born. O God, let me never offend one of Thy simple ones! Sooner let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!"—WESLEY.

12. **They were all amazed.** "Even the scribes themselves for a time"—WESLEY.

Vers. 13–17. LEVI'S (OR MATTHEW'S) CALL AND FEAST. (See on Matt. 9. 9–13; Luke 5. 27–32.)—13, **All the multitude came to Him**—"namely, by the seaside. **And He** as readily **taught them** there as if they had been in a synagogue"—WESLEY.

15. **Many publicans and** notorious **sinners sat with Jesus.** "Some of them, doubtless, invited by S. Matthew, moved with compassion for his old companions in sin. But the next words, **For they were many, and they followed Him**, seem to imply that the greater part, encouraged by His gracious words and the tenderness of His behaviour, and impatient to hear more, stayed for no invitation, but pressed in after Him, and kept as close to Him as they could"—WESLEY.

16. **And the scribes and the Pharisees said.** "So now the wise men, being joined by the saints of the world, went a little further in raising prejudices against our Lord. In His answer He uses, as yet, no harshness, but only calm, dispassionate reasoning"—WESLEY.

17. **I came not to call the righteous**—"therefore, if these were righteous, I should not call them. But now they are the very persons I came to save"—WESLEY.

Vers. 18–22. DISCOURSE ON FASTING. (See on Matt. 9. 14–17; Luke 5. 33–39.)

Vers. 23–28. PLUCKING CORN-EARS ON THE SABBATH. (See on Matt. 12. 1–8; Luke 6. 1–5.)—26. **In the days of Abiathar the high priest.** "Abimelech, the father of Abiathar, was high priest then; Abiathar himself, not till some time after. This phrase, therefore, only means in the time of Abiathar, who was afterwards the high priest"—WESLEY.

27. **The Sabbath was made for man**—"and therefore must give way to man's necessity"—WESLEY.

28. **Moreover, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath**—"being the supreme Lawgiver, He hath power to dispense with His own laws; and with this in particular"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1–12. HEALING A WITHERED HAND, AND SUBSEQUENT RETIREMENT. (See on Matt. 12. 9–21; Luke 6. 6–11.)—1. **He entered again into the synagogue**—"at Capernaum on the same day"—WESLEY.

2. **And they**—"the scribes and Pharisees—**watched Him, that they might accuse Him.** Pride, anger, and shame, after being so often put to silence, began now to ripen into malice"—WESLEY.

4. **Is it lawful to save life, or to kill?**—"which He knew they were seeking occasion to do. **But they held their peace**—being confounded, though not convinced"—WESLEY.

5. **Looking round upon them with anger, being grieved**—"angry at the sin, grieved at the sinner: the true standard of Christian anger. But who can separate anger at sin from anger at the sinner? None but a true believer in Christ"—WESLEY.

6. **The Pharisees going out**—"probably leaving the scribes to watch Him still—**took counsel with the Herodians**—as bitter as they usually were against each other!"—WESLEY.

8. **From Idumea**—"the natives of which had now professed the Jewish religion above an hundred and fifty years. **They about Tyre and Sidon**—the Israelites who lived in those coasts"—WESLEY.

10. "**Plagues** or 'scourges' (so the Greek word properly means) seem to be those very painful or afflictive disorders which were frequently sent, or at least permitted of God, as a scourge or punishment of sin"—WESLEY.

12. **He charged them not to make Him known**—"it was not the time; nor were they fit preachers"—WESLEY.

Vers. 13–19. THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHOSEN. (See on Luke 6. 12–19.)—13. **He calleth whom He would.** "With regard to the eternal states of men God always acts as just and merciful. But with regard to numberless other things He seems to us to act as mere Sovereign"—WESLEY.

16. **He surnamed them sons of thunder**—"both with respect to the warmth and impetuosity of their spirit, their fervent manner of preaching, and the power of their word"—WESLEY.

Vers. 20–30. JESUS HEALS A DEMONIAC, AND HIS ENEMIES BLASPHEME. (See on Matt. 12. 22–37; Luke 11. 14–26.)—20. **To eat bread**—"that is, to take any subsistence"—WESLEY.

21. **His relations**—"His mother and His brethren (ver. 31). But it was some time before they could come near Him"—WESLEY.

22. "**The scribes** and Pharisees (Matt. 12. 24) **who had come down from Jerusalem**—purposely, on the devil's errand, and not without success, for the common people now began to drink in the poison from these learned, good, honourable men! **He hath Beelzebub**—at command, is in league with him. **And by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils.** How easily may a man of learning elude the strongest proof of a work of God! How readily can he account for every incident without ever taking God into the question!"—WESLEY.

30. **Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.** "Is it not astonishing that men who have ever read these words should doubt what is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? Can any words declare more plainly that it is 'the ascribing those miracles to the power of the devil which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost'?"—WESLEY.

Vers. 31–35. HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN COME TO HIM. (See on Matt. 12. 46–50; Luke 8. 19–21.)—31. **Then come His brethren and His mother**—"having at length made their way through the crowd, so as to come to the door. His brethren are here named first, as being first and most earnest in the design of taking Him, for 'neither did' these of 'His brethren believe on Him.' **They sent to Him, calling Him**—they sent one into the house, who called Him aloud by name"—WESLEY.

34. **Looking round on them who sat about Him**—"with the utmost sweetness. **He said, Behold My mother and My brethren.** In this preference of His true disciples, even to the Virgin Mary, considered merely as His mother after the flesh, He not only shows His high and tender affection for them, but seems designedly to guard against those excessive and idolatrous honours which He foresaw would, in after ages, be paid to her"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1–34. PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM. (See on Matt. 13. 1–23, 31, 32; Luke 8. 4–18.)—I. *Parabolic Teaching.*—To-day we enter the charmed circle of the Parables of our

Saviour. One who was writing a Life of Christ, pausing in a moment of exultation, said, "Twenty men could not, in a lifetime, write all I now see: how can I put it into one book?" How can the Parables of the Kingdom be put into one lesson? They are seven:

1. The Parable of the Sower.
2. The Parable of the Tares.
3. The Parable of the Drag Net.
4. The Parable of the Mustard Seed.
5. The Parable of the Leaven.
6. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure.
7. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price.

This is not exactly the order in which they were given. Nor were they all spoken at one time. "With many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to hear it." It was the method of His teaching. A parable is a Divine painting concealing truth from the foolish, but revealing it to the wise, always founded on analogy from nature or daily life. In the New Testament two Greek words have been rendered by this one English term. One of these is almost peculiar to S. John, seeing that he uses it four times: "This parable spake Jesus unto them" (ch. 10. 6); "These things have I spoken unto you in parables; the hour cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in parables" (ch. 16. 25); "Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no parable" (ver. 29). The Revised Version has the word "proverb" sometimes in the text and at others in the margin. In the only other passage in which the word occurs (2 Pet. 2. 22) both the Authorised and the Revised have "proverb." The other and more common term, which is never used by S. John, while it is the one employed by the other Evangelists, is simply the English word in Greek letters—parable. It means to throw or place side by side; the placing one thing by the side of another for the purpose of comparison.

In its more restricted sense, it is the name given to a connected narrative, whether of events in human life or of a process in nature, by which some great spiritual truth is illustrated or enforced. The little girl was very near the mark when she said that "a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." All things are double. The sun shines to give light and life, but he is also a great preacher of moral and spiritual truths. When wise men look into his face they think of the Maker, of whom it is said, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Our Lord found God everywhere, suggestions of spiritual truths in all things. "This world, with all its forces and powers, is patterned after spiritual things, and seems made purposely to express invisible forms, as in an incarnation, the invisible facts of the spiritual world. Thus many of our words for immaterial things are derived from the material world. *Spirit* is derived from breath; *heaven* is that which is heaved up; *heart-courage* is from our physical heart. Hence the ease and naturalness of illustrations from nature. Christ took almost as many texts from the works as from the words of God"—PELOUBET. Stanley, Thomson, Tristram, and other travellers have pointed out that the scenery round the Lake suggested many of the details of the parables of the kingdom: (1) on the shore was the vast multitude gathered "out of every city" (Luke 8. 4); (2) from the fishing-boat the eye of the Divine Speaker would rest on (*a*) patches of undulating cornfields with the **trodden pathway** running through them, the **rocky ground** of the hillside protruding here and there, the large **bushes of thorn** growing in the very midst of the waving wheat, the deep loam of the **good rich soil** which distinguishes the whole of the Plain of Gennesaret descending close to the water's edge; (*b*) the mustard tree, which grows especially on the shores of the Lake; (*c*) the fishermen connected with the great fisheries, which once made the fame of Gennesaret, plying amidst its marvellous shoals of fish the **drag net** or "hauling net" (Matt. 13. 47, 48), the **casting net** (Matt. 4. 18; Mark 1. 16), the bag net, and basket net (Luke 5. 4–9); (*d*) the women and children employed in picking out from the wheat the tall green stalks called by the Arabs *Zuwân*, Greek *Zizania*, the *Lollia* of the Vulgate, the **tares** of our version; (*e*) the countless flocks of birds, aquatic fowl by the Lake side, partridges and pigeons hovering over the rich plain. A Jewish proverb says four characteristics distinguish those that sit in the presence of the sages in order to study: they are either like a sponge, or a funnel, or a strainer, or a sieve. The sponge sucketh in everything without discrimination; the funnel receiveth at one end and poureth out at the other, not retaining anything; the strainer allows the liquor to escape, and retains the dregs; the sieve separates the chaff from the fine flour. Some who listened to Christ were made more blind by the light. "He spake the word unto them as they were able to hear it." "He said unto the Twelve, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that, seeing, they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand." He gave parables not to produce moral blindness, but because it existed. "Did He speak in parables because He did not wish them to *know* and to *enjoy*? Everything the reverse. But He was aware that in consequence of the inveteracy of their prepossession, they could not, in the first instance, *see* the secret of the kingdom without being repelled in spirit and confirmed in their dissent and dislike. He wished, therefore, that they should not *see*. But at the same time He graciously wished that they should *look*, and keep looking, so that they might, if possible, get such a glimpse of the inner glory as might

fascinate their interest and attention, and by and by disarm their prejudices, so that they might with safety be permitted to see"—MORISON.

II. *Parables of Growth.*—The seed growing secretly is the only parable which is peculiar to S. Mark, and seems to take the place of the leaven recorded by S. Matthew (Matt. 13. 33). The emphasis is on the secret energy of the seed, which grows on whilst the sower sleeps. "The earth beareth fruit of herself." This thought occurs again in the narrative of S. Peter's deliverance from prison; the gate opened to them of its own accord. Man's part in the growth is inconsiderable. The seed is not his. He sows it; but he does not make it grow. When we look upon a plant, we say "It grew." But what growth is, who can say? We know it in its effects rather than in itself. The seed is sown, but its growth goes on dependent on the laws of growth, as we say; on seed and soil, on rain and sunshine; in one word, on God. So will our work ripen. We do our task; it is God who holds in His hands the consequences. "The working passes along, in trust, as it were, now *through* man, now *from* man, now *to* man"—MORISON.

By and by comes the harvest-home. The parable of the mustard seed would recall to the Jewish hearers pages in the scrolls of Ezekiel and Daniel (Dan. 4. 10-12; Ezek. 17. 22-24; 31. 3-9). The *intensive* power of the kingdom was marked in the parable of the leaven: its extensive power in the parable of the mustard seed. The smallness of the mustard seed had become proverbial. It was used, not only by our Lord, but frequently by the rabbis, to indicate the smallest amount. When grown, it is a tree in comparison with other garden herbs; and a tree whose branches afforded lodgment to the birds of heaven was a familiar Old Testament figure for a mighty kingdom that gave shelter to the nations. Expansiveness is the idea. The kingdom of heaven began with twelve disciples, but it is yet to cover the world. In another narrower sense this is the law of all we do, either for good or evil. Beginnings are small, but endings are not. So with goodness in the heart. Small at the outset, it grows until it controls the entire heart and intellect and life. The Cross of Christ is a symbol of victory over a ransomed world. The kingdoms of earth often begin full of promise and end in ruin. Not so the kingdom of God. God's works all commence small, according to worldly measurements. In spite of persecution and violence, the Church has grown and will continue. A Luther, a Knox, a Calvin, a Wesley, under God, may turn a nation upside down. The despised Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. **He taught them many things by parables**—"after the usual manner of the Eastern nations, to make His instructions more agreeable to them, and to impress them the more upon attentive hearers. A parable signifies, not only a simile or comparison, and sometimes a proverb, but any kind of instructive speech, wherein spiritual things are explained and illustrated by natural. 'To understand a proverb, and the interpretation' (Prov. 1. 6). The proverb is the literal sense, the interpretation is the spiritual: resting in the literal sense killeth, but the spiritual giveth life"—WESLEY.

3. **Hearken.** "This word He probably spake with a loud voice, to stop the noise and hurry of the people"—WESLEY.

10. **When He was alone**—"that is, retired apart from the multitude"—WESLEY.

11. **To them that are without**—"so the Jews termed the heathens; so our Lord terms all obstinate unbelievers; for they shall not enter into His kingdom; they shall abide in outer darkness"—WESLEY.

12. **So that seeing they see, and do not perceive.** "They would not see before; now they could not, God having given them up to the blindness which they had chosen"—WESLEY.

13. **Know ye not this parable**—"which is as it were the foundation of all those that I shall speak hereafter; and is so easy to be understood"—WESLEY.

19. **The desire of other things choke the word**—"a deep and important truth! The desire of anything, otherwise than as it leads to happiness in God, directly tends to barrenness of soul. **Entering in**—where they were not before. Let him, therefore, who has received and retained the word, see that no other desire then enter in, such as perhaps till then he never knew. **It becometh unfruitful**—after the fruit had grown almost to perfection"—WESLEY.

21. **And He said, Is a candle.** "As if He had said, I explain these things to you, I give you this light, not to conceal, but to impart it to others. And if I conceal anything from you now, it is only that it may be more effectually manifested hereafter"—WESLEY.

24. **Take heed what ye hear**—"that is, attend to what you hear, that it may have its due influence upon you. **With what measure ye mete**—that is, according to the improvement you make of what you have heard, still further assistance shall be given. **And to you that hear**—that is, with improvement"—WESLEY.

25. **He that hath**—"that improves whatever he has received, to the good of others, as well as of his own soul"—WESLEY.

26. **So is the kingdom of God.** "The inward kingdom is like seed **which a man casts into the ground.** This a preacher of the gospel casts into the heart. And he **sleeps, and rises night and day**—that is, he has it continually in his thoughts. Meantime it **springs and grows up he knows not**

how—even he that sowed it cannot explain how it grows. For as the earth by a curious kind of mechanism, which the greatest philosophers cannot comprehend, does as it were spontaneously bring forth first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; so the soul, in an inexplicable manner, brings forth, first weak graces, then stronger, then full holiness; and all this *of itself*, as a machine, whose spring of motion is within itself. Yet observe the amazing exactness of the comparison: the earth brings forth no corn, as the soul no holiness, without both the care and toil of man, and the benign influence of heaven"—WESLEY.

29. **He putteth in the sickle.** "God cutteth down and gathereth the corn into His garner"—WESLEY.

33. **He spake the word as they were able to hear**—"adapting it to the capacity of His hearers, and speaking as plain as He could without offending them. A rule never to be forgotten by those who instruct others"—WESLEY.

Vers. 35–41. THE STILLING OF THE TEMPEST. (See on Matt. 8. 23–27; Luke 8. 22–25.)—36. **They take Him as He was in the vessel**—"they carried Him immediately in the same vessel from which He had been preaching to the people"—WESLEY.

38. **On the pillow.** "So we translate it, for want of a proper English expression for that particular part of the vessel near the rudder on which He lay"—WESLEY.

39. **Peace.** "Cease thy tossing. **Be still.** Cease thy roaring—*lit.* 'be thou gagged'"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER V.

Vers. 1–21. HEALING OF THE GADARENE DEMONIAC. (See on Matt. 8. 28–34; 9. 1; Luke 8. 26–40.)

I. *Possessed.*—Glorious cure of the Gadarene demoniac is the heading we may place above this miracle. We may confess at once that there is a strangeness, a weirdness, a mystery about it, that requires us to remember that it was the power of the Son of God which cast out the evil spirits. Forgetful of reverence, some have made merry with the story of the swine. Let us rather confess that our knowledge of the other world is too vague, our knowledge of the possibilities of brute-life is too limited, to interpret fully and absolutely all that we read here. But that Lord of nature who, in the previous chapter, hushed the winds to silence, and made the waves obedient to His word, is also the Lord of Life who has the hearts of all men at His disposal, and turneth them as seemeth best to His godly wisdom. The man who refused to send for a doctor because he could not understand all the laws of cure would hardly be as wise as Solomon. How demons can possess swine we may not understand: but do we understand how they possess men? The union of mind and body is a mystery of spiritual influence. Evil thoughts come unbidden, even to the good. Some angels are not good angels, as a night stroll in any city will testify. There are sins that are naked and open to the sight of men; others are only set in the light of God's countenance. S. Mark, the inspired man, puts in the front how it befell him that was possessed. It is on the picture of the man that attention is fixed. What a subject for an artist:—

First panel.—The raving man, naked and bleeding, fierce and furious—the terror of the neighbourhood.

Second panel.—The dispossessed man, calm and tranquil, clothed and cleansed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and in his right mind.

Each Evangelist adds something to complete the picture of the terrible visitation under which the possessed man laboured—S. Matthew, that he made the way impassable for travellers (ch. 8. 28); S. Luke, that he was without clothing (ch. 8. 27); S. Mark, that he cried night and day, and cut himself with stones (ch. 5. 5). He lived, too, among the tombs. He is described broadly as a man with an unclean spirit. Can we find any present-day lessons here? A man with an unclean spirit—is he living still? Could we find him if we made a diligent search? "As drunk as a lord," and "He swore like a trooper," are no longer true to a proverb. We have to ransack history to ascertain what such phrases mean. A country gentleman of the present day would not become intoxicated by rule. English officers would exclude from the mess-room a brother officer who uttered oaths and curses. And yet drunkenness and impurity are in all classes of society. Thousands of the lower classes are brutalised. The life of many of the young men of the middle classes is that of sowing to the flesh. In some circles the possibility of purity is received with a sneer. Temptation has a demoniac deceptiveness. This poor man of the Gospel history dwelt among the tombs, wore no clothes, fought with wild beasts, and thought himself the companion of the dead. And "stealing my master's money" is veiled under "appropriating for a time," "using for a temporary convenience." Let us strip falsehood of its disguises. "Due mental reserve" plain men call "lying." "Appropriating" is "stealing." "Outwitting" is no more honest than "highway robbery." The uneducated poor may be men of unclean spirits, so may the educated rich. This is not a question of money, station, or influence. It is more moral than intellectual. In an exhibition of pictures there was a show picture which all the world ran to see. It was called "The Road to Ruin." It consisted of five panels: College, Ascot, Arrest, Struggles, The End. It portrayed the road to ruin of a rich young gambler. But most likely his head was emptier than his purse. There was another picture of greater signifi-

cance. It was poor Richard Savage sleeping in Covent Garden Market. Here is the man: An earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribands in St. James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds' weight of iron on his legs in the condemned cell of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the piazza of Covent Garden. That is Lord Macaulay's description, and the picture was painted to illustrate it. That Richard Savage became a helpless and hopeless beggar is fuller of meaning than that Mr. Frith's gambler blew his brains out. The science of astronomy does not lead all our Magi to Christ. The inspiration of poetry is not always associated with the inspiration of a holy life. To be able to write wise precepts is not necessarily to possess the power to practise them. Did not Jesus Christ say that tombs might be whitewashed? Was not His law this, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "Not that which entereth into a man defileth a man." "By their fruits ye shall know men." Their position, their influence, their authority shall not be safe signs that they are not "men with unclean spirits."

II. *Confronted.*—When he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped. According to another Evangelist, there were two demon-possessed men. S. Mark only speaks of one. Probably one was much better known in the country round than the other, or one was so much fiercer that the other was hardly taken any account of. The demons knew and named Jesus Christ. Hades recognises heaven. Profligacy worships purity. Whatever men practise, they believe in a life Divine as Christ's. This is not the only instance in the Gospels of the recognition of our Lord by demonised men. Indeed, few things are more noteworthy in His life than the way in which the outcasts of society gathered to Him. The most hopeless gathered hope from His tone and look. As the demoniac man drew near, Jesus said, **Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.** Fear took possession of him. As he bowed to worship, he cried with a loud voice, **What have I got to do with Thee, Jesus?** Was this the man's question? or did the demon speak through him? We know not. This we know, moral evil dreads the presence of Jesus. The Great White Throne is described as terrible. And "the wrath of the Lamb" is one of the weirdest pictures in the Bible. The demonised acknowledged the Son of God. And in reply, He said, **What is thy name?** It is the only instance on record of our Lord asking a distinctive name. But a name is the outward sign of personality—of responsibility. There will be a great naming at the Judgment Day. **My name is Legion,** answered the man. The presence of Roman armies in Palestine had rendered every Jew too well acquainted with the word legion as descriptive of a multitude. The man was confused. The possession led him to believe that a multitude of unseen spirits ruled him. His personality was destroyed. **And he besought Him much that He would not send him away out of the country.** Or, as S. Matthew, "If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine." Or, as S. Luke, "They besought Him that He would not command them to go out in the deep." Are the demons powerless except they take some bodily form? Must it be men or swine? But we have said already that speculation here is useless, if indeed it be not irreverent. We know that a rider communicates his exultation or his fear to the horse on which he rides, or the dog which accompanies him. We know that though man's control over the brute creation is curtailed, it is yet considerable. But we do not know enough of that other world to do more than read vers. 12, 13. The man was saved, the swine were lost.

III. *Healed.*—They came to Jesus from the surrounding country, stirred by the strange tale, and saw him which was possessed sitting clothed and in his right mind. He who had been always night and day in the mountains was **sitting.** He who could not be bound, and wore no clothes, was **clothed.** The man who had been crying and cutting himself with stones was at the feet of Jesus. Christianity clothes the naked, moderates the madness of passion, and brings all to the feet of Jesus, to learn lessons of life, and receive strength to live lives of godliness. Literally, many a one has been clothed. He who had a ragged coat and an empty pocket before conversion, now has a purse and two coats. The cost of religion is less than the cost of wickedness. This healed man is another picture of the seeking love of Christ, of the unmeasured love of God. Divine pity stoops to the lowliest and most degraded. Generally our Lord enjoined silence on those He blessed. Now He commands speech. **Go home to thy friends and tell them. And the man departed and began to publish.** Thus He who took away their swine sent them a missionary.

2. **There met Him a man with an unclean spirit.** "S. Matthew mentions two. Probably this, so particularly spoken of here, was the most remarkably fierce and ungovernable"—WESLEY.

9. **My name is Legion; for we are many.** "But all these seem to have been under one commander, who accordingly speaks all along both for them and himself"—WESLEY.

15. **And they were afraid.** "It is not im-

probable they might otherwise have offered some rudeness, if not violence"—WESLEY.

19. **Tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.** "This was peculiarly needful there, where Christ did not go in person"—WESLEY.

20. **He published in Decapolis**—"not only at home, but in all that country where Jesus Himself did not come"—WESLEY.

Vers. 22–43. RAISING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS, AND HEALING OF THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD. (See on Matt. 9. 18–26; Luke 8. 41–56.)

We must think chiefly of the act of the Lord of Life in raising the child of Jairus. But we are not forbidden to consider the new life poured into the veins of the pain-stricken woman. For amongst those who thronged our Lord (see ver. 24), she was the most important. And, indeed, the two wonderful deeds are hardly separable. The special point is that in going to help one sufferer Jesus Christ paused to help another. Misery never wearied Him. There is no sign in the four Gospels of weariness, still less of impatience, at the constant claims on His attention. He came into the world with distinct reference to misery. He never grew tired of helping. Misery was never in His way. On the appeal of Jairus He started to the house of mourning. They were joined by a curious and expectant crowd. Many had seen, more had heard, about the miracles of healing: the demon-possessed man in the synagogue; the paralytic let down through the roof; the centurion's servant; Simon's mother-in-law; and the nobleman's son—all of which occurred in this city. On the way He paused. A woman compelled, not by curiosity, but by need, came behind Him and touched His garments. He turned Him about in the press and said, **Who touched My clothes?** The people denied; the disciples remonstrated. Jesus insisted, **Somebody hath touched Me.** At last the poor woman pressed through the throng, and falling down before Him, **told Him all the truth. While He yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead.** Entering the house, He silenced the mourners, and broke upon the stillness of death by His word of command, **Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked.** One miracle is embedded in the other.

I. *Here are two sorrows brought to one Sympathiser.* (Read vers. 23 and 25, and compare with Matthew and Luke.)—The sorrow of Jairus trembled in the words which told it. **My little daughter, my only daughter, is a dying; she is at the point of death; she is perhaps even now dead. Come into the house, lay Thy hands on her, and she shall live.** Sentences are broken by sobs of grief; words are dropped as if forgotten. As for the woman, it is easy to see how the thought of coming grew in her mind. The tide of His fame had rapidly risen. Her money gone, further application to the **many physicians** was impossible, and, with her experience, quite as useless. So when she heard of Jesus she came. We hear her muttering as she comes, **If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole!**

A dying child, and death lingering ere it take the aged, such is the picture The one had twelve years of life, and the other twelve years of suffering. In one case the lamp of life was going out, in the other it was burning low. Both were women. Daughters of the first sinner, they are sharers in their mother's suffering. Youth and age met in that circle of suffering, the circumference of which embraces the race.

Trouble invades palace and cottage alike. Jairus in his agony, and the woman in her suffering, came to Jesus *in the last extremity.* The servant of the centurion and the son of the nobleman were at the point of death. The impotent man had lain thirty-eight years at the Pool of Bethesda. Sorrow realises the unseen. Pain, tears, and death, are the gate of another world. We come to the Bible in trouble. When death enters and shatters the affections like a dropped vase, it puts a new meaning into S. Paul's description of "the God of Consolation." And so the miracles of healing are parables for all time.

II. *Here is one pause for two purposes.*—A motley group was this as it defiled through the streets of Capernaum: Jairus, consumed by his fears; a crowd moved with curiosity and sympathy; hesitating disciples, and a suffering woman trembling at her own audacity. Christ paused for the sake of all, but specially for the sake of the two sufferers: (1) To correct their knowledge.—Jairus' faith in the healing power was tremulous; his knowledge of the Healer was imperfect. He must have a *presence* and a *touch:* **Come into the house; lay Thy hands upon her that she may be healed.** The woman must have hold of **the hem.** Both were slaves of second causes. Both these sufferers were far behind that Roman centurion who came with his tale of distress to Christ, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick. Jesus said, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." They learnt that not in the hem, nor in the touch, but in the wondrous Personality the virtue dwelt. He paused.

(2) To interpret, test, and strengthen their faith.—The woman, though inferior to Jairus in knowledge, was superior to him in faith. Her difficulties were many and great. She was a woman, and, according to Jewish Law, unclean. There was a throng to be jostled aside. Her modesty would naturally shrink. But

necessity knows no law. She broke down every barrier. To Jairus the pause was frightful. Every moment involved life and death. He needed the assuring word, **Fear not, only believe.** It is an instance of *the value of hindrances.* The halt to bless the woman prepared Jairus to trust the Healer. It gave the onlookers evidence of His universal sympathy. To the woman He speaks after the cure; to Jairus, before it.

III. *Here are two touches with one object.*—(1) The touch of the woman.—It was according to Levitical Law an impure touch, but to Him it could impart no impurity. Light reveals dirt, but does not borrow it. It was an almost despairing touch. She had tried all others in vain. It was a confiding touch. She flings herself upon the mightiness of this last Helper. She only touched, she did not grasp. She touched His clothes, not Himself. Yet the healing virtue went out to that trembling body. **Go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.** (2) The touch of Christ.—It was a grasp. He took the child by the hand. He had wrought a miracle of omniscience in discerning the outflow of virtue; now He works a miracle of control. Life touches death, and is victorious over it. There is a staying point in the miraculous. God does not do what man can accomplish. **He commanded that something be given her to eat.** Before Lazarus came from his grave the stone had "to be rolled away." And after he had risen, human hands must remove the grave-clothes. Where men's power ends the power of God begins.

22. **One of the rulers of the synagogue.** "To regulate the affairs of every synagogue, there was a council of grave men. Over these was a president, who was termed the ruler of the synagogue. Sometimes there was no more than one ruler in a synagogue"—WESLEY.

37. **John the brother of James.** When S. Mark wrote, not long after our Lord's ascension, the memory of S. James, lately beheaded, was so fresh, that his name was more known than that of John himself.

40. **Them that were with Him**—"Peter, James, and John"—WESLEY.

43. **He charged them that no man should know it**—"that He might avoid every appearance of vain-glory, might prevent too great a concourse of people, and might not further enrage the scribes and Pharisees against Him; the time for His death, and for the full manifestation of His glory, being not yet come. **He commanded something should be given her to eat**—so that when either natural or spiritual life is restored, even by immediate miracle, all proper means are to be used in order to preserve it"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER VI.

Vers. 1–6. CHRIST REJECTED AT NAZARETH. (See on Matt. 13. 54–58.)—3. **Is not this the carpenter?** "There can be no doubt, but in His youth He wrought with His supposed father, Joseph"—WESLEY.

5. **He could do no miracle there**—"not consistently with His wisdom and goodness: it being inconsistent with His wisdom to work them there, where it could not promote His great end; and with His goodness, seeing He well knew His countrymen would reject whatever evidence could be given them. And, therefore, to have given them more evidence would only have increased their damnation"—WESLEY.

6. **He marvelled**—"as man. As He was God, nothing was strange to Him"—WESLEY.

Vers. 7–13. MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES. (See Luke 9. 1–6.)—8. **He commanded them to take nothing for the journey**—that they might be always unencumbered, free, ready for motion—**save a staff only.** He that had one might take it; but he that had not was not to provide one. (Matt. 10. 10.)

9. **Be shod with sandals**—"as you usually are. Sandals were pieces of strong leather or wood, tied under the sole of the foot by strings, something resembling modern clogs. The shoes, which they are in S. Matthew forbidden to take, were a kind of short boots, reaching a little above the mid-leg, which were then commonly used in journeys. Our Lord intended by this mission to initiate them into their apostolic work. And it was, doubtless, an encouragement to them all their life after, to recollect the care which God took of them when they had left all they had, and went out quite unfurnished for such an expedition. In this view our Lord Himself leads them to consider it. 'When I sent you forth without purse or scrip, lacked ye anything?' (Luke 22. 35)"—WESLEY.

13. **They anointed with oil many that were sick**—"which S. James gives as a general direction (ch. 5. 14–15), adding those peremptory words, 'And the Lord shall heal him.' He shall be restored to health; not by the natural efficacy of the oil, but by the supernatural blessing of God. And, it seems, this was the great standing means of healing desperate diseases in the Christian Church, long before extreme unction was used or heard of, which bears scarce any resemblance to it; the former being used only as a means of health; the latter, only when life is despaired of"—WESLEY.

Vers. 14–29. HEROD AND THE BAPTIST. (See on Matt. 14. 1–12; Luke 9. 7–9.)

I. *A Lesson on Conscience.*—The narrative is a Lesson on Conscience, unfolded in a dramatic passage in the life of King Herod. We must have two Gospels open at the same time—S. Mark, here; S. Matthew (ch. 14). The fame of the wonderful words and deeds of Jesus Christ had reached the palace, and Herod said, "It is John whom I beheaded," others said Elijah or one of the prophets.

Such is the power of personality. At the moment of writing a distinguished Englishman is ill, and princes, members of Parliament, churchmen of many opinions, and simple Christians from many lands are standing by to watch the fight between death and life. Jesus was a great Personality. He could not be hid. But if with others it was a question of curiosity, with Herod it was a question of conscience. **It is John, whom I beheaded.** The emphasis is on "I." Cruel, crafty, voluptuous, Herod may have been, but he was weak as well as wicked. He allowed himself to be led into evil; he did not resist; he did not say No; hence his sufferings. BUNYAN says, "Of all the men I met in my pilgrimage, Shame, I think, bears the wrong name. He is a bold villain." But shame must follow sin. Wrong is the mother of fear. Theoretically a king like Herod should fear naught; but let him sin, and every shaking leaf will make him quake. DANIEL WEBSTER said, "There is no evil that we cannot either face or flee from, but the consciousness of duty disregarded. It is omnipresent like the Deity. We cannot escape its power, nor fly from its presence." Or, as a great writer has said, "Conscience is a thousand swords." And in God's own word do we not read, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

II. *A Gay World.*—Many things we may do, but leave one important thing undone. Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous man and a holy, and kept him safe. And when he heard him he was much perplexed; and he heard him gladly. But when John said, **It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife**, he did not listen and answer, "You are right, I will not." This is the Herodias mentioned in our lesson. Her daughter danced before the king and his feasting nobles. Outwardly it was a gay scene; but within there was moral rottenness. Herod's sin of passion led to his sin of murder. The sixth and seventh commandments are printed together in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus. They are often closely associated in life. It is a delicate and difficult task, but ministers and teachers must tell young men and maidens that this way danger lies. Love, courtship, and marriage are solemn realities. The biblical rule is to marry only in the Lord. Our own Church requires that law to be distinctly stated. Sins of the flesh are ruinous. A gay life spells dishonour, disgrace, death. How low this princess stooped. She, Herod's own niece, a grand-daughter of Herod the Great and of Mariamne, a descendant therefore of Simeon the high priest, and of the great line of Maccabæan princes, sank to the position of a shameless public dancer. There is nothing royal, nothing noble in evil. Herod and Herodias had their chance. The fearless Baptist had told them the plain truth. For, fearing God, John the forerunner knew no other fear. He bearded the lion in his den. Nor was it a sudden sin of passion. Both Herod and Herodias calculated their chances. They schemed before they acted; and now it has ended here in a degraded exhibition, which demeaned a king's household and a nation's court. Sin has two faces. At first she is a beautiful tempting one; afterwards an ugly reproachful hag. Herod and Herodias in New Testament story recall the Old Testament pages that are filled with the deeds of Ahab and Jezebel.

III. *Weakness growing into wickedness.*—

> "It is a great sin to swear unto a sin,
> But greater sin to keep a sinful oath.
> Who can be bound by any solemn vow
> To do a murderous deed?"

Herod began by desiring something he ought not to possess. He schemed for it. He passed by the warning of the prophet of God. He imprisoned the truth-speaker because he did not like the truth. He got what he foully sought for. Now Herodias' turn has come. **The king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went out, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.** What a request! And from a woman, too. "No jewelled trinket, no royal palace, no splendid robe, should be the reward of her daughter's feat,—'Ask,' said she, 'for the head of John the Baptizer.'" It seems incredible. Mother and daughter in council; mother misleading daughter; both joining in a murderous deed. What meaneth this? "The heart is deceitful above all things." If when Herod sat listening to John's preaching he had been told that he would stain his hands with the prophet's blood, he would have recoiled with horror. But he let "I dare not" wait upon "I would." When the daughter of Herodias made her strange request, **the king was exceeding sorry; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat, he would not reject her.** On account of his oaths. He had repeated and perhaps repeated his oath. "Was it right in Herod, it has often been asked, to choose not to displease Salome, and consequently to murder John? It is sufficient to answer that it can never be right to do wrong. But what then of the obligation of his oaths? He was conscious of their force; but still they could not bind him to do wrong. No power in the universe can ever make it right to do wrong. But is it not doing wrong to violate an oath? No, if the oath were itself wrong. The making of such an oath is the first wrong-doing; the keeping of it is the second"—MORISON. Right is right, wrong is wrong, all the world over; at all times, and under all circumstances.

IV. *The daring urgency of evil.*—There is a contrast between the king and the damsel. But they are alike in the swift passage from sin to sin. Social restraints are not very binding under strong temptations. Passion has great force; it is a giant armed from toe to teeth. The girl should not have forgotten her modesty—but she did. The king should have listened to the prophet—but he did not. Neither would end there. Mark the boldness of the girl's **I will**, and the madness of the king's *repeated oath.* The rest is soon told; a word to the executioner, and the deed is done. The deed is done, but not done with. Long after Herod recalls it in his dreams, and Christ's wonders seem to him a resurrection of the power he once admired and then destroyed. Says Bishop BUTLER, "If conscience had the power, as it has the right, it would rule the world." Let us take care that it rule us. Nobody has painted the death of John. Who saw it? Was he *alone* with the officer—none to applaud, none to encourage? This is another of the blanks in the story—the silences of the Bible.

15. **A prophet, as one of the prophets**—"not inferior to one of the ancient prophets"—WESLEY.

16. **But Herod hearing thereof**—"of their various judgments concerning him still—**said, It is John**"—WESLEY.

20. **And preserved him**—"against all the malice and contrivances of Herodias. **And when he heard him**—probably sending for him, at times, during his imprisonment, which continued a year and a half, **he heard him gladly**—delusive joy, while Herodias lay in his bosom!"—WESLEY.

21. **A convenient day**—"convenient for her purpose. **His lords, captains, and principal men of Galilee**—the great men of the court, the army, and the province"—WESLEY.

23. **To the half of my kingdom**—"a proverbial expression"—WESLEY.

26. **Yet for his oath's sake, and for the sake of his guests.** "Herod's honour was like the conscience of the chief priests. (Matt. 27. 6.) To shed innocent blood wounded neither one nor the other"—WESLEY.

Vers. 30–56. MIRACLES OF FEEDING, AND CONTROL OF NATURE. (See on Matt. 14. 13–36; Luke 9. 10–17; John 6. 1–24.)—Amongst the peculiarities of S. Mark's narrative we may mention: the disciples telling what they had taught; the press of the crowd; the teaching; the estimate of cost; the order of rank; and the gathering up of the fishes. We are indebted to S. John for a definite note of place. The desert place was over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. S. Luke adds another link to the chain, "belonging to the city called Bethsaida." The people saw them departing, and ran round by the head of the Lake, and taking one of the fords of the river, met Jesus as He reached the other side.

32. **They departed**—"across a creek, or corner of the Lake"—WESLEY.

34. **Coming out**—"of the vessel"—WESLEY.

40. **They sat down in ranks.** "The word properly signifies a parterre or bed in a garden; by a metaphor, a company of men ranged in order. **By hundreds, and by fifties**—that is, fifty in a rank, and an hundred in file. So an hundred multiplied by fifty made just five thousand"—WESLEY.

43. **Full of the fragments**—"of the bread"—WESLEY.

45. **He constrained His disciples**—"who did not care to go without Him"—WESLEY.

48. **And He saw them**—"for the darkness could veil nothing from Him. **And would have passed by them**—that is, walked as if He was passing by"—WESLEY.

52. **Their heart was hardened**—"and yet they were not reprobates. It means only, they were slow and dull of apprehension"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER VII.

Vers. 1–23. CLEAN AND UNCLEAN. (See on Matt. 15. 1–20.)—1. **Coming from Jerusalem**—"probably on purpose to find occasion against Him"—WESLEY.

4. **Washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and couches.** "The Greek word 'baptisms' means, indifferently, either washing or sprinkling. The cups, pots, and vessels were washed; the couches sprinkled"—WESLEY.

5. **The tradition of the elders**—"the rule delivered down from your forefathers"—WESLEY.

15. **There is nothing entering into a man from without which can defile him.** "Though it is very true, a man may bring guilt, which is moral defilement, upon himself, by eating what hurts his health, or by excess either in meat or drink; yet even here the pollution arises from the wickedness of the heart, and is just proportionable to it. And this is all that our Lord asserts"—WESLEY.

19. **Purging all meats**—"probably the seat was usually placed over running water"—WESLEY.

22. **Wickedness.** "The word means ill-nature, cruelty, inhumanity, and all malevolent affections. **Foolishness**—directly contrary to sobriety of thought and discourse; all kind of wild imaginations and extravagant passions"—WESLEY.

Vers. 24–37. THE FRIEND OF STRANGERS. (See on Matt. 15. 21–31.)

I. *The barrier broken down.*—It has never been easy for people to cordially recognise those of another nation. Such words as "barbarians," "foreigners," carry in them memories of reproach. The Jews—the children of the kingdom, as they proudly described

themselves—were wont to designate the heathen as "dogs." In the East, now, the Mohammedans apply this name to the Christians. And if Chinese exclusiveness still speaks of other peoples as "foreign demons," American exclusiveness calls Chinese residents "heathen." In spite of all our boasted civilisation, we do not yet disregard the differences of clime and colour. Although our Lord stands alone, having no parallel, it sometimes makes His life vivid by recalling similar acts in the lowlier lives of men. Elijah the Prophet and Paul the Apostle wandered in regions then considered foreign and outcast. Martin Luther found in the Wartburg what was denied to him in Wittenberg. John Wesley prepared himself in Georgia for the work he did in Britain. Our Lord's travelling towards the borders of Tyre and Sidon was the prophetic and symbolic representation of the future progress of Christianity. From Jews it would pass to Gentiles, from civilisation to heathendom, until the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

II. *The Woman of Canaan.*—In His wanderings He came to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into the house of some friend or dependant. But He could not be hid. His fame crossed the border and brought to Him a heathen woman, a Gentile, viewed generally—more specially, a Syrian—still more specially a Phenician. She appears to have first called after Christ and His disciples, and afterwards was admitted into the house. She had no petition for herself. She was the mother of a sick child, and her mother-love gave wings to her feet as she swept across the country to find the Miracle-Worker of whom so many tongues were speaking. S. Mark passes more briefly over the interview than S. Matthew. We must compare the records. There were three stages of this woman's trial:—

1. *Silence.*—"He answered her not a word" (Matt. 15. 23). It is the first and only instance of our Lord's refusal to perform a miracle. It was not absolute and permanent. His silence could not have been intended simply as a test. In one sense she had no claim upon His attention. His mission was to the Jews. "He came unto His own." No doubt He desired to make clearer to her who He was, and why He came.

2. *Refusal.*—"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15. 24). He came first to them. When they rejected Him, He passed to the Gentiles. His heart was wide as the world. Misfortune naturally appealed to Him. But He could not bless, except under conditions. In one place it is said, "He could not do many mighty works, because of their unbelief." The preparation of the heart was important. Only to receptiveness could He communicate blessing.

3. *Reproach.*—"It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" (Matt. 15. 26). "Two reasons," says FARRAR, "suggest themselves as explaining His present action. He may have desired to test the feelings of His disciples, who might be unprepared to see Him grant His blessings, not only to a Gentile but a Canaanite. He may have desired to test yet further the woman's faith, both that He might crown it with a more complete and glorious reward, and that she might learn something deeper respecting Him than the mere Jewish title that she may have accidentally picked up. At any rate, He strangely repulsed her for a time." "But in spite of all she persevered, and finally conquered. The daughter was healed in consequence of the mother's faith, and in answer to her prayers. This is an instance of a cure effected *at a distance.* Other instances are (1) the nobleman's son at Capernaum, whom our Lord healed while Himself at Cana (John 4. 46); (2) the centurion's servant (Luke 7. 6). The case also of this lonely woman not suffering the Lord 'to go' until He had blessed her (comp. Gen. 32. 24-32) is the greatest of the three ascending degrees of faith, as it manifests itself in the breaking through of hindrances which would keep us from Christ. The paralytic broke through *the outward hindrances,* the obstacles of *things merely external* (Mark 2. 4); blind Bartimæus through the hindrances opposed by his fellow-men (Mark 10. 48); but this woman, more heroically than all, through *apparent hindrances,* even from Christ Himself"—TRENCH and MACLEAR. Every miracle is rich in moral significance. This is no exception. For all time it will encourage men and women and children, teaching them to persevere in spite of appearances, and to trust God when they cannot trace Him.

III. *Deaf and Dumb.*—Passing on, our Lord came through Sidon unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis. And, S. Matthew tells us, there came unto Him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at His feet, and He healed them, insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel. S. Mark selects one of these cases of healing, distinguished from the rest, perhaps, by the special circumstances of being a double defect of hearing and of speech. It arrests our attention by the elaborateness of the cure. Usually a single word or a simple touch effected the cure. Not so here. The people were foreigners—heathen, too, and believed in magical powers. Christ was to them almost unknown. By this new method of healing, if we may so speak of it, their attention was directed to the Personality; and their weak faith, aided by the use of means, which would suggest the relations of cause and effect. There were evidently circumstances in the man's case which rendered it necessary that his cure should be gradual,

and effected by visible signs. And so our Lord—(*a*) took him aside from the multitude; (*b*) put His fingers into his ears; (*c*) touched his tongue with the moisture of His mouth; (*d*) looked up to heaven, and sighed; and (*e*) spake the one word **Ephphatha.** The upturned look was natural to Jesus Christ. He dwelt in heaven, even when on earth. His thoughts were always ascending thither. As He looked at the deaf and dumb man He sighed. "We may well believe," as TRENCH says, "that this poor helpless creature now brought before Him, this living proof of the wreck which sin had brought about, of the malice of the devil in deforming the fair features of God's original creation, wrung the groan from His heart." The human sympathies of the Saviour were as broad as human suffering and sorrow. Ephphatha is the actual Aramaic word used by our Lord. It is like "Abba" and "Talitha cumi," a bit of His native home speech. The people broke the command to be silent. **They were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: He maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.** Our Christian institutions for the deaf and dumb are an abiding monument of that miraculous healing in the mountains. The deaf and dumb man is a type of us. We are deaf to Divine voices, and dumb when we ought to be praising Him "who hath done all things well."

26. **The woman was a Greek**—"that is, a Gentile, not a Jew; **a Syrophenician,** or Canaanite. Canaan was also called Syrophenicia, as lying between Syria, properly so called, and Phenicia"—WESLEY.

33. **He put His fingers into his ears**—"perhaps intending to teach us, that we are not to prescribe to Him, as they who brought this man attempted to do; but to expect His blessing by whatsoever means He pleases; even though there should be no proportion or resemblance between the means used, and the benefit to be conveyed thereby"—WESLEY.

34. **Ephphatha.** "This was a word of SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY; not an address to God for power to heal. Such an address was needless; for Christ had a perpetual fund of power residing in Himself to work all miracles whenever He pleased, even to the raising the dead. (John 5. 21, 26)"—WESLEY.

36. **Them**—"the blind man, and those that brought him"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER VIII.

Vers. 1–26. FOUR THOUSAND FED. (See on Matt. 15. 32–16. 12.)—8. **So they did eat.** "This miracle was intended to demonstrate that Christ was the true bread which cometh down from heaven; for He who was almighty to create bread without means to support natural life could not want power to create bread without means to support spiritual life. And this heavenly bread we stand so much in need of every moment, that we ought to be always praying, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread'"—WESLEY.

11. **Tempting Him**—"that is, trying to ensnare Him"—WESLEY.

12. **Why doth this generation**—"that is, these scribes and Pharisees—**seek a sign**—not out of sincerity, but out of hypocrisy"—WESLEY.

15. **Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod**—"or of the Sadducees: two opposite extremes"—WESLEY.

17, 18. "Our Lord here affirms of all the apostles (for the question is equivalent to an affirmation) that their **hearts were hardened**; that **having eyes** they **saw not, having ears** they **heard not**; that they **did not consider,** neither **understand**: the very same expressions that occur in Matt. (ch. 13). And yet, it is certain, they were not judicially hardened. Therefore all these strong expressions do not necessarily import anything more than the present want of spiritual understanding"—WESLEY.

23. **He led him out of the town.** "It was in just displeasure against the inhabitants of Bethsaida, for their obstinate infidelity, that our Lord would work no more miracles among them, nor even suffer the person He had cured, either to go into the town or to tell it to any therein"—WESLEY.

24. **I see men as trees, walking**—"he distinguished men from trees only by their motion"—WESLEY.

The narrative of the healing of the blind man (vers. 22–26) is the only recorded example of a progressive cure.

Vers. 27–38. S. PETER'S CONFESSION. (See on Matt. 16. 13–20; Luke 9. 18–20.)

I. *Confession.*—Our Lord and His disciples set out in a northerly direction, and travelled along the eastern banks of the Jordan, and beyond the waters of Merom, seeking solitude among the mountains. At length they reached the neighbourhood of the remote city of Cæsarea Philippi. This was the northernmost point of His wanderings. "Cæsarea Philippi lay on the north-east of the reedy and marshy plain of *El Huleh*, close to Dan, the extreme north of the boundaries of ancient Israel." "(1) Its earliest name, according to some, was Baal-Gad (Josh. 11. 17; 12. 7; 13. 5), or Baal-Hermon (Judg. 3. 3; 1 Chron. 5. 23), when it was a Phenician or Canaanite sanctuary of Baal under the aspect of 'Gad,' or the god of good fortune. (2) In later times it was known as Panium, or *Paneas*, a name which it derived from a cavern near the town, abrupt, prodigiously deep, and full of still water, adopted by the Greeks of the Macedonian kingdom of Antioch as the nearest likeness that Syria afforded of the beautiful limestone grottoes which in their own country were inseparably associated with the worship of the sylvan *Pan*

and dedicated to that deity. Hence its modern appellation *Baneas*. (3) The town retained the name under Herod the Great, who built here a splendid temple of the whitest marble, which he dedicated to Augustus Cæsar. (4) It afterwards became part of the territory of Herod Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis, who enlarged and embellished it, and called it Cæsarea Philippi, partly after his own name, and partly after that of the Emperor Tiberius. It was called Cæsarea *Philippi*, to distinguish it from Cæsarea Palestinæ or Cæsarea on the sea. Dean Stanley calls it a Syrian Tivoli, and certainly there is much in the rocks, caverns, cascades, and the natural beauty of the scenery to recall the Roman Tibur. Behind the village, in front of a great natural cavern, a river bursts forth from the earth, the upper source of the Jordan. Inscriptions and niches in the face of the cliffs tell of the old idol-worship of Baal and of Pan."—MACLEAR and TRISTRAM. It was in this desert region that the apostles on one occasion found their Lord engaged in solitary prayer (Luke 9. 18), a significant action which had preceded several important events in His life, as (*a*) the baptism, (*b*) the election of the Twelve, and (*c*) the discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum. It was now the precursor of a solemn and momentous question, **Who do men say that I am?** Hitherto He is not recorded to have asked the Twelve any question respecting Himself. The hour had come. He was testing His work. It is not wrong, then, to desire the good opinion of the wise and good. We cannot do the best work well without the encouragement of some success. Nor can teacher, or church, or institution, or government be indifferent to opinion. Our Lord's question had many answers. He was well known, but not rightly known. **And they told Him, saying, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets.** S. Matthew adds, "and others, Jeremiah." These were the opinions of outsiders. Disciples must now be tested. **And He asked them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto Him, Thou art the Christ.** S. Matthew calls himself by the despised name "the Publican," but the other disciples do not. S. Mark, writing under the eye of S. Peter, records our Lord's rebuke to S. Peter, but does not record the word of commendation. S. Matthew, however, records it: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." S. Peter modestly kept this out of his Gospel. In such side-lights as these we read character.

II. *Anticipation.*—The question of our Lord and the answer it called forth were alike preparatory to the strange and mournful tidings which He now began to reveal distinctly. Clear and full before Him rose the garden of agony and the cross of shame. "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." That is a Divine "must." It indicates our Lord's perfect consciousness of a Divine plan ruling His life from first to last. As He said at another time, "I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." And after His resurrection, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" There was nothing haphazard in the Life of lives. From the word He here uses to describe His sufferings has come such words as "The Passion," "Passion Week." S. Mark adds the word of strong rebuke, **Peter took Jesus and began to rebuke Him. But He, turning about and seeing His disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.** As if He had said, What! is Satan come again to tempt Me as he did of old? Avaunt! thou adversary: get thee hence! Had He listened and turned aside, our redemption would not have been accomplished.

III. *Association.*—Calling to Him the multitude, He addressed to them, as well as to His apostles, deep teaching concerning cross-bearing. Not He only would carry a cross. It would enter into all lives—literally into some. Sorrow is in the way to the city of God. Through much tribulation they would all enter the kingdom. He, too, had just been tempted to turn aside; so would they be. **Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For what should a man give in exchange for his life?** Gain is sometimes loss: loss is often gain. Some things may be bought too dear. Conscience is more than fame; conviction is a greater possession than gold. Place highest that which is highest. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth. He is greater than what he has. Then, in language of awful solemnity, of great dignity, and of astonishing claims, our Lord added, **For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.** These are not the words of a man. They are too bold. The Divinity of Jesus is

in them. ME is emphatic. He claims the loyalty of the heart and the submission of the life. At the day of His coming, judgment will begin. They who confess Christ will be acknowledged by Him; those who are ashamed of Him He will reject.

30. "He enjoined them silence for the present—(1) that He might not encourage the people to set Him up for a temporal king; (2) that He might not provoke the scribes and Pharisees to destroy Him before the time; and (3) that He might not forestall the brighter evidence which was to be given of His divine character after His resurrection"—WESLEY.

32. **He spake that saying openly**—"or in express terms. Till now He had only intimated it to them. **And Peter taking hold of Him**—perhaps by the arm or clothes"—WESLEY.

33. **Looking on His disciples**—"that they might the more observe what He said to Peter"—WESLEY.

34. **And when He had called the people**—"to hear a truth of the last importance, and one that equally concerned them all. **Let him deny himself**—his own will, in all things, small and great, however pleasing, and that continually. **And take up his cross**—embrace the will of God, however painful, daily, hourly, continually. Thus only can he **follow Me**, in holiness, to glory"—WESLEY.

38. **Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words**—"that is, of avowing whatever I have said, particularly of self-denial and the daily cross, both by word and action"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER IX.

Vers. 1–13. THE TRANSFIGURATION. (See on Matt. 17. 1–13; Luke 9. 28–36.)—1. **Till they see the kingdom of God coming with power.** "So it began to do at the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were converted to God at once"—WESLEY.

2. **By themselves**—"that is, separate from the multitude. **Apart**—from the other apostles. **And was transfigured.** The Greek word seems to refer to 'the form of God' and 'the form of a servant,' mentioned by S. Paul (Phil. 2. 6, 7), and may intimate that the Divine rays, which the indwelling God let out on this occasion, made the glorious change from one of these forms into the other"—WESLEY.

3. **White as snow; such as no fuller can whiten**—"such as could not be equalled either by nature or art"—WESLEY.

4. **Elijah**—"whom they expected. **Moses**—whom they did not"—WESLEY.

7. **There came a** bright luminous **cloud, overshadowing them.** "This seems to have been such a cloud of glory as accompanied Israel in the wilderness, which, as the Jewish writers observe, departed at the death of Moses. But it now appeared again, in honour of our Lord, as the great Prophet of the Church, who was prefigured by Moses. **Hear ye Him**—even preferably to Moses and Elijah"—WESLEY.

12. **Elijah verily coming first restoreth all things: and how it is written**—"that is, and He told them how it is written; as if He had said, Elijah's coming is not inconsistent with My suffering. He is come; yet I shall suffer. The first part of the verse answers their question concerning Elijah; the second refutes their error concerning the Messiah's continuing for ever"—WESLEY.

Vers. 14–32. HEALING OF A DEMONIAC. (See on Matt. 17. 14–23; Luke 9. 37–45.)—15. **All the multitude seeing Him were greatly amazed**—"at His coming so suddenly, so seasonably, so unexpectedly; perhaps also at some unusual rays of majesty and glory which yet remained on His countenance"—WESLEY.

17. **And one of the multitude answering.** "The scribes gave no answer to our Lord's question. They did not care to repeat what they had said to His disciples. **A dumb spirit**—a spirit that takes his speech from him"—WESLEY.

20. **When he saw Him.** "When the child saw Christ; when his deliverance was at hand. **Immediately the spirit tore him**—made his last grand effort to destroy him. Is it not generally so before Satan is cast out of a soul of which he has long had possession?"—WESLEY.

22. **If Thou canst do anything**—"in so desperate a case—**have compassion on us**—me, as well as him"—WESLEY.

23. **If thou canst believe.** "As if He had said, The thing does not turn on My power, but on thy faith. *I* can do all things; canst *thou* believe?"—WESLEY.

24. **Help Thou mine unbelief.** "Although my faith be so small that it might rather be termed unbelief, yet help me"—WESLEY.

25. **Thou deaf and dumb spirit**—"so termed because he made the child so. When Jesus spake the devil heard, though the child could not. **I command thee**—I Myself now; not My disciples"—WESLEY.

26. **Having rent him sore.** "So does even the body sometimes suffer when God comes to deliver the soul from Satan"—WESLEY.

30. **They passed through Galilee**—"though not through the cities but by them, in the most private ways. **He was not willing that any should know it. For He taught His disciples**—He wanted to be alone with them some time, in order to instruct them fully concerning His sufferings. **The Son of Man is delivered**—it is as sure as if it were done already"—WESLEY.

32. **They understood not the word**—"they did not understand how to reconcile the death of our Saviour (nor, consequently, His resur-

rection, which supposed His death) with their notions of His temporal kingdom"—WESLEY.

Vers. 33-50. STRIFE AMONG THE TWELVE. (See on Matt. 18. 1-9; Luke 9. 46-50.)—34. **Who should be greatest**—"prime-minister in His kingdom"—WESLEY.

35. **Let him be the last of all**—"let him abase himself the most"—WESLEY.

37. **One such little child**—"either in years or in heart"—WESLEY.

38. **And John answered Him**—"as if he had said, But ought we to receive those who follow not us? **Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name**—probably this was one of John the Baptist's disciples who believed in Jesus, though he did not yet associate with our Lord's disciples. **And we forbade him, because he followeth not us.** How often is the same temper found in us! How readily do we also 'lust to envy'! But how does that spirit become a disciple, much more a minister of the benevolent Jesus? S. Paul had learned a better temper when he rejoiced that Christ was preached even by those who were his personal enemies. But to confine religion to them that follow us is a narrowness of spirit which we should avoid and abhor"—WESLEY.

39. **Jesus said.** "Christ here gives us a lovely example of candour and moderation. He was willing to put the best construction on doubtful cases, and to treat as friends those who were not avowed enemies. Perhaps, in this instance, it was a means of conquering the remainder of prejudice, and perfecting what was wanting in the faith and obedience of these persons. **Forbid him not**—neither directly nor indirectly discourage or hinder any man who brings sinners from the power of Satan to God, 'because he followeth not us' in opinions, modes of worship, or anything else which does not affect the essence of religion"—WESLEY.

40. **For he that is not against you is for you.** "Our Lord had formerly said, 'He that is not with Me is against Me,' thereby admonishing His hearers that the war between Him and Satan admitted of no neutrality, and that those who were indifferent to Him now would finally be treated as enemies. But here, in another view, He uses a very different proverb, directing His followers to judge of men's characters in the most candid manner, and charitably to hope that those who did not oppose His cause wished well to it. Upon the whole, we are to be rigorous in judging ourselves, and candid in judging each other"—WESLEY.

41. **For whosoever shall give you a cup.** "Having answered S. John, our Lord here resumes the discourse which was broken off at ver. 37"—WESLEY.

42. "On the contrary, **whosoever shall offend** the very least Christian"—WESLEY.

43. "**And if** a person **cause thee to offend.** The discourse passes from the case of offending to that of being offended. If one who is as useful or dear to thee as an hand or eye hinder or slacken thee in the ways of God, renounce all intercourse with him. This primarily relates to persons; secondarily, to things"—WESLEY.

44. **Where their worm**—"that gnaweth the soul (pride, self-will, desire, malice, envy, shame, sorrow, despair) **dieth not**—no more than the soul itself. **And the fire** (either material or infinitely worse) that tormenteth the body **is not quenched** for ever"—WESLEY.

49. **Every one**—"who does not cut off the offending member, and consequently is cast into hell, **shall be**, as it were, **salted with fire** — preserved, not consumed, thereby; whereas **every** acceptable **sacrifice shall be salted with** another kind of **salt**—even that of Divine grace, which purifies the soul (though frequently with pain) and preserves it from corruption"—WESLEY.

50. "Such **salt is good** indeed; highly beneficial to the world, in respect of which I have termed you 'the salt of the earth.' **But if the salt**—which should season others—**have lost its own saltness, wherewith will ye season it?** Beware of this; see that ye retain your savour; and, as a proof of it, **have peace one with another.** More largely this obscure text might be paraphrased thus:—As every burnt-offering was salted with salt, in order to its being cast into the fire of the altar, so every one who will not part with his hand or eye shall fall a sacrifice to Divine justice, and be cast into hell fire, which will not consume but preserve him from a cessation of being. And, on the other hand, every one who, denying himself and taking up his cross, offers up himself as a living sacrifice to God, shall be seasoned with grace, which, like salt, will make him savoury, and preserve him from destruction for ever. As salt is good for preserving meats, and making them savoury, so it is good that ye be seasoned with grace, for the purifying your hearts and lives, and for spreading the savour of My knowledge, both in your own souls and wherever ye go. But as salt, if it loses its saltness, is fit for nothing, so ye, if ye lose your faith and love, are fit for nothing but to be utterly destroyed. See, therefore, that grace abide in you, and that ye no more contend who shall be greatest"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER X.

Vers. 1-12. JESUS SPEAKS ON DIVORCE. (See on Matt. 19. 1-12.)—6. **From the beginning of the creation.** "Therefore Moses in the first of Genesis gives us an account of things from the beginning of the creation. Does it not clearly follow that there was no creation previous to that which Moses describes? **God made them male and female** —therefore Adam did not at first contain

both sexes in himself, but God made Adam, when first created, male only; and Eve female only. And this man and woman He joined together, in a state of innocence, as husband and wife"—WESLEY.

11, 12. "All polygamy is here totally condemned"—WESLEY.

Vers. 13–16. LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST. (See on Matt. 19. 13–15; Luke 18. 15–17.)—*Christ and little children.* This is the children's page of the New Testament; pictures, poems, addresses, stories innumerable, have been grouped around this scene. They brought to some house where Jesus was staying young children. S. Luke calls them babes, small enough to be carried in one's arms. Their mothers brought them. Mothers are always anxious to bring us within reach of blessing; beyond the power of harm. No greater gift can God give to us than that first great gift—a mother's love. These mothers brought their children to Jesus Christ that He should **touch** them. S. Matthew says that He should put His hands on them and pray. The Jews were accustomed to value the blessing of the rabbis. The Talmud says, "After the father of the child had laid his hands on his child's head, he led him to the elders, one by one, and they also blessed him, and prayed that he might grow up famous in the law, faithful in marriage, and abundant in good works." We sometimes read of the patron saint of children; but it is not S. Nicholas, nor S. Martin, nor the Archangel Michael—it is the LORD JESUS CHRIST. We never read of our Lord embracing grown-up people. More than once we do read that He embraced children. A dozen of the tenderest scenes in the Gospels are connected with Jesus and the children. Speaking of bringing children to Jesus, Dr. PELOUBET says, "We bring the children to Jesus—(1) by daily, constant, earnest prayers on their behalf; (2) by teaching them the truth; (3) by consecrating them to God for this life and the life to come; (4) by training them up for Christ."

In almost fierce impatience at the theory, half-consciously held by so many, that children must first sin greatly, and then suffer the agonies of remorse before Christ will welcome them, Dr. BUSHNELL says, "The true idea of Christian education is that the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise. Infancy and childhood are the ages most pliant to good. And who can think it necessary that the plastic nature of childhood must first be hardened into stone, and stiffened into enmity toward God and all duty, before it can become a candidate for Christian character? 'Train up a child in the way he should go, that when he is old he may not depart from it.'" The venerable Dr. TYNG almost goes further when he says, "In all my ministry, when the choice must be made between one child and two adults, I have never hesitated to take the child. It seems to me that the devil would never ask anything more of a minister than to have him look upon his mission as chiefly to the grown-up members of his congregation, while somebody else was to look after the children." And Mr. SPURGEON says, "Of the many boys and girls whom we have received into Church fellowship, I can say of them all that they have gladdened my heart, and I have never received any with greater confidence than I have these. And this I have noticed about them, they have greater joy and rejoicing than any others. Among those I have had at any time to exclude from Church fellowship, out of a church of 2700 members, I have never had to exclude a single one who was received while yet a child." Whom Christ receives, the Church must not reject. She has often done so, acting like the disciples of to-day's lesson. The mothers brought their children to Christ. They came with them. Sometimes parents send their children to church, but do not come themselves. Even Sunday-school teachers speak of a Saviour who is to them a stranger. Experience is the greatest help in teaching and training. Word and example should be like voice and echo. As truth is many-sided, the preceding paragraph must be interpreted in the light of the wise words of Mr. GLOVER: "Our Lord's word, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God,' certainly does not mean that children are so holy that they are naturally in the kingdom of God without any change of heart, in the face of such declarations as John 3. 5, but that children can most easily have the childlike spirit, and enter the kingdom, and that they are the most helpful material for the Church; and the fact that they are not sinless gives all the more hope to the children of God who are conscious of imperfection, while they know they are trusting and loving as children to a parent. The kingdom of God means the saved family of God on earth." When children die they do not pass out of God's care. Heaven and earth are two wings of God's home. Jesus is the Friend of children, the Founder of infant baptism, infant schools, infant catechising, and of all good institutions that care for children. Our High Priest, who bears the whole world on His heart, takes the children into His arms. To every child we may say in Christ's name, "Come, and welcome—a thousand welcomes!" To bring them to Him is the end of all our labours, the reward of all our patience.

14. **Jesus seeing it, was much displeased**—"at their blaming those who were not blameworthy, and endeavouring to hinder the children from receiving a blessing. **Of such is the kingdom of God**—the members of the kingdom which I am come to set up in the world are such as these, as well as grown persons of a childlike temper"—WESLEY.

15. **Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child** — "as totally disclaiming all worthiness and fitness, as if he were but a week old"—WESLEY.

Vers. 17–31. THE RICH YOUNG RULER. (See on Matt. 19. 16–30; Luke 18. 18–30.)

Vers. 17–21 constitute a paragraph parallel to Matt. 19. 16–26 and Luke 18. 18–27. **Good Master** (*lit.* "Good Teacher"). **Why callest thou Me good?** "Our Lord does not decline the appellation good. He repels it only in the superficial sense of the questioner, who regarded Him merely as a good Rabbi. The young man was ignorant (1) of our Lord's character, (2) of his own heart"—C. B. **All these have I kept.** We are told that when the Angel of Death came to fetch the Rabbi Chanina, he said, "Go and fetch me the book of the Law, and see whether there is anything in it which I have not kept." **Jesus, beholding him, loved him.** Many have wondered at this statement. Even Dr. ALEXANDER says, "Most probably love, as in many other places, denotes, not moral approbation, nor affection founded upon anything belonging to the object, but a sovereign and gratuitous compassion, such as leads to every act of mercy upon God's part. The sense will then be, not that Jesus loved him on account of what he said, or what he was, or what he did, but that, having purposes of mercy towards him, He proceeded to unmask him to himself, and to show him how entirely groundless, although probably sincere, was his claim to have habitually kept the Law. The Saviour's love is, then, mentioned, not as the effect of what precedes, but as the ground or motive of what follows." Dr. MORISON says, "It should, however, be borne in mind, that those who love both wisely and well take cognisance invariably of lovable qualities in the objects of their love. It would not be to the glory of any being to love the utterly unimportant, insignificant, and unlovely. Beauty of moral character may, indeed, be wanting; but excellency of capability, or superiority of constitution, or some other beauty or worth, must be discernible, as an indispensable condition of such love as challenges the approbation of conscience and the admiration of intelligence. Love of compassion is never absolutely separated from love of appreciation. Our Saviour's love would be no exception. He would discern in the young man not a little that was really amiable, the result of the partial reception and reflection of gracious Divine influences. There was ingenuousness, for instance, and moral earnestness. There was restraint of the animal passions, and an aspiration of the spirit towards the things of the world to come. There was still, indeed, one thing that was wanting, one thing that was wrong: and in that one thing many things would be involved. But there were other things that were the fit objects of complacency." **How hardly shall they that have riches.** The favourites of fortune have their drawbacks as well as advantages.

20. **He answering said to Him, Master.** "He stands reproved now and drops the epithet 'good'"—WESLEY.

21. **Jesus, looking upon him**—"and looking into his heart—**loved him**—doubtless for the dawnings of good which He saw in him. **And said to him**—out of tender love—**One thing thou lackest**—the love of God, without which all religion is a dead carcase. In order to this, throw away what is to thee the grand hindrance of it. Give up thy great idol, riches. **Go, sell whatsoever thou hast**"—WESLEY.

24. **Jesus saith to them, Children.** "See how He softens the harsh truth, by the manner of delivering it, and yet without retracting or abating one tittle. **How hard is it for them that trust in riches**—either for defence or happiness, or deliverance from the thousand dangers that life is continually exposed to. That these cannot enter God's glorious kingdom is clear and undeniable. But 'it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye' than for a man to have riches and not trust in them. Therefore, 'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom'"—WESLEY.

28. **Lo, we have left all** — "though the young man would not"—WESLEY.

30. **He shall receive an hundredfold, houses,** etc.—"not in the same kind—for it will generally be **with persecutions**—but in value; an hundredfold more happiness than any or all of these did or could afford. But let it be observed, none is entitled to this happiness, but he that will accept of it with persecutions"—WESLEY.

I. *The setting of the Story.*—It may have been accidental, as men speak, but it is none the less interesting, that this story of the young inquirer follows the narrative of the blessing of little children. All ages as well as ranks came within the sympathy of the Son of Man. For us men, and for our salvation, He came down from heaven. The incarnation brought Him within touch of every one of us. As Mediator between God and man, He laid His hand upon both and atoned—set at one again. But as Man amongst men He lived a child's life, and passed through the experience of youthhood. It was like Him, if we may speak thus without irreverence, to take the children into His arms, and immediately afterwards welcome the youth who came, under the excitement of enthusiasm, to inquire into the secret of eternal life. "Jesus," as Dr. LANGE teaches us, "is the Friend of children, the great Friend of the little ones; the Founder of infant baptism, infant schools, infant catechising, and of all good institutions that care for children." KLOPSTOCK, with a poet's fancy, brings many souls of children, before they are conducted by angels into human bodies, to the cross of Christ, in order that they may receive

a deep impression of it, such as will fit them afterwards to receive the doctrine of the Crucified. This is a poet's fancy, but it impresses the fact of Christ's love for youth, and the possibility of early consecration to Christ. Jesus and children are closely connected ideas. And our schools have not done their work when they have taught Bible truth, and interested scholars in Bible study, but when they have led them to the children's Saviour.

II. *The suggestiveness of the Story.* — 1. *The value of feeling.* — The young man of this Gospel page had been moved by the teaching, attracted by the personality of Jesus. Such a Master, he thought, might win disciples; such a Teacher should be inquired of. He came running — kneeling — asking. These simple words carry in them interest, feeling, a measure of earnestness, lovableness. **And Jesus, beholding him, loved him.** Christ, who was in harmony with all natural beauty, was in harmony with all natural virtue. He saw that the young man did protest too much. He knew the chain that bound him. None the less did He rejoice in the youthful enthusiasm and the feeling doomed to failure and disappointment. 2. *The insufficiency of feeling.*—It often places words in the stead of deeds. **Good Master. Why callest thou Me good?** Solemn, indeed, is the meaning of words. A simple vow to lead a simply religious life involves self-sacrifice and much self-knowledge. If Christ was really the Good Master, then at all cost He must be obeyed, and obedience, however painful, would be the only way of safety. If Christ was really the Good Teacher, then all other voices must be unheeded that were not echoes of His. But when Christ bade the young man do a hard thing he went away sorrowful, but not strong enough for the task. He had kept the commandments. Now he was to learn how spiritual, deep, incisive, controlling they were, and the lesson was too difficult for him to learn. Feeling must have conviction behind it: conviction is born of a sense of duty; and duty is the stern daughter of God. 3. *The control of feeling.*—Translate it into conduct. Life is the safety-valve of emotion. Fear is destroyed by trust, and doubt removed by action. None can tell what he is able to do until he tries; none can know the reality of a purpose till he turns will into deed, word into service. Do not dream about duty—do it. Do not admire Christ—obey Him. Do not narrow law by current interpretation; see how large the word of Jesus, how fruitful the life of Jesus, make law to be. Thou knowest not what surrender may mean in thy case; how great self-sacrifice Christ may require at thy hands. Be certain of this, that none can enter the kingdom of God who is not prepared to lay down the riches of the purse, the riches of the intellect, the riches of good opinion, at the imperious call of conscience, of duty, of God. Sorrow cannot take the place of sacrifice. Feeling is not an end, but a means to an end. Virtue is not a dull level plain of monotonous duty for all feet alike; some are called to noble heroism, lofty endeavour, complete self-abandonment, for Christ's sake.

Vers. 32–45. Fuller Announcement of His Suffering, and Ambition of James and John. (See on Matt. 20. 17–28; Luke 18. 31–34.)

Selfish ambition.—There came near unto Him James and John, and with them their mother Salome (Matt. 20. 20), to ask the same favour. We learn her name by comparison of Matt. 27 56 with Mark 15. 40. If disciples called to be apostles were not free from evil, may not all learn a lesson of humility? "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed." **Master, we would that Thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire.** Strong importunity is expressed in the form of the sentence. (Comp. Bathsheba's request to Solomon, 1 Kings 2. 20.) But instead of promising beforehand, like Solomon and Herod, to grant the request whatever it might be, our Lord, though perfectly aware of it, requires it to be plainly stated for their conviction and reproof. What do ye wish Me to do for you? **Grant that we may sit one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left.** The desire may have been nurtured by the honour which He had already put upon these two with S. Peter, and by the place which S. John appears to have occupied at table next to Christ, and therefore leaning or reclining on His bosom. The expression of it may have been called forth at this time by the recent promise that in the regeneration or reorganisation of the Church, the Twelve should sit upon as many thrones, judging the tribes of Israel. (Matt. 19. 28; Luke 22. 30.) They ask that they may fill the nearest seats to that of Christ Himself. **Ye know not what ye ask.** "They had no sort of presentiment what terrible places of honour they would shortly have attained if their wish had been accorded them, namely, the place of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, at His right hand and at His left" —Lange. **Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink?** This is the first time that He employs this figure. (Comp. Ps. 75. 8; Isa. 51. 17.) The same thought is then clothed in another figure, that of baptism or purifying, washing. This expression is peculiar to S. Mark. And they said, **We are able.** "If their declaration, 'We can,' be estimated according to its real worth, it cannot be mistaken that our Lord acknowledges in some measure the truth of their declaration. He does not at all announce to them, as to S. Peter, that in the hour of affliction they would deny Him. He acknowledges that these Sons of Thunder, in their eager attachment to Him, in their fiery enthusiasm and magnanimity, and possessing the germs of the Spirit, could already accomplish something considerable"—Lange. The

prediction was fulfilled in both the brothers, but in a very different manner. S. James was the first apostolical martyr. (Acts 12. 2.) S. John was the last survivor of the Twelve, making up, as has been well said, by the variety and length of his distresses for the absence of the crown of blood. Even if the legend of the poison and the boiling oil is unhistorical, it is still true that S. John, as well as S. James, pre-eminently shared his Master's cup and baptism. The highest places are not awarded out of caprice or mere favour. The most endowed will have the greatest responsibility, the most faithful the greatest honour. In the remaining verses our Lord declares the law of service. They who would rule must learn to obey. Ambition is blind and o'erleaps itself. Christ, who is Lord of All, became the Servant of All. In the kingdoms of the world a man is called great when he rules; in the kingdom of grace when he serves many. He came, not to be served, but to serve.

32. **They were in the way to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed**—"at His courage and intrepidity, considering the treatment which He had Himself told them He should meet with there. **And as they followed they were afraid**—both for Him and themselves. Nevertheless, He judged it best to prepare them, by telling them more particularly what was to ensue"—WESLEY.

35. **Saying**—"by their mother. It was she, not they, that uttered the words"—WESLEY.

38. **Ye know not what ye ask.** "Ye know not that ye are asking for sufferings, which must needs pave the way to glory. **The cup**—of inward; **the baptism**—of outward sufferings. Our Lord was filled with sufferings within, and covered with them without"—WESLEY.

40. **Save to them for whom it is prepared**—"them 'who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.' For these only eternal life 'is prepared.' To these only He will 'give it' in that day; and to every man his own reward, according to his own labour"—WESLEY.

45. **A ransom for many**—"even for as many souls as needed such a ransom. (2 Cor. 5. 15)"—WESLEY.

Vers. 46-52. BLIND BARTIMÆUS HEALED. (See on Matt. 20. 29-34; Luke 18. 35-43.)—50. **Casting away his garment**—"through joy and eagerness"—WESLEY.

A Story of two blind men.—S. Matthew says there were two blind men; S. Mark and S. Luke represent but one. A similar case occurs in the account of the demoniac of Gadara. S. Matthew and S. Mark say that the miracle was performed on Christ's departure from Jericho; S. Luke, as He came nigh Jericho. One of the two following explanations is the most probable: "It is not inconsistent with the narrative that the blind man made his first appeal to the Saviour as the latter was entering the city, but for some reason was not at first answered; perhaps he was not heard; perhaps Jesus would develop his faith. The next morning he stationed himself at the gate through which the Saviour would pass on leaving the city, and renewed his application to Him, now accompanied by another. All difficulty is removed if we suppose the words 'on the morrow' to be understood in Luke 18. 38 thus: 'And (on the morrow) he cried,' etc."—HACKETT. FARRAR quotes from Macknight the supposition, and Godet quotes it from a German periodical of 1870, that the healing occurred at a point between the old and the new city, and so could be described as occurring either when they went out from Jericho, or as they drew near to Jericho. Of the two sufferers, one has gained the distinct title, *The Blind Man.* A crowd, composed of people going up to keep the Passover, and swollen by continual accessions from the towns and neighbourhoods through which they passed, accompanied Jesus Christ when the cries of Bartimæus fell on their ears. Bartimæus means son of Timæus, but was used as a proper name, like our Johnson or Thomson. It is said in Palestine and on the Lower Nile one adult out of five has some affection of the eyes. Blindness and poverty are almost synonymous words. On the Continent the beggars gather about church doors. As Mr. GLOVER well says, "Beggars know that godliness and kindness go together, and they always congregate where God's worshippers are found." The Christian Church has always found in this blind beggar of the Gospel a picture of those who wander through the world without God. As THOMAS À KEMPIS says, "That man only is poor in this world who lives without Jesus; and that man only is rich with whom Jesus delights to dwell." Suddenly and unexpectedly the poor man of the narrative came into contact with Christ; earnestly, with the resistless earnestness of need, he told his tale of sorrow, and besought relief. He prayed a short, direct, earnest prayer. He continued to cry until he was heard and answered. He was blind in body, but not in soul. The eyes of his understanding were opened. "He who moves the universe is held by the prayer of this man"—THOMAS. He was made whole — complete, sound, nothing wanting. The blindness of blindness is not to see God: to be ignorant of the way of duty. LONGFELLOW has a beautiful poem on Blind Bartimæus, which teachers will do well to read. GEORGE MACDONALD also has one touchingly beautiful in its simplicity and trust. We append two verses:—

"As Jesus went into Jericho town,
'Twas darkness from toe to crown
About Blind Bartimæus.
He said, 'When eyes are so very dim
They are no use for seeing Him;
No matter—He can see us.'

"Cry out, cry out, blind brother, cry—
Let not salvation dear go by,—
'Have mercy, Son of David.'
Though they were blind, they both could hear;
They heard, and cried, and He drew near,
And so the blind were saved."

CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 1–11. CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY. (See on Matt. 21. 1-9; Luke 19. 29-40; John 12. 12-19.)—1. **To Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives.** "The limits of Bethany reached to the Mount of Olives, and joined to those of Bethphage. Bethphage was part of the suburbs of Jerusalem, and reached from the Mount of Olives to the walls of the city. Our Lord was now come to the place where the boundaries of Bethany and Bethphage met"—WESLEY.

Vers. 1–10 contain the approach to the capital city by way of Bethany and Bethphage. The paragraph corresponds to Matt. 21. 1–11; Luke 19. 29–38; John 12. 12–15. The order of events at this point, says the Cambridge Bible, needs explanation: (1) The Saviour apparently reached Bethany on the evening of Friday, Nisan 8; there (2) in quiet retirement He spent His last earthly Sabbath; and (3) in the evening sat down to a festal meal provided by the sisters of Lazarus at the house of one Simon, who had been a leper (Matt. 26. 6; John 12. 1); (4) at this feast He was annointed by Mary (John 12. 3); and (5) during the night a council of the Jews was convened to consider the propriety of putting, not Him only, but Lazarus also to death (John 12. 10). The Evangelist, passing over for the present the peaceful scene at the festal meal (Mark 14. 3-9), translates us at once to Palm Sunday as to time, and as to place to the region between Bethany and the Mount of Olives. **Bethphage**—all trace of this village seems to have disappeared. **Bethany** has lingered on to the present day; but it is, as TRISTRAM calls it, "a miserable village." "Bethany," says Dr. ROBINSON, "is a poor village, of some twenty families; its inhabitants are without thrift or industry." And yet, when Dr. MORISON visited it in 1855, he found, among the children who were clustering about, a boy carrying an inkhorn by his side. On being asked if he could write, he answered in the affirmative, and wrote with his reed on the blank leaf of a New Testament the words, in Arabic, "God is Love." It was of his own accord that he selected the words. **At the Mount of Olives**—the procession moved in the direction of the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives, or the mountain of the olive trees, was the natural name of the beautiful mountain that rises close to Jerusalem on the east. "The sides of the mountain," says Dr. ROBINSON, "are still sprinkled with olive trees, though not thickly, as was probably the case of old." "At present," says HACKETT, "the mountain exhibits, on the whole, a desolate appearance. Rocky ridges crop out here and there above the surface, and give to the hill a broken, sterile aspect. Yet the mount is not wholly destitute of verdure even now. A few spots are planted with grain; and fruit trees, such as almonds, figs, pomegranates, olives, are scattered up and down its sides. The olives take the lead, decidedly, and thus indicate the propriety of the ancient name." The mountain rises about 220 feet above Mount Moriah, over against it on the west, and affords a magnificent and most commanding prospect. "Surely," says Dr. BARCLAY, "there is not in all the world a prospect so delightful to behold as the panorama to be enjoyed by ascending the minaret alongside the Church of Ascension that now crowns the elevation nearest the city." "Observe the minuteness of the circumstances specified in the directions given to the disciples. They would find the colt tied; it had never been ridden; it would be found outside, at the door of the house, in the open street; and persons would be near it, and the words which they would speak are predicted, and the answer is prescribed which the apostles were to make"—C. B. The owner may have been a secret disciple. "Secret disciples, such as the five hundred who afterwards gathered to one spot in Galilee, and the hundred and twenty who met after the resurrection (1 Cor. 15. 6; Acts 1. 15), were scattered in many places."

I. KING JESUS.—"The expectation of the Messiah," says LANGE, "was the expectation of His kingdom; hence the salutation of Messiah was the salutation of His kingdom. Christ and His kingdom are not to be separated; but the kingdom of His cross and the kingdom of His glory are to be distinguished, even as the glorified Christ is distinguished from the Christ in the form of a servant." "By Thine agony and bloody sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy precious Death and Burial; by Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost, good Lord, deliver us." In these words the Church has prayed for three hundred years. And in some such form Christians have pleaded ever since the day when the lions of Roman emperors were fed with the flesh of the followers of the Nazarene who suffered under Pontius Pilate. But, mark it well, the Church does not pray:—By the miracle of Thy Transfiguration, by the majesty of Thy triumphal entry, good Lord, deliver us. It is not so much in the Lord's superiority that she takes refuge, as in His sympathy. Yet Christ, be it ever remembered, is Lord as well as Saviour; King not less than Priest and Prophet. We may not crown Him; He is crowned. We can only, like the Wise Men who came to His cradle, fall down and worship Him. And though we have no treasures of gold and spices to spread before Him we may offer the

frankincense of devotion and a golden obedience. Between Palm Sunday and Easter Day there stands Good Friday. The Lord of the dead and living gave up His life. But He never resigned His Lordship. He was King of Hades; He is King of men. (Read the narrative of the entry in the Four Gospels, and mark the Kingship of Jesus.)

II. INDICATIONS OF KINGSHIP.—*The Kinglike Speech.*—**Go into the village. . . . Say the Lord hath need of him. If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.** The reference to the stones is a covert intimation of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is not unlike the old English legends based upon the ultimate revelations of wrong. "Murder will out." "A bad deed cannot be buried." The rocks, too, have borne their testimony to Christianity. Discoveries have cast a flood of light on biblical truth.

He is King over the irrational world.—**Loose and bring.** Did He ever ride before? Probably not. This time He rode an animal whereon no man ever yet sat. "In the action which the Lord contemplated He meant to be no man's successor." Unused animals were put to sacred purposes. (See Num. 19. 2; Deut. 21. 3; 1 Sam. 6. 7.) But we may see in this little scene a picture of the subjection of things to Christ. The beasts of the field shall honour Him.

He is King of men.—**If any man say aught unto you, say the Lord hath need of him.** Unto one He saith go, and he goeth; to another come, and he cometh; and to His servants do this, and they do it. For He is Lord.

He is King in all places.—**He entered into the Temple and cast out.** At the beginning of His ministry He had swept its courts. At the end He vindicates it against those who polluted it, and converted the House of Prayer into a den of thieves. **And the blind and the lame came to Him in the Temple, and He healed them.**

III. HE STILL CLAIMS FEALTY AND SERVICE.—*King Jesus claims all men's homage.*—Who composed this procession? The crowd. The children. The Pharisees. Our Lord's disciples. The blind man healed at Jericho's gate. Possibly Lazarus, whose recent resurrection was not yet forgotten. So various the elements, so wide-embracing His influence. He remaineth ever.

King Jesus claims all kinds of homage.—Some cast their garments. Others cut down branches. Others sang Hosanna. At His birth wealthy Magi brought gifts; poor shepherds, delighted hearts and willing tongues. The pardoned woman bathed His feet. The rich Arimathæan lent Him a grave. Nicodemus brought spices. Every man in his own order.

King Jesus claims genuine homage.—The Hosanna of the lip. The homage of the life. *Christ still reigns* over thoughts and dispositions: in society, art, and literature. All things are not yet put under Him. But He is King, and destined to rule over all nations. "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

Vers. 12–26. THE BARREN FIG TREE. (See on Matt. 21. 18–22; Luke 19. 45–48.)—**And on the morrow.** The triumphal entry being on the first day of the week, the following day was Monday. **A fig tree afar off, having leaves.** "It stood alone, a single fig tree by the wayside (Matt. 21. 19), and presented an unusual show of leaves for the season. **The time of figs was not**—that is, the ordinary fig season had not yet arrived. The rich verdure of this tree seemed to show that it was fruitful, and there was every probability of finding upon it either the late violet-coloured autumn figs, which often hung upon the tree all through the winter, and even until the new spring leaves had come, or the first ripe figs (Isa. 28. 4; Jer. 24. 2; Hos. 9. 10; Nah. 3. 12), of which Orientals are particularly fond. But this tree had nothing but leaves. It was the very type of a fair profession without performance; a very parable of the nation, which, with all its professions, brought no fruit to perfection. (Comp. Luke 8. 14)"—C. B. Our Lord's coming to the fig tree was a parable in act. His own physical hunger was the outward and visible sign of His inward and spiritual hunger for the nation's well-being. **And He answered.** "The tree," as BENGEL remarks, "is regarded as having *refused to give fruit.* The nation had leaves of profession, but refused to show the fruits of obedience." **No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.** That word, BROWN remarks, did not make the tree barren, but sealed it up in its own barrenness. **And His disciples heard it.** They were in an attitude of attention. The consequences of His word they did not discover until the next day. **They come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the Temple, and began to cast out.** A similar proceeding is described by S. John (ch. 2. 14–16) as having taken place at the first Passover after the commencement of His public ministry. **And He taught, and said to them.** Our Lord gave reasons for His conduct. **Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might destroy Him.** Destroyed He must be, but how, and when? **For they feared Him.** A strange power went forth from Him, attaching friends and alarming foes. **And when even was come He went out of the city**—back probably to Bethany. **And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.** The blight operated from within outward. **And Peter**

calling to remembrance. Peter was often the mouthpiece of his brethren. **Behold the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered. Have faith in God**—"*very literally*, 'Have faith of God.' The genitive, however, represents the object, not the subject of the faith, and hence the translation given in our A.V. is correct. The same construction occurs in Gal. 2. 16–20, where we read of 'the faith of Jesus Christ' and 'the faith of the Son of God,' rather obscure expressions in English idiom. We can readily speak of 'the love of God,' meaning, according to circumstances, either the love of which He is the subject, or the love of which He is the object. But the phrase, the faith of God, or the faith of Christ, has not got fixed, in its objective signification, into an easy-going idiom"—MORISON. **Verily I say unto you.** Our Lord's formula of solemn assurance. **Whosoever shall say to this mountain.** "Language like this," says MACLEAR, "was familiar in the schools of the Jews. They used to set out those teachers among them that were more eminent for the profoundness of their learning, or the splendour of their virtues, by such expressions as these, He is a rooter up or remover of mountains. They called Rabbah Bar Nachmani a rooter up of mountains, because he had a piercing judgment."

13. **For it was not a season of figs.** "It was not, as we say, a good year for figs; at least not for that early sort, which alone was ripe so soon in the spring. If we render the words, 'It was not the season for figs,' that is, the time of gathering them in, it may mean, 'The season was not yet'; and so (enclosing the words in a parenthesis, 'And coming to it, He found nothing but leaves') it may refer to the former part of the sentence, and may be considered as the reason of Christ's going to see whether there were any figs on this tree. Some who also read that clause in a parenthesis, translate the following words, 'For where He was, *it was* the season of figs.' And it is certain this meaning of the words suits best with the great design of the parable, which was to reprove the Jewish Church for its unfruitfulness at that very season when fruit might best be expected from it"—WESLEY.

Figurative Meaning of the Miracle.—"Our Saviour was not expecting to find figs in order to satisfy His bodily hunger. His mind was bent on higher things. 'He came to the tree,' says ZWINGLE, 'not for the sake of eating, but for the sake of performing an adumbrative action.' It was true He was hungry. His hunger, too, was the occasion that gave shape to His adumbrative action when He went to the leafy tree to see if there was fruit on it. But in every step that He took toward the tree, and in every act that He performed after He reached it, as in all the details of His engagements before and after in those memorable Jerusalem days, He was actuated by a far profounder hunger than that of the body. If this be ignored, the whole action of our Lord in the case before us, and the whole peculiarity and mystery of His life and death, become an inexplicable enigma"—MORISON. 'Our Lord's action was emblematical, according to the usual custom of the sages of the East to express things by symbolical actions. It was also prophetic. Our Lord intended to prove that His power to punish the disobedient was as great as that to confer benefits. It was, moreover, to prefigure the destruction of the perverse Jews, because in the time of fruits they had borne none, and likewise to read a very important lesson to all His disciples of every age—that if the opportunities God gives for approving themselves virtuous be neglected, nought will remain but to be withered by the fiat which shall consign them to everlasting destruction"—BLOOMFIELD.

16. **He suffered not that any one should carry a vessel through the Temple**—"so strong notions had our Lord of even relative holiness; and of the regard due to those places, as well as times, that are peculiarly dedicated to God"—WESLEY.

18. **They feared Him**—"that is, they were afraid to take Him by violence, lest it should raise a tumult—**because all the people was astonished at His teaching**—both at the excellence of His doctrine, and at the majesty and authority with which He taught"—WESLEY.

22. **Have faith in God**—"and who could find fault, if the Creator and Proprietor of all things were to destroy, by a single word of His mouth, a thousand of His inanimate creatures, were it only to imprint this important lesson more deeply on one immortal spirit"—WESLEY.

25. **When ye stand praying.** "Standing was their usual posture when they prayed. **Forgive**—and on this condition ye shall have whatever ye ask without wrath or doubting"—WESLEY.

Vers. 27–33. THE CHIEF PRIESTS QUESTION CHRIST'S AUTHORITY. (See on Matt. 21. 23–27; and Luke 20. 1–8.)

CHAPTER XII.

Vers. 1–12. PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN. (See Matt. 21. 28–46; Luke 20. 9–18.)—12. **They feared the multitude.** "How wonderful is the providence of God, using all things for the good of His children! Generally, the multitude is restrained from tearing them in pieces only by the fear of their rulers. And here the rulers themselves are restrained through fear of the multitude!"—WESLEY.

Vers. 13–40. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. (See on Matt. 22. 15–46; Luke 20. 20–47.)

17. **They marvelled at Him**—"at the wisdom of His answer"—WESLEY.

25. "**When they rise from the dead, neither**

men **marry, nor women are given in marriage.**"—WESLEY.

27. **He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living**—"that is, if the argument be proposed at length, Since the character of His being the God of any persons plainly intimates a relation to them not as dead, but as living; and since He cannot be said to be at present their God at all, if they are utterly dead, nor to be the God of human persons, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, consisting of souls and bodies, if their bodies were to abide in everlasting death, there must needs be a future state of blessedness, and a resurrection of the body to share with the soul in it"—WESLEY.

28. **Which is the first commandment**—"the principal, and most necessary to be observed"—WESLEY.

29. **The Lord our God is one Lord.** "This is the foundation of the first commandment, yea, of all the commandments. The Lord our God, the Lord, the God of all men, is one God, essentially, though three Persons. From this unity of God it follows, that we owe all our love to Him alone"—WESLEY.

30. **With all thy strength**—"that is, the whole strength and capacity of thy understanding, will, and affections"—WESLEY.

31. **The second is like unto it**—"of a like comprehensive nature; comprising our whole duty to our fellow-creatures, as the other does our whole duty to God. **There is no other moral, much less ceremonial, commandment greater than these**"—WESLEY.

33. **To love Him with all the heart**—"to love and serve Him with all the united powers of the soul in their utmost vigour. **And to love his neighbour as himself**—to maintain the same equitable and charitable temper and behaviour toward all men, as we, in like circumstances, would wish for from them toward ourselves, is a more necessary and important duty than the offering the most noble and costly sacrifices"—WESLEY.

34. **Jesus said to him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.** "Reader, art not thou? Then go on: be a real Christian; else it had been better for thee to have been afar off"—WESLEY.

38. **Beware of the scribes.** "There was an absolute necessity for these repeated cautions. For, considering their inveterate prejudices against Christ, it could never be supposed the common people would receive the gospel till these incorrigible blasphemers of it were brought to just disgrace"—WESLEY.

"Yet He delayed speaking in this manner till a little before His Passion, as knowing what effect it would quickly produce. Nor is this any precedent for us; we are not invested with the same authority"—WESLEY.

13. "**Pharisees**—a religious party, or school, amongst the Jews at the time of Christ, so called from a Hebrew word which signified 'separated.' The name does not occur either in the Old Testament or in the Apocrypha. A cursory perusal of the Gospels is sufficient to show that Christ's teaching was in some respects thoroughly antagonistic to theirs. He denounced them in the bitterest language, and made against them as a class sweeping charges of hypocrisy"—*Smith's Bible Dictionary.* "**Herodians.** Just as the partisans of Marius were called Mariani, of Pompeius, Pompeiani, of Otho, Othoniani, so the partisans of Herod the Great and his successors were called Herodiani. The sect was rather a political than a religious body. Adopting Sadducean opinions, they held that the hopes of the Jewish nation rested on the Herods as a bulwark against Roman ambition, and almost looked to them for a fulfilment of the prophecies respecting the advent of the Messiah. They favoured the compromise between the ancient faith and later civilisation, which Herod inaugurated, and his successors endeavoured to realise. On one occasion our Lord warns His disciples against 'the leaven of Herod,' in close connection with 'the leaven of the Pharisees' (Mark 8. 15; Luke 12. 1)"—C. B. "The Pharisees were the heroic national party; while the Sadducees were the priestly-aristocratic party, who allied themselves always with the ruling power, even when that power was anti-national in its aims. In our Lord's time, the names had gradually come to connote differences which were religious as well as political. The Sadducees may broadly be described as rationalists, the Pharisees as ritualists, names which, though not rigidly accurate, convey, on the whole, a true impression of their respective positions"—FARRAR. **And they send.** A series of distinct attacks was now made upon our Lord. (*a*) The Pharisees took the lead with theirs, one most cleverly devised; (*b*) the Sadducees followed; and then (*c*) came the scribes of the Pharisees' party. "It was," to quote FARRAR'S phrase, "the day of temptations, the last and greatest day of the public ministry of Jesus." Dr. MACLEAR distinguishes it as "the day of questions." **That they might catch Him in His words.** The verb rendered "they might catch" is a hunting word. They hoped to take Him off His guard by flattery, and then twist His confessions into a charge of heresy, or national disloyalty. **Is it lawful to give tribute?** Judas the Gaulonite (Acts 5. 37) and his followers keenly resented the capitation tax levied by the Roman government. If our Lord held the payment unlawful, He would be liable to punishment by the Romans; if He sanctioned it, He would lose the confidence of the national party. **But He, knowing their hypocrisy.** They said, **Thou art true;** He knew they were not. **Bring me a penny.** "They would not be likely," says FARRAR, "to carry with them the hated Roman coinage, with its heathen symbols, though they might have been at once able to produce from their

girdles the Temple shekel. But they would only have to step outside the Court of the Gentiles and obtain from the money-changers' tables a current Roman coin. A penny, literally a denarius, of the value of 7½d. of our money. **Whose is this image and superscription?**—"as if," says MORISON, "He had said, 'The coin, I perceive, has the likeness of some royal personage stamped upon it, and it bears an inscription or legend. Whose is the likeness? Whose name is mentioned in the legend?'" **And they said unto Him, Cæsar's.** Then said Jesus, Give Cæsar his right. You use his coin. You share his protection. Give as well as receive. And as you render to Cæsar that which is his, render to God whatsoever He rightly claims. **And they marvelled at Him.** He had silenced Pharisees and Herodians. **Then come the Sadducees.** "Few, rich, and dignified," they had rather stood aloof from the Man of Nazareth. They denied the resurrection and immortality. They denied the existence of angel or spirit. "They deny," says JOSEPHUS, "the immortality of the soul, and the punishments and rewards of Hades:" Christ refers them to the Book. "Have ye not read in the Book of Moses, how, in the bush, God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham," etc. In the bush means here, in the section of the Book of Exodus (ch. 3. 1), called "The Bush." In the Koran the chapters are named after the matter they contain, and so also the Homeric poems. Wyclif gives the right meaning: "Have ye not read in the book of Moyses on the bousche, how God said to him."

Vers. 41–44. THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES. (See on Luke 21. 1–4.)—41. **He beheld how the people cast money into the treasury.** "This treasury received the voluntary contributions of the worshippers who came up to the feast; which were given to buy wood for the altar, and other necessaries not provided for in any other way"—WESLEY.

43. **I say to you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.** "See what judgment is cast on the most specious outward actions by the Judge of all! And how acceptable to Him is the smallest which springs from self-denying love!"—WESLEY.

"As Temple offerings are needed still, for the service of Christ at home and abroad, so **looking down** now, as then **up**, He **sees** who **cast in**, and how much. Christ's standard of commendable offering is not our superfluity but our deficiency — not what will never be missed, but what costs us some real sacrifice, and just in proportion to the relative amount of that sacrifice"—BROWN.

CHAPTER XIII.

Vers. 1–37. PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. (See on Matt. 24. 1–51 and Luke 21. 5–36.)—In one of the best Commentaries this important chapter is divided into six parts, which we will abridge:—

A. The occasion (vers. 1–4).—S. Mark brings before us a single speaker, who pointed out to the Lord the splendour of the Temple; while S. Luke speaks of several; S. Matthew, of the disciples in general. One might imagine it was S. Andrew who furnished in this manner the occasion, entering as he did this time into the circle of the intimate few. If it were not he, then it was most probably S. Peter. The disciples intercede, so to speak, for the Temple. The thought that such a building should be destroyed was too sad for them.

B. The world's course to the world's end in general. The last things of the Christian (vers. 5–13).—The warning against the false Christs is common to all the Synoptists; S. Luke alone has the addition that the time draws near. The representation of the wars of the nations is in S. Mark the shortest. The signs of the world's development are given by S. Luke most complete; earthquakes, famines, pestilence, terrors, and signs in the heavens. S. Mark depicts the persecutions of the Christians. These were weighty words spoken for Roman Christians at a time when the martyrdom of S. Peter and S. Paul in Rome was about to take place. Then, as early as the tenth verse, he gives the *concluding* statement of S. Matthew regarding the preaching of the gospel in all the world.

C, D. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the interval between this and the end of the world; or the world's course to the end from the predominating point of view of the Jewish Theocracy (vers. 14–20; 21–23).—The presage of the destruction of Jerusalem is given more briefly than by S. Matthew, still in biblical form; not as in S. Luke, who declares plainly the besieging and destruction of the city. The conclusion is in the highest degree impressive: **Take ye heed; behold, I have told you all things beforehand.**

E. The end of the Cosmos (vers. 24–27).—S. Mark, as well as S. Matthew, draws a very sharply-defined distinction between the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the time when the sign of the end of the world shall appear.

F. The parable of the sudden irruption of the catastrophe, and the exhortation to watchfulness (vers. 28–37).—To the end of ver. 32, S. Mark writes to quite the same import as S. Matthew; then, however, a different statement comes in: **Of that day and that hour knoweth . . . not the angels, . . . neither the Son.** At this point the three Synoptists separate, and take different ways. S. Matthew represents the Lord as here pointing back to the days of Noah, as being symbols of the days of the world's end. The surprise of that day is depicted by him in a particular way. The parable of the midnight has its characteristic point in the coming thief; and succeeding this

is another parable of the lord who, in coming home, surprises his servants. S. Mark has the exhortation, **Watch, for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh** (R.V.), which is found in S. Matthew. But then he adds a parable, peculiar to himself, of the lord going away upon a journey, appointing special duties to his trusted servants; and in this parable the chief person is the lowest servant, the porter, who must keep watch; while S. Matthew makes him the steward, who had charge of the house. It is evident that the parables are distinct. S. Matthew selected the steward, because watchful honesty seemed to him the chief thing; S. Mark selected the porter, because honest watchfulness seemed to him the chief thing. S. Matthew may have had before him, in his selection, the picture of the Jewish high priest; and S. Mark, the picture of a porter attached to some noble Roman house. S. Mark notices the different hours in which the master may return, marking them out sharply by the statement of the divisions of the night. S. Luke brings prominently forward the common danger to man—the heart must not be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life; the momentous day is compared by him to a snare. S. Mark concludes with the word **Watch!** "It may be," writes Archdeacon FARRAR, "that the shadows of His thought gave a strange solemnity to His attitude and features as He sat there silent among the silent and saddened band of His few faithful followers. Not without a touch of awe His nearest and most favoured apostles—Peter and James and John and Andrew—came near to Him, and as they saw His eye fixed on the Temple, asked Him privately, **When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?** (Matt. 24. 3.) Their 'when?' remained for the present unanswered. It was the way of Jesus, when some ignorant or irrelevant or inadmissible question was put to Him, to rebuke it, not directly, but by passing it over, and by substituting for its answer some great moral lesson which was connected with it, and could alone make it valuable. Accordingly, this question of the apostles drew from Him the great Eschatological Discourse, or Discourse of the Last Things, of which the four moral key-notes are, BEWARE! and WATCH! and ENDURE! and PRAY! S. Matthew, writing for Jews, speaks of the restoration of the Temple; S. Mark, for Romans, its size and strength; S. Luke, for humanity, its beauty. But neither strength, nor beauty, nor historical interest, could save it. City and Temple fell in 'the most soul-stirring struggle of all ancient history.' Serious conflicts had occurred from time to time before Titus appeared before the walls of Jerusalem. Josephus states that more than a million perished during the siege, and nearly a hundred thousand were carried captive during the whole war. These numbers may be somewhat exaggerated, but, after fair deduction, the figures will be startling. On certain days, handed down by tradition as 'days of wretchedness,' the most desperate hand-to-hand encounters took place, some in the passages from the Antonia to the cloisters, some in the cloisters themselves—the Romans endeavouring to force their way in, the Jews preventing them. But the Romans gradually gained ground. It is said the Temple was fired by the wanton act of a soldier, contrary to the intention of Titus; and in spite of every exertion he could make to stop it, the sanctuary itself was fired. Now the whole of the city was demolished; the aged and infirm were killed; the children under seventeen were sold as slaves; the rest were sent, some to the Egyptian mines, some to the provincial amphitheatres, and some to grace the triumph of the conqueror. The demolition was complete—so complete that, Josephus being our assurance, 'the whole was so thoroughly levelled and dug up, that no one visiting it would believe it had ever been inhabited.' The same authority says the Temple was built of white stones of great size—the length of each about thirty-seven and a half feet, some even forty-five feet; the thickness twelve feet, and the breadth eighteen. Need we wonder that the disciples said, **Master, behold, what manner of stones, and what manner of buildings** (R.V.). Nor can we conceive the astonishment and alarm with which they would hear the terrible words, **Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down** (R.V.). And if Christ's words have been true in their fulfilled portions, will they fail in their fulfilment in the great future? Does He not still speak to us and to all? Watch, therefore! The past accredits the Prophet of God, so shall the future."

4. "Two questions are here asked; the one, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; the other, concerning the end of the world"—WESLEY.

11. "**The Holy Ghost** will help you. But do not depend on any other help; for all the nearest ties will be broken"—WESLEY.

14. **Where it ought not**—"that place being set apart for sacred uses"—WESLEY.

19. **In those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation.** "May it not be doubted, whether this be yet fully accomplished? Is not much of this affliction still to come?"—WESLEY.

20. **The elect**—"the Christians. **Whom He hath chosen**—that is, hath taken out of, or separated from, the world, 'through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' **He hath shortened**—that is, will surely shorten"—WESLEY.

24. **But in those days**—"which immediately precede the end of the world. **After that tribulation**—above described"—WESLEY.

29. **He is nigh**—"the Son of Man"—WESLEY.

30. **All these things**—"relating to the Temple and the city"—WESLEY.

32. **Of that day.** "The day of judgment is often in the Scriptures emphatically called 'that day.' **Neither the Son**—not as man: as man he was no more omniscient than omnipresent; but as God He knows all the circumstances of it"—WESLEY.

34. "The Son of Man is **as a man taking a far journey.** Being about to leave this world and go to the Father, He appoints the services that are to be performed by all His servants, in their several stations. This seems chiefly to respect ministers at the day of judgment; but may be applied to all men, and to the time of death"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XIV.

Vers. 1-11. THE CHIEF PRIESTS CONSPIRE WITH JUDAS ISCARIOT. (See on Matt. 26. 1-16; Luke 22. 1-6; John 12. 1-11.)—4. **Some had indignation**—"being incited thereto by Judas—**and said**—probably to the woman"—WESLEY.

10. **Judas went to the chief priests**—"immediately after this reproof, having anger now added to his covetousness"—WESLEY.

At this point it is not easy to fix a note of time with certainty. S. Mark says, "After two days was the feast of the Passover," and then introduces the anointing at Bethany. S. John says, "Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany." The general opinion is that S. John fixes the exact date. On the Sabbath evening, or Saturday night, Jesus sat down to supper at Bethany, and received the homage of the alabaster box. S. Mark, having to refer to the Sanhedrim in council, whose plans depended on the treachery of Judas, steps backward a few days to introduce an incident that awakened the slumbering greed of Judas. This supposition tempts Wordsworth to some beautiful allegorising. This supper at Bethany was probably on the Sabbath before His death. It was on a Sabbath—the Sabbath before that great Sabbath on which Christ rested in the grave and fulfilled the Sabbath, and prepared the grave as a place of rest for all who pass from this life in His faith and fear. He also allegorises on the meaning of Bethany, a house of passage, as prefiguring the passage to the spiritual banquet in Paradise. **Simon the leper**—Simon, or Simeon, was a common name among the Jews, hence it was necessary to distinguish particular individuals. This man had been a leper, and may have been cured by our Lord. His leprosy had been removed, otherwise he would have been an outcast from society. In the absence of definite information, it has been conjectured that he was the father of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. Others have supposed that he was the husband of Mary. The mention of Lazarus, it has been pointed out by WESTCOTT, as one of those present, hardly falls in with the idea that he and his sisters were the hosts. It may have been that the villagers provided the feast in the house of Simon. The Jews were fond of giving entertainments at the close of the Sabbath. **As He sat at meat**—more literally, as He was reclining (at table). There is reference to the recumbent position which, in imitation of the Greeks and Romans, had been adopted for banquets by the Jews. **There came a woman.** Her name is suppressed both by S. Matthew and S. Mark; S. John tells us that it was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. **Having an alabaster box of ointment.** There is no word for box in the original. The Revisers use the word "cruse," and put in the margin, "flask." The expression in the original is simply, "having an alabaster of ointment." At Alabastron, in Egypt, there was a manufactory of small vases for holding perfumes, which were made from a stone found in the neighbouring mountains. The Greeks gave to those vases the name of the city from which they came, calling them alabastrons. This name was eventually extended to the stone of which they were formed. **Spikenard.** In the margin the Revisers place, "Greek, pistic nard," pistic being, perhaps, a local name. Others take it to mean genuine; others liquid. Genuine, pure, unadulterated nard is probably the best meaning. **Very precious**—very expensive, very costly; precious being used in the old and strict sense of the English word. It was the costliest anointing oil of antiquity. **Poured it on His head** (R.V. "over His head")—it may have run down the person to the feet, "thus reconciling," as Dr. ALEXANDER says, "the statement of S. John that she anointed the feet of Jesus." "She broke the narrow neck of the cruse," says Dr. MACLEAR, "and poured the perfume first on the head, and then on the feet of Jesus (a point mentioned only by S. John, ch. 12. 3), drying them with the hair of her head, though it was a disgrace to a Jewish woman to unbind the hair in public." She did not wish to keep or hold back anything. She offered up all, gave away all, and her "all" was a tribute worthy of a king. **Some that had indignation.** A veil is here drawn. S. Matthew tells us they were the disciples, and S. John that the irritability was first shown in Judas the Traitor. **Three hundred pence.** The denarius was the ordinary wage for a day's work. **They murmured against her.** The word in the original suggests the roar of a lion and the snort of a horse. **Let her alone; why trouble ye her?** Our Lord always defended the defenceless. **She hath wrought a good work on Me**—a noble and beautiful work—this is what the word means. **She is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying** ("She hath anointed My body aforehand for the burying," R.V.). The words must have fallen with a strange sound on the ears of all who were gathered at the village feast. The custom of embalming was common in Eastern

lands. **Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her**—not the written Gospel merely, but the history of these events, transmitted through the generations. "The striking originality of the saying common to two Gospels," says Dr. SANDAY, "though not quite in the same order, and the large claim which it makes, are evidence of its origin from Him who spake as never man spake." "The word used for memorial is connected with Mnemosyne, the mother of the Muses, and so called," says MORISON, "because before the invention of writing, a capacious and tenacious memory was a prime pre-requisite in every effort of literary genius."

Vers. 12-26. THE PASSOVER AND THE LAST SUPPER. (See on Matt. 26. 17-30; Luke 22. 7-23, 39; John 13. 21-30.)—13. **Go into the city, and there shall meet you a man.** "It was highly seasonable for our Lord to give them this additional proof both of His knowing all things, and of His influence over the minds of men"—WESLEY.

15. **Furnished.** "The word properly means, spread with carpets"—WESLEY.

24. **This is My blood of the new testament**—"that is, This I appoint to be a perpetual sign and memorial of My blood, as shed for establishing the new covenant; that all who shall believe in Me may receive all its gracious promises"—WESLEY.

25. **I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, till I drink it new in the kingdom of God**—"that is, I shall drink no more before I die: the next wine I drink will not be earthly, but heavenly"—WESLEY.

Vers. 27-31. JESUS FORETELLS TREACHERY. (See on Matt. 26. 31-35; Luke 22. 31-38; John 13. 36-38.)—27. **This night.** "The Jews, in reckoning their days, began with the evening, according to the Mosaic computation, which called the evening and the morning the first day. (Gen. 1. 5.) And so that which after sunset is here called 'this night,' is (ver. 30) called **to-day**. The expression there is peculiarly significant: **Verily I say to thee, that thou,** thyself, confident as thou art, **to-day,** even within four-and-twenty hours; yea, **this night,** or ever the sun be risen; nay, **before the cock crow twice,** before three in the morning, **wilt deny Me thrice.** Our Lord, doubtless, spake so determinately, as knowing a cock would crow once before the usual time of cock-crowing. By ch. 13. 35, it appears that the third watch of the night, ending at three in the morning, was commonly styled the cock-crowing"—WESLEY.

Vers. 32-42. THE AGONY. (See on Matt. 26. 36-46; Luke 22. 39-46.)—33. **Sore amazed.** "The original word imports the most shocking amazement mingled with grief: and that word in the next verse which we render **sorrowful,** intimates that He was surrounded with sorrow on every side, breaking in upon Him with such violence as was ready to separate His soul from His body"—WESLEY.

36. **Abba, Father.** "S. Mark seems to add the word 'Father,' by way of explication"—WESLEY.

37. **Saith to Peter**—"the zealous, the confident Peter"—WESLEY.

Vers. 43-52. BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS. (See on Matt. 26. 47-56; Luke 22. 47-53; John 18. 1-12.)—44. **Whomsoever I shall kiss**—"probably our Lord, in great condescension, had used (according to the Jewish custom) to permit His disciples to do this, after they had been some time absent"—WESLEY.

51. **A young man.** "It does not appear that he was one of Christ's disciples. Probably, hearing an unusual noise, he started up out of his bed, not far from the garden, and ran out with only the sheet about him, to see what was the matter. **And the young men laid hold on him**—who was only suspected to be Christ's disciple; but could not touch them who really were so"—WESLEY.

Vers. 53-65. JESUS ARRAIGNED, CONDEMNED, AND SHAMEFULLY ENTREATED. (See on Matt. 26. 57-68; Luke 22. 54; John 18. 13-18.)—55. **All the council sought for witness, and found none.** "What an amazing proof of the over-ruling providence of God, considering both their authority and the rewards they could offer, that no two consistent witnesses could be procured to charge Him with any gross crime!"—WESLEY.

56. **Their evidences were not sufficient.** "The Greek words, literally rendered, are, 'were not equal': not equal to the charge of a capital crime. It is the same word in the fifty-ninth verse"—WESLEY.

58. **We heard Him say.** "It is observable, that the words which they thus misrepresented were spoken by Christ at least three years before. (John 2. 19.) Their going back so far, to find matter for the charge, was a glorious, though silent, attestation of the unexceptionable manner wherein He had behaved through the whole course of His public ministry"—WESLEY.

Vers. 66-72. PETER'S DENIALS AND REPENTANCE. (See on Matt. 26. 69-75; Luke 22. 55-62; John 18. 26, 27.)—72. **And he covered his head**—"which was a usual custom with mourners, and was fitly expressive both of grief and shame"—WESLEY.

I. *The unfaithful disciple.*—In comparing the records of the Evangelists, concerning the denial of Peter, we find minor variations with essential coincidences, proving the independence of the Evangelists and confirming the truth of their narrative. In this instance specially, and in similar difficulties generally, we may ponder the wise words of Dean Alford. Whether we can arrange them or not, being thoroughly persuaded of the holy truthfulness of the Evangelists, and of the Divine guidance under which they wrote, our

faith is in no way shaken by such discrepancies. We value them rather as testimonies to independence; and are sure that, if for one moment we could be put in complete possession of all the details as they happened, each account would find its justification, and the reasons of all the variations would disappear. And this I firmly believe will one day be the case. Meanwhile Dr. LANGE arranges them in the following order:—

First denial.—Immediately on entering the palace (John 18. 17), and on the charge of the maid who kept the door. According to Matthew (26. 69), in the court; according to John and Mark, at the fire, where the servants warmed themselves; according to Luke, by the light of the fire.

Second denial.—According to John's narrative, Peter was still standing by the fire and warming himself, probably with the design of covering a speedy retreat by assuming the appearance of unconcern. According to Matthew, he was now about to leave, when another maid attacked him, and people gathered around him in the porch. Luke reports one of these bystanders as already expressing the general feeling in the words: "Thou art also of them."

Third denial.—Again Peter had tarried for some time in the porch. The false oath which he had taken had allayed the rising indignation of the people, when another fancied that he recognised him by his speech. Soon the servants declared that his speech betrayed him. Such a recognition would involve imminent peril of life. For, according to John, a relative of Malchus maintained that he had seen him in the garden with Jesus. Then Peter began to curse and swear, and immediately the cock crew (a second time), reminding and warning him. It appears that he had scarcely given any heed to the first crowing of the cock (Mark). This picture of the denial of the Lord, as exhibited by the fall of that disciple who had been the first to confess Christ, has its peculiar and eternal import in the history of the Church. Hence we should study its causes, its stages, the repentance that followed it, and the true life that showed how real was the penitence. Christ was the faithful witness; Peter the unfaithful disciple. Christ was the incarnation of love; Judas the incarnation of hypocrisy. Peter's fall is a beacon to the Church and every individual Christian. He was too self-confident; declared himself ready for prison or for death. He got into bad company, amongst the foes of Christ. He proved a moral coward, and ended in open denial, falsehood, and profanity. His sin was of no common magnitude—a disciple, an apostle, one of the favoured three, one who had beheld special miracles. He had been forewarned, and should have been forearmed. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

II. *The penitent apostle.*—The look of the Lord broke unfaithful Peter's heart. The crowing of the cock recalled the Saviour's warning—a warning Peter has too soon forgotten. Nature has warning tokens as well as comforting messages. A small matter, like this servant girl's word, makes a man fall when God does not support him; a small matter, as the crowing of a cock, may raise him again when God's grace makes use of it. The Bible has a good deal to say about the look of God. The silent look of Jesus is several times mentioned. Peter went out and wept bitterly. He went out into the blackness of night, but not into the blackness of despair. He is in his repentance the David of the New Testament.

III. *The restored apostle.*—Forgiveness was not assured to him publicly until after the crucifixion and resurrection (John 21. 15–17). The First Epistle of Peter shows the reality of his restoration. In the light of his fall and repentance, read 1 Pet. 1. 13; 2. 1, 11; 3. 12, 15. The threefold "Lovest thou Me" is the counterpart of the threefold temptation and denial. As the lesson of to-day is fraught with spiritual significance, and especially capable of personal, practical application, let us conclude by reading the opinions of some of the leading students and interpreters of the Word of God. "Peter's denial," says one, "is remarkable in the evangelical history, in the history of the human heart, and in the history of the suffering and death of our Lord. Peter and Judas may be compared in their sins, and contrasted in their penitence." "Passion week," remarks THOLUCK, "brings to view in Peter how great the wavering may be even in a human heart that has already confessed itself to have found the words of eternal life with Jesus." "If any have fallen, even in the most dreadful manner, let them think of Peter's recovery, and not despair, and let them recollect the words of Christ as well as their own sins, that their fears, confessions, and humiliations may be mingled with hope. And let us all frequently remember our past follies, and manifold instances of ingratitude, that we may learn watchfulness, humility, caution, and compassion for the tempted and fallen, by the experience of our own numerous mistakes, sins, and recoveries"—SCOTT. "Tradition reports that ever after, when S. Peter heard the crowing of a cock, he fell upon his knees and moaned; others say that he was wont to rise at midnight and spend the time in penitent devotion between cock-crowing and daylight. Peter went out into the black night, but not as Judas into the blackness of despair. Weeping bitterly, he awaited the dawn of another and a better morning. The angel of mercy accompanied him on that heavy road to spiritual self-condemnation which issued in the death of his old man, more especially of his former pride and self-confidence. And thus it came

that he really accompanied Christ unto death, though in a very different and much better sense than he had intended. His repentance had to be completed; he had to obtain peace and reconciliation from the mouth of Christ Himself before he could offer the requisite satisfaction for his guilt towards man, by making such a grand confession as would efface and obliterate the offence of his grand denial"—LANGE. "Whoever is too eager to vindicate Peter makes his repentance an exaggerated melancholy, and thereby actually declares that our Lord dealt with him afterwards almost too severely; on the other side, we may undoubtedly, in mitigation of his guilt, point to the fact that he denied the Lord only with his mouth, but not with his heart, and sought to make good the error of a single night by a whole life of unwearied faithfulness"—OOSTERZEE. "The fall and repentance of Peter was one of the most powerful means by which he was trained into one of the most eminent of the apostles. A character like his would never have mounted so high if it had not fallen so low"—LANGE.

CHAPTER XV.

Vers. 1–20. JESUS BEFORE PILATE. (See on Matt. 27. 1, 2, 11–31; Luke 23. 1–6, 13–25; John 18. 28–19. 16.)—7. **Insurrection**—"a crime which the Roman governors, and Pilate in particular, were more especially concerned and careful to punish"—WESLEY.

9. **Will ye that I release to you the King of the Jews?** "Which does this wretched man discover most—want of justice, or courage, or common sense? The poor coward sacrifices justice to popular clamour, and enrages those whom he seeks to appease by so unseasonably repeating that title, 'the King of the Jews,' which he could not but know was so highly offensive to them"—WESLEY.

16. **Prætorium**—"the inner hall, where the prætor, a Roman magistrate, used to give judgment. But S. John calls the whole palace by this name"—WESLEY.

17. **Purple.** "As royal robes were usually purple and scarlet, S. Mark and S. John term this a purple robe, S. Matthew a scarlet one. The Tyrian purple is said not to have been very different from scarlet"—WESLEY.

Vers. 1–37. CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS. (See on Matt. 27. 32–50; Luke 23. 26–46; John 19. 17–30.)—21. **The father of Alexander and Rufus.** "These were afterwards two eminent Christians, and must have been well known when S. Mark wrote"—WESLEY.

24, 25. "S. Mark seems to intimate that they first nailed Him to the cross, then parted His garments, and afterwards reared up the cross"—WESLEY.

34. **My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?**—"thereby claiming God as His God; and yet lamenting His Father's withdrawing the tokens of His love, and treating Him as an enemy, while He bare our sins"—WESLEY.

Vers. 38–47. SIGNS FOLLOWING. (See on Matt. 27. 51–66; Luke 23. 45, 47–56; John 19. 31–42.)—41. **Who served Him**—"provided Him with necessaries"—WESLEY.

42. **Because it was the day before the Sabbath**—"and the bodies might not hang on the Sabbath day; therefore they were in haste to have them taken down"—WESLEY.

43. **Honourable**—"a man of character and reputation. **A counsellor**—a member of the Sanhedrim. **Who waited for the kingdom of God**—who expected to see it set up on earth"—WESLEY.

46. **He rolled a stone**—"by his servants. It was too large for him to roll himself"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XVI.

Vers. 1–18. APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION. (See on Matt. 28. 1–10, 16–20; Luke 24. 1–51; John 20. 1, 2, 11–29.)—2. **At the rising of the sun.** "They set out 'while it was yet dark,' and came within sight of the sepulchre, for the first time, just as it grew light enough to discern that the stone was rolled away. (Matt. 28. 1; Luke 24. 1; John 20. 1.) But by the time Mary had called Peter and John, and they had viewed the sepulchre, the sun was rising"—WESLEY.

3. **Who shall roll us away the stone?** "This seems to have been the only difficulty they apprehended. So they knew nothing of Pilate's having sealed the stone, and placed a guard of soldiers there"—WESLEY.

7. **And Peter**—"though he so oft denied his Lord. What amazing goodness was this!"—WESLEY.

13. **Neither believed they them.** "They were moved a little by the testimony of these, added to that of S. Peter. (Luke 24. 34.) But they did not yet fully believe it"—WESLEY.

15. **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.** "Our Lord speaks without any limitation or restriction. If, therefore, every creature in every age hath not heard it, either those who should have preached or those who should have heard it, or both, made void the counsel of God herein"—WESLEY.

16. **And is baptized**—"in token thereof. Every one that believed was baptized. **But he that believeth not**—whether baptized or unbaptized, shall perish everlastingly"—WESLEY.

17. **And these signs shall follow them that believe.** "An eminent author subjoins, 'That believe with that very faith mentioned in the preceding verse.' (Though it is certain that a man may work miracles, and not have saving faith, Matt. 7. 22, 23.) 'It was not one faith by which S. Paul was saved, another by which he wrought miracles. Even at this day, in every believer, faith has a latent miraculous

power, every effect of prayer being really miraculous; although in many, both because of their own littleness of faith, and because the world is unworthy, that power is not exerted. Miracles in the beginning were helps to faith; now also they are the objects of it. At Leonberg, in the memory of our fathers, a cripple that could hardly move with crutches, while the Dean was preaching on this very text, was in a moment made whole.' **Shall follow**—the word and faith must go before. **In My name**—by My authority committed to them. Raising the dead is not mentioned. So our Lord performs even more than He promises"—WESLEY.

18. **If they drink any deadly thing**—"but not by their own choice. God never calls us to try any such experiments"—WESLEY.

Vers. 19–20. THE ASCENSION, AND TRIUMPHANT PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL THEREAFTER.—19. **So then, after the Lord**—"an epithet applied to Jesus by this Evangelist only in the two concluding verses, when he comes to His glorious Ascension, and its subsequent fruits. It is most frequent in Luke. **Had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven.** (See on Luke 24. 50–51.) **And sat on the right hand of God.** This great truth is here only related as a fact in the Gospel history. In that exalted attitude He appeared to S. Stephen (Acts 7. 55, 56), and it is thereafter perpetually referred to as His proper condition in glory. **And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.** We have in this closing verse a most important link of connection with the Acts of the Apostles, where He who directed all the movements of the infant Church is perpetually styled **THE LORD**, thus illustrating His own promise for the founding and building up of the Church **LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY!**"—BROWN.

19. **The Lord.** "How seasonably is He called by this title! **After He had spoken to them**—for forty days"—WESLEY.

20. **They preached everywhere.** "At the time S. Mark wrote, the apostles had already gone into all the known world. (Rom. 10. 18.) And each of them was there known where he preached. The name of Christ only was known throughout the world"—WESLEY.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

S. LUKE.

THE BOOK AND ITS AUTHOR.

THE AUTHOR.

LET us get some concise account of the man. Neither as to the person or history of the third Evangelist is much known that is perfectly certain. From the Epistles of S. Paul we learn that he held high rank among the friends and fellow-labourers of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. In the letter to Philemon, S. Luke is reckoned among S. Paul's fellow-workers. And in the last imprisonment S. Luke is honourably mentioned as being S. Paul's only companion. To the Colossians he is described as the beloved physician. From the repeated occurrence of the pronoun "we" in the Acts of the Apostles, it is generally inferred that S. Luke, the writer, was with the apostle whenever the first person is used. If so, he joined S. Paul at Troas and crossed with him to Philippi, where he remained till the apostle returned, after which he accompanied him to Jerusalem, and, having stayed by his side during his imprisonment at Cæsarea, went in the same ship to Rome, sharing, not only his privations and shipwreck by the way, but also his imprisonment there.

According to an ancient tradition, S. Luke was not only a physician, but a distinguished painter; while another legend places him among the Christian martyrs. But these are of no value. After the death of S. Paul his movements are lost in obscurity. "It is perhaps as the Evangelist wishes it to be; we only know him whilst he stands by the side of his beloved Paul; when the master departs, the history of the follower becomes confusion and fable." According to Nicephorus, S. Luke suffered martyrdom in Greece, where he was, for want of a cross, nailed

to the nearest olive tree, in the eightieth year of his age. Legend says that, being a painter, he painted the portraits of our Lord, the Virgin, and the principal apostles.

THE BOOK.

This third Gospel has often been styled "The Gospel of S. Paul," and there is no doubt that S. Luke shows much of the tolerance and large-heartedness of the Apostle of the Gentiles. He was a Gentile by birth. He traces Christ's lineage up to Adam, that thus He might be presented as the Saviour of the world. He speaks far more than the other Evangelists of "grace," "glad tidings," "salvation," and a "Saviour." The parables and deeds of mercy, which he has specially related, point largely to Jesus as the Saviour of all mankind. He proclaims the Lord as "a Light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as to be "the glory of Israel." He recalls the works of mercy in heathen districts, and reveals the tolerance of Jesus. The outcasts are in this Gospel brought within the range of Christ's influence. S. Luke alone relates the pardon of the woman which was a sinner; the conversion of the chief publican, Zacchæus; and the penitence of the dying thief. To this narrator we are indebted for the parables of the importunate friend; the rich fool; the barren fig tree; the lost piece of silver; the prodigal son; the good Samaritan; the unjust steward; the rich man and Lazarus; and the Pharisee and Publican.

Here alone, too, are recorded the raising of the widow's son at Nain; the healing of the woman with the spirit of infirmity; of the man who had the dropsy; and of the ten lepers. In the closing hours of the Saviour's life, S. Luke alone preserves for us the weeping of Jesus over Jerusalem, His bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane, the healing of the ear of Malchus, the sending of Jesus from Pilate to Herod, the solemn address to the daughters of Jerusalem, the prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them," the account of the penitent robber, the appearance of the risen Lord to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and the particulars of the Ascension. Oftener than the rest he reveals Christ in prayer, and dwells upon His tender human sympathy.

He dwells most upon spiritual agencies; and his glimpses of the future state are remarkably vivid and powerful. "The third Gospel," as LANGE has said, "is pre-eminently that of perfect humanity—human mercy presented in the light of Divine grace, the transformation of all human kindness to Divine love." "Universality," says ALFORD, "is throughout the characteristic of this Gospel. Christ is not the Messiah of the Jew only. He is the desire of all nations."

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1-4. This short, weighty, artless, candid DEDICATION belongs to the Acts, as well as the Gospel of S. Luke—1. **Many have undertaken.** He does not mean S. Matthew or S. Mark; and S. John did not write so early. For these were eyewitnesses themselves, and ministers of the word.

3. **To write in order.** S. Luke describes in order of time, first, the acts of Christ,—His conception, birth, childhood, baptism, miracles, preaching, passion, resurrection, ascension; then the Acts of the Apostles. But in many smaller circumstances he does not observe the order of time. **Most excellent Theophilus.** This was the appellation usually given to Roman governors. Theophilus (as the ancients inform us) was a person of eminent quality at Alexandria. In Acts 1. 1, S. Luke does not give him this title. He was then, probably, a private man.

After the Preface S. Luke gives us the History of Christ, from His coming into the world to His ascension into heaven.

"HEREIN WE MAY OBSERVE:

I. The beginning: and therein—

1 The Conception of John, ... Chap. i. 5-25.
2. The Conception of Christ, ... ,, ,, 26-56.

3. The Birth and Circumcision of John; the hymn of Zacharias; the youth of John, ... Chap. i. 57–80.
4. Christ's Birth, ... ,, ii. 1–20.
Circumcision and Name, ... ,, 21.
Presentation in the Temple, . . . ,, ,, 22–38.
Country and Growth, ... ,, ,, 39–40.
II. The Middle, when He was twelve years old and upward, . ,, ,, 41–52.
III. The course of the History—
A. The Introduction, wherein are described John the Baptist; Christ's Baptism and Temptation, . . ,, iii., iv. 1–13.
B. The Acceptable Year in Galilee:
a. Proposed at Nazareth, ... ,, iv. 14–30.
b. Actually exhibited—
i. At Capernaum, and near it: here we may observe—
1. Actions not censured, while Jesus
(1) Teaches with authority, . . ,, ,, 31–32.
(2) Casts out a devil, . . . ,, ,, 33–37.
(3) Heals many sick, . . . ,, ,, 38–41.
(4) Teaches everywhere, . . ,, ,, 42–44.
(5) Calls Peter; then James and John, ,, v. 1–11.
(6) Cleanses the Leper, . . ,, ,, 12–16.
2. Actions censured, more and more severely. Here occur—
(1) The healing of the Paralytic, . ,, ,, 17–26.
(2) The calling of Levi; eating with Publicans and Sinners, . . ,, ,, 27–32.
(3) The question concerning Fasting, . ,, ,, 33–39.
(4) The plucking the ears of corn, . ,, vi. 1–5.
(5) The withered hand restored; snares laid, ... ,, ,, 6–11.
3. Actions having various effects on various persons—
(1) Upon the Apostles, . . ,, ,, 12–16.
(2) Upon other Hearers, . . ,, ,, 17–49.
(3) Upon the Centurion, . . ,, vii. 1–10.
(4) Upon the Disciples of John—
The occasion; the Young Man raised, ... ,, ,, 11–18.
The Message and Answer, . . ,, ,, 18–23.
The Reproof of them that believed not John, ... ,, ,, 24–35.
(5) Upon Simon and the Penitent Sinner, ... ,, ,, 36–50.
(6) Upon the Women that ministered to Him, ... ,, viii. 1–3.
(7) Upon the People, . . . ,, ,, 4–18.
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3. His Discourses in the Temple—
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(2) The Answer concerning paying Tribute, „ „ 20–26.
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(4) The Disciples admonished, . . „ „ 45–47.
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1. Peter and John prepare the Passover, . „ „ 7–13.
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3. The Dispute, which of them was greatest, . „ „ 24–30.
4. Peter and the other Apostles warned, . „ „ 31–38.
5. On the Mount of Olives:
(1) Jesus prays; is in an agony; strengthened by an angel; wakes His Disciples, „ „ 39–46.
(2) Is betrayed; unseasonably defended, . „ „ 47–53.
(3) Carried to the High Priest's House, . „ „ 54.
Denied by Peter, ... „ „ 55–62.
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1. His Passion and Death: Transactions—
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(3) With Herod, ... „ „ 6–12.
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The Prodigies, and the Death of Jesus, . „ „ 44–46.
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e. His Resurrection made known—
1. To the Women, ... Chap. xxiv. 1–12.
2. To the Two going into the country, and to Simon, ... ,, ,, 13–35.
3. To the other Apostles, ... ,, ,, 36–45.

f. The instructions given His Apostles; His Ascension, ,, ,, 46–53." WESLEY.

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5. The course of Abia. "The priests were divided into twenty-four courses, of which that of Abia was the eighth. (1 Chron. 24. 10.) Each course ministered in its turn, for seven days, from Sabbath to Sabbath. And each priest of the course, or set in waiting, had his part in the Temple service assigned him by lot"—WESLEY.

6. Walking in all the moral commandments and ceremonial ordinances blameless. "How admirable a character! May our behaviour be thus unblamable, and our obedience thus sincere and universal!"—WESLEY.

10. The people were praying without at the time of the incense—"so the pious Jews constantly did. And this was the foundation of that elegant figure by which prayer is in Scripture so often compared to incense. Perhaps one reason of ordaining incense might be to intimate the acceptableness of the prayer that accompanied it, as well as to remind the worshippers of that 'sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour,' which was once to be 'offered to God' for them, and of that incense which is continually 'offered with the prayers of the saints, upon the golden altar that is before the throne' (Rev. 8. 3, 4)"—WESLEY.

12. Zacharias was troubled. "Although he was accustomed to converse with God, yet we see he was thrown into great consternation at the appearance of His angelic messenger, nature not being able to sustain the sight. Is it not then an instance of the goodness as well as the wisdom of God that the services which these heavenly spirits render us are generally invisible?"—WESLEY.

13. Thy prayer is heard. "Let us observe with pleasure, that the prayers of pious worshippers come up with acceptance before God; to whom no costly perfume is so sweet as the fragrancy of an upright heart. An answer of peace was here returned, when the case seemed to be most hopeless. Let us wait patiently for the Lord, and leave to His own wisdom the time and manner wherein He will appear for us. **Thou shalt call his name John.** 'John' signifies, 'the grace and favour of Jehovah'; a name well suiting the person who was afterwards so highly in favour with God, and endued with abundance of grace, and who opened a way to the most glorious dispensation of grace in the Messiah's kingdom. And so Zacharias' former prayers for a child, and the prayers which he as the representative of the people was probably offering at this very time for the appearing of the Messiah, were remarkably answered in the birth of His forerunner"—WESLEY.

15. He shall be great before the Lord—"God the Father. Of the Holy Ghost and the Son of God mention is made immediately after. **And shall drink neither wine nor strong drink**—shall be exemplary for abstemiousness and self-denial; and so much the more filled with the Holy Ghost"—WESLEY.

16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn. "None therefore need be ashamed of preaching like John the Baptist. **To the Lord their God**—to Christ"—WESLEY.

17. He shall go before Him—Christ—**in the power and spirit of Elijah**—"with the same integrity, courage, austerity, and fervour; and the same power of God attending his word. **To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children**—to reconcile those that are at variance, to put an end to the most bitter quarrels, such as are very frequently those between the nearest relations. **And the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just**—and the most obstinate sinners to true wisdom, which is only found among them that are righteous before God"—WESLEY.

18. Zacharias said, Whereby shall I know this? "In how different a spirit did the blessed Virgin say, 'How shall this be?' Zacharias disbelieved the fact; Mary had no doubt of the thing, but only inquired concerning the manner of it"—WESLEY.

19. I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God. "Seven angels thus stand before God (Rev. 8. 2), who seem the highest of all. There seems to be a remarkable gradation in the words, enhancing the guilt of Zacharias' unbelief. As if he had said, I am Gabriel, an holy angel of God—yea, one of the highest order. Not only so, but I am now peculiarly sent from God; and that with a message to thee in particular. Nay, and to show thee glad tidings, such as ought to be received with the greatest joy and readiness"—WESLEY.

20. Thou shalt be dumb. "The Greek word signifies *deaf*, as well as dumb; and it seems plain that he was as unable to hear as he was to speak; for his friends were obliged to make signs to him, that he might understand them (ver. 62)"—WESLEY.

21. The people were waiting—"for him to

come and dismiss them, as usual, with the blessing"—WESLEY.

24. **Hid herself.** "She retired from company, that she might have the more leisure to rejoice and bless God for His wonderful mercy"—WESLEY.

25. **He looked upon me, to take away my reproach.** "Barrenness was a great reproach among the Jews, because fruitfulness was promised to the righteous"—WESLEY.

26. **In the sixth month**—"after Elizabeth had conceived"—WESLEY.

27. **Espoused.** "It was customary among the Jews for persons that married to contract before witnesses some time before; and as Christ was to be born of a pure virgin, so the wisdom of God ordered it to be of one espoused; that, to prevent reproach, He might have a reputed father according to the flesh"—WESLEY.

28. **Hail, thou highly favoured; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.** "Hail is the salutation used by our Lord to the women after His resurrection. 'Thou art highly favoured,' or 'hast found favour with God' (ver. 30), is no more than was said of Noah, Moses, and David. 'The Lord is with thee,' was said to Gideon (Judg. 6. 12); and, 'Blessed shall she be above women,' of Jael (Judg. 5. 24). This salutation gives no room for any pretence of paying adoration to the Virgin; as having no appearance of a prayer, or of worship offered to her"—WESLEY.

32. **He shall be called the Son of the Highest**—"in this respect also; and that in a more eminent sense than any, either man or angel, can be called so. **The Lord shall give Him the throne of His father David**—that is, the spiritual kingdom, of which David's was a type"—WESLEY.

33. **He shall reign over the house of Jacob**—"in which all true believers are included"—WESLEY.

35. **The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.** "The power of God was put forth by the Holy Ghost as the immediate Divine agent in this work; and so He exerted the power of the Highest as His own power who, together with the Father and the Son, is the Most High God. **Therefore also**—not only as He is God from eternity, but on this account likewise, He **shall be called the Son of God**"—WESLEY.

36. **And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth.** "Though Elizabeth was of the house of Aaron, and Mary of the house of David, by the father's side, they might be related by their mother's. For the Law only forbade heiresses marrying into another tribe. And so other persons continually intermarried, particularly the families of David and of Levi"—WESLEY.

38. **And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord.** "It is not improbable, that this time of the Virgin's humble faith, consent, and expectation, might be the very time of her conceiving"—WESLEY.

39. **A city of Judah**—"probably Hebron, which was situated in the hill country of Judea, and belonged to the house of Aaron"—WESLEY.

41. **When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary**—"the discourse with which she saluted her, giving an account of what the angel had said, the joy of her soul so affected her body, that the very child in her womb was moved in an uncommon manner, as if it leaped for joy"—WESLEY.

45. **Happy is she that believed**—"probably she had in her mind the unbelief of Zacharias"—WESLEY.

46. **And Mary said**—"under a prophetic impulse, several things, which perhaps she herself did not then fully understand"—WESLEY.

47. **My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.** "She seems to turn her thoughts here to Christ Himself, who was to be born of her, as the angel had told her He should be, the Son of the Highest, whose name should be JESUS, THE SAVIOUR. And she rejoiced in hope of salvation through faith in Him, which is a blessing common to all true believers, more than in being His mother after the flesh, which was an honour peculiar to her. And certainly she had the same reason to rejoice in God her Saviour that we have. Because He had **regarded the low estate of His handmaid.** In like manner has He regarded our low estate; and vouchsafed to come and save her and us, when we were reduced to the lowest estate of sin and misery"—WESLEY.

51. **He hath wrought strength with His arm**—"that is, He hath shown the exceeding greatness of His power. She speaks prophetically of those things as already done, which God was about to do by the Messiah. **He hath scattered the proud**—visible and invisible"—WESLEY.

52. **He hath put down the mighty**—"both angels and men"—WESLEY.

54. **He hath helped His servant Israel**—"by sending the Messiah"—WESLEY.

55. **To his seed**—"His spiritual seed; all true believers"—WESLEY.

56. **Mary returned to her own house**—"and thence soon after to Bethlehem"—WESLEY.

60. **His mother said**—"doubtless by revelation, or a particular impulse from God"—WESLEY.

66. **The hand of the Lord**—"the peculiar power and blessing of God"—WESLEY.

67. **And Zacharias prophesied**—"of things immediately to follow. But it is observable, He speaks of Christ chiefly; of John only, as it were, incidentally"—WESLEY.

69. **An horn**—"signifies honour, plenty, and strength. **An horn of salvation**—

that is, a glorious and mighty Saviour"—WESLEY.

70. **His prophets, who have been since the world began**—"for there were prophets from the very beginning"—WESLEY.

74. **To serve Him without fear**—"without any slavish fear. Here is the substance of the great promise, that we shall be always holy, always happy; and being delivered from Satan and sin, from every uneasy and unholy temper, we shall joyfully love and serve God, in every thought, word, and work"—WESLEY.

76. **And thou, child.** "He now speaks to John; yet not as a parent, but as a prophet" —WESLEY.

77. **To give knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins**—"the knowledge of the remission of our sins being the grand instrument of present and eternal salvation. (Heb. 8. 11, 12.) But the immediate sense of the words seems to be, to preach to them the gospel doctrine of salvation by the remission of their sins"—WESLEY.

78. **The dayspring**—"or the rising sun; that is, Christ"—WESLEY.

In this opening chapter of the Gospel it seemed best not to break the continuity of Mr. Wesley's teaching, but we may now look back upon the chapter and note a few of the more important things.

ANGELS.—"The appearance of an angel in ver. 11 is the first note in that overture of angels which introduced Christ to the world." —ABBOT. In ver. 19 he gives his name Gabriel, *i.e.* "Hero of God." The same angel appeared to Daniel. This is the first message of God recorded in the Bible for four hundred years since the time of Malachi. "The ministry of angels is undoubtedly a deep subject. Nowhere in the Bible do we find such frequent mention of them as in the period of our Lord's earthly ministry. At no time do we read of so many appearances of angels as about the time of our Lord's incarnation and entrance into the world"—RYLE. This chapter is known as the Gospel History before the birth of Christ. It announces the birth of the forerunner, the annunciation to the mother of Jesus, the Magnificat, and the birth of John the Baptist.

MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS—(1) *Her name.*—Mary, or Miriam, being the name of the great sister of Moses, was one of the most common of Jewish female names. (2) *Lineage.* —Very little is told us of Mary's parentage, but it is continually implied that she is of the royal line of David. Tradition calls her mother's name Anna. If the genealogy given in Luke is really that of Mary (and of Joseph only by marriage and adoption, as is almost certain), then her father's name is Heli. (3) *The Annunciation.*—While Mary was betrothed, but before her marriage, it was announced to her that she should be the mother of the Saviour of the world. Jesus Himself was the Eternal Son of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. (John 1. 1–3.) But in order that He might be the Saviour of men, it was necessary that He should partake of human nature.

SONGS OF THANKSGIVING.—Interwoven with the history in this first chapter of Luke are two hymns of praise, so Jewish in form and language, that comparisons have been made with the song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2. 1–10), and other Old Testament Scriptures. But with the letter of the Old they infuse the spirit of the New Testament. These hymnists of the olden time stood on a border line of two dispensations. Coming events were casting their shadows before. "It is striking, that whilst it is said of both Elizabeth and Zacharias, before they uttered their songs, that they were filled with the Holy Spirit, the same is not said of Mary. The Spirit seems no longer to have come upon her after the Old Testament manner, for a few moments, but to have dwelt in and acted upon her in the gospel manner. The royal spirit is more expressed in her song; the priestly character in that of Zacharias; in his, the Old Testament type, in hers, the New prevails"—OOSTERZEE. "The song of praise uttered by Zacharias," says LANGE, "depicts the form and stature of his faith; it is the expression of the gospel, as his heart had received it. It is with a truly priestly intuition that Zacharias sees the reconciliation and transformation of the world in the advent of the Messiah, and his people celebrating the service of God in perpetual freedom. It is this that is his heart's delight as a priest. His heart's delight as a father is, that his son John should be the herald of the Lord, to give the knowledge of His salvation, even to them who sit in darkness and the shadow of death." "O blessed hymn of joy and praise!" exclaims S. AUGUSTINE, "divinely inspired by the Holy Ghost, and divinely pronounced by this venerable priest, and daily sung in the Church of God. O may thy words be often in my mouth, and the sweetness of them always in my heart. The expressions thou usest are the comfort of my life; and the subject thou treatest of, the hope of all!"

CHAPTER II.

OUR LORD FROM HEAVEN.—Son of God and Son of Man. How familiar these words are, and yet how far off from ordinary experience. It is the mystery of mysteries. But life is a mystery; thought is a mystery; sleep and awaking, birth and burial, are mysterious. Growth is an ever-present miracle of God. Jesus was God's great gift. He came down from heaven for us men and our salvation. But He was set in the centre of the history of the period. The time of Herod is the turning-point between the old and new dispensations. Time, place, and circumstances were all selected. Prophets of olden time had spoken of the coming One. Micah had mentioned Bethlehem-Ephratah as the little one among the thousands of Judah, out of which should come the Ruler

in Israel. A decree or edict went forth from the all-powerful Cæsar that all the world should be enrolled, their numbers and names taken, for taxing or military purposes, or both. From every village they must go to the town of their district or clan. Joseph was of the house and lineage of David; hence, accompanied by Mary, he journeyed to Bethlehem. The hand of the clock of the Divine purpose was reaching the hour. JESUS was born.

1. **That all the world should be enrolled**—"that all the inhabitants, male and female, of every town in the Roman empire, with their families and estates, should be registered"—WESLEY.

2. **When Cyrenius was governor of Syria**—"when Publius Sulpicius Quirinus governed the province of Syria, in which Judea was then included"—WESLEY.

6. **And while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.** "Mary seems not to have known that the Child must have been born in Bethlehem, agreeably to the prophecy. But the providence of God took care for it"—WESLEY.

7. **She laid Him in the manger.** "Perhaps it might rather be translated 'in the stall.' They were lodged in the ox-stall, fitted up, on occasion of the great concourse, for poor guests. **There was no room for them in the inn**—now also, there is seldom room for Christ in an inn"—WESLEY.

THE MANGER-CRADLE.—Bethlehem was a poor place, and its inn was probably an enclosed space surrounded by open recesses, of which the paved floor is raised a little above the ground. The traveller pays a trifle for food and water. If the inn be crowded, the traveller must be content with a corner of the courtyard, or enclosed place, among the cattle, or else in the stable. The stable is often a limestone cave or grotto, and there is a very ancient tradition that this was the case in the khan of Bethlehem. If, as is probable, the traditional site of the Nativity is the real one, it took place in one of the caves where S. Jerome spent so many years as a hermit, and translated the Bible into Latin. The Apocryphal Gospels tell wonderful stories of miracles connected with the Babe in the Manger-Cradle; but the Gospels are simple and artlessly beautiful. As one has said, "The unfathomable depths of the Divine counsels were moved; the fountains of the great deep were broken up; the healing of the nations was issuing forth: but nothing was seen on the surface of human society but this slight rippling of the water."

> "The manger and the straw He bore,
> The cradle did He not abhor."

He was not ashamed to be The Child Jesus, who was Lord of angels and Judge of men. But if He had no honour upon earth He was not forgotten in heaven. The first gospel upon earth was preached by an angel of the Lord. The greatest event in human history is recorded in few words, with little embellishment and no exaggeration. The Apocryphal Gospels, on the contrary, abound in miraculous details, often trifling, sometimes absurd. Some, however, are not wanting in naturalness, and enable us to realise how the reverent imagination of early times regarded these sacred events. It happened, say these old legends, as Mary and Joseph were going up towards Bethlehem, that the time came when Jesus should be born, and Mary said to Joseph, "Get me down from my ass," and he took her down from her ass, and said to her, "Where shall I take thee, for there is no inn here?" Then he found a cave near the grave of Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin; and light never entered the cave, but it was always filled with darkness, and the sun was then just going down. But when Mary entered the cave it was presently filled with light, and beams, as if of the sun, shone around; and thus it continued, day and night, while she remained in it. In this cave the Child was born, and the angels were around Him at His birth, and worshipped the new-born, and said, **Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth and goodwill to men.** Meanwhile, Joseph wandered about seeking help, and when he looked up he saw that the pole of the heavens stood still, and the birds of the air stopped in the midst of their flight, and the sky was darkened. And looking on the earth he saw a dish full of food, prepared, and workmen resting round it, but the faces of all were turned upwards. And he saw sheep which were being driven along, and the sheep stood still, and the shepherd lifted his hand to strike them, but it remained uplifted. And he came to a spring, and saw the goats with their mouths touching the water, but they did not drink; for all things at that moment were turned from their course. But if wonders such as these were wanting, the birth of the Saviour was not without signs of His Divine glory. If His birth was mean on earth below, as men assert, it was celebrated with hallelujahs by the heavenly host in the air above. Why did our Lord choose a stable? asks S. Bernard. And he answers his own question. Evidently that He might reprove the glory of the world, and condemn the vanities of this present life. His very infant body has its speech. Christ has consecrated all the hard places where His people have to lie. As OOSTERZEE finely says, "When we are once convinced *who* it is that came, the manner *in which* He came becomes a manifestation, not only of the love of the Father, but also of the grace of the Son. The lowly birth of the Saviour of the world coincides exactly with the nature of His kingdom. The origin of His kingdom was not of earth, its fundamental law was to deny self, and for love to serve others; its end, to become great

through abasement, and to triumph by conflict; all this is here exhibited before our eyes."

" Wrapt in His swaddling bands,
And in His manger laid,
The hope and glory of all lands,
Is come the world to aid.
No peaceful home upon His cradle smiled,
Guests rudely went and came
Where slept the ROYAL CHILD."

11. **To you** — "shepherds; Israel; mankind"—WESLEY.

14. **Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men.** "The shouts of the multitude are generally broken into short sentences. This rejoicing acclamation strongly represents the piety and benevolence of these heavenly spirits—as if they had said, Glory be to God in the highest heavens; let all the angelic legions resound His praises. For with the Redeemer's birth, peace and all kind of happiness come down to dwell on earth: yea, the overflowings of Divine goodwill and favour are now exercised toward men"—WESLEY.

THE PILGRIM SHEPHERDS.—But some guests went and came not rudely. "God sent visitors of His own to pay court to the new-born King." These were simple shepherds; but they belonged to the true aristocracy. "Like Simeon, they were among the waiters for the Consolation of Israel." "And if the simplicity of their rustic minds, their quiet occupation, the stillness of the midnight hours, and the amplitude of the deep blue vault above them for the heavenly music which was to fill their ear, pointed them out as fit recipients for the first tidings of an infant Saviour; so also," Dr. BROWN says, "the congenial meditations and conversations by which, we may suppose, they would beguile the tedious hours, would perfect their preparation for the unexpected visit. Thus was Nathanael engaged, all alone but not unseen, under the fig tree, in unconscious preparation for his first interview with Jesus. (John 1. 48.) But if the shepherds in His immediate neighbourhood had the *first*, others from afar had the *next* sight of the new-born King. Even so still, simplicity first, science next, finds its way to Christ. In Bible history God has singularly honoured toil. While Moses watched the flock, the Angel of the Covenant came. David was anointed, and Jacob blest, tending the flock. To the shepherds the first tidings were given. The quiet in the land are not forgotten of God."

" In quiet ever and in shade
Shepherd and Sage may find,
They who have bowed untaught to Nature's sway,
And they who follow Truth along her star-pav'd way."

The Festival of Christmas is a children's festival. It leads us to a Child, and it fills the world of children with joy. Children think of it as a holiday time. And we do well if we remember the connection between holiday and holy day. The celebration of Christmas was not generally introduced into the Church till about four hundred years after the birth of the Saviour. The day of the birth is traditional. It may or may not have been in December. God conceals what it is not necessary for us to know. The Saviour was born in the fulness of time, when the world most needed Him. He was born at Bethlehem, where David had pastured his flocks. He was announced to the shepherds by an angel, to the sages by a star. Thus it is still. The lowly and the lofty may find their way to Christ.

A SONG OF TWO WORLDS.—A multitude of the heavenly host suddenly joined the announcing angels, praising God, and saying, **Glory. Peace.** The angels are represented as the body-guard of the Lord. They surrounded His cradle. They guarded His grave. They were with Him in the glory of His transfiguration and the anguish of the garden. "There is something unspeakably great and glorious in this union of earthly obscurity with heavenly splendour, of angels with shepherds, of the form of a servant with the majesty of a King" —OOSTERZEE. The song was of Two Worlds: **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.** The temple of Janus was closed at the time of the Nativity. The angels sang of an ultimate peace, but, alas! it is slow in coming, yet it is slowly coming. But there is a peace of God within that is not dependent upon outward circumstances. Yet the good time will come — must come; because it is in harmony with the will of God. "Sacred poetry was born with religion, and the poetry of the Church is the echo and response to the poetry and music of angels in heaven." The angels came and then returned: the Lord remained. Angels sang; shall we be silent?

HEAVEN AND EARTH UNITED.—"The shepherds," GEIKIE says, "must have been men looking out, in their simple way, towards the Invisible and Eternal, and seeking that kingdom of God for themselves which was one day, as they believed, to be revealed in their nation at large. Only that mind which has sympathy with external nature can receive in their true significance the impressions it is fitted to convey, and only the heart which has sympathy with spiritual things can recognise their full meaning; poetic sensibility is required in the one case, and religious in the other. In each case it is the condition of sincere emotion. The stillness over hill and valley, broken only by the bleating of the sheep; the unclouded brightness of the Syrian sky, with its innumerable stars; and the associations of these mountain pastures, dear to every Jew as the scene of David's youth, were over and around them." **And now, lo, an angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings. And**

suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

> **Glory to God in the highest,**
> **And on earth peace,**
> **Goodwill toward men.**

20. **For all the things that they had heard**—"from Mary. **As it was told them**—by the angels"—WESLEY.

21. **To circumcise the child** — "that He might visibly be 'made under the Law,' by a sacred rite which obliged Him to keep the whole Law; as also that He might be owned to be the seed of Abraham, and might put an honour on the solemn dedication of children to God"—WESLEY.

22. **The days**—"the forty days prescribed. (Lev. 12. 2–4)"—WESLEY.

24. **A pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.** "This offering sufficed for the poor"—WESLEY.

OUR LORD'S INFANCY.—"Of many a wonder," says FARRAR, "which rooted itself in the earliest traditions, there is no trace whatever in the New Testament. The inventions of man differ wholly from the dealings of God. Four events only of our Lord's infancy are narrated by the Gospels, namely, the circumcision, the presentation in the Temple, the visit of the Magi, and the flight into Egypt. Of these the first two occur only in S. Luke, the last two only in S. Matthew. The accurate and detailed sequence of biographical narrative from the earliest years of life was a thing wholly unknown to the Jews, and alien alike from their style and temperament. Anecdotes of infancy, incidents of childhood, indications of future greatness in boyish years, are very rare phenomena in ancient literature. It is only since the dawn of Christianity that childhood has been surrounded by a halo of romance. As Jesus was the first great Teacher of men who showed a genuine sympathy for childhood, so in the life of the Child Jesus we discover the secret of the romance and reverence with which Christendom has ever since invested early life." "Can we think," asks Dr. PUSEY, "that Holy Scripture thus tells us of the sacred Childhood of Jesus, and means us not to reverence childhood? Feel we not a drawing forth of our inmost hearts towards them—a tender love, a reverence for them, which, alas! we cannot have for ourselves, and often not for others of riper years?"

GIVEN TO GOD.—Of the Circumcision scarcely any mention is made in the Apocryphal Gospels; but to the Christian it has its own solemn meaning. It shows that Christ came, not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. Thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness. Thus early did He suffer pain for our sakes, to teach us the spiritual Circumcision — the circumcision of the heart—the circumcision of all our bodily senses. As the East catches at sunset the colours of the West, so Bethlehem is a prelude to Calvary; and even the Infant's cradle is tinged with a crimson reflection from the Redeemer's cross. It was on this day, too, that Christ first publicly received that name of Jesus, already announced by the angel Gabriel. On the fortieth day after the Nativity, the Virgin presented herself, with her Babe, for their purification in the Temple at Jerusalem. "Thus, then," says S. BONAVENTURA, "do they bring the Lord of the Temple to the Temple of the Lord." The proper offering on such occasions was a yearling lamb for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering. But the Law that honoured poverty provided for it. The poor might bring instead two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. With this small offering the mother of Jesus presented herself and presented her first-born to God. Of the purification and presentation no further details are given to us. The rite was much the same as churching is with us. The ceremony is still in force among the Jews, handed down in all its main features from earliest times. Dr. GEIKIE gives a picture of the ceremony as still observed. The Hebrew father invites ten friends and a rabbi, who must be a Cohen,— that is, one reputed to belong to the house of Aaron,—to his house, on the thirty-first day after the child's birth. The infant is then brought in by him and laid on the table before the rabbi, with a sum of money, which, in England, if the father be about ordinarily well-to-do, generally amounts to twelve shillings. He then formally tells the rabbi that this is his first-born son, which, therefore, he now gives to the rabbi, as the representative of God. "Which would you, then, rather do?" asks the rabbi; "give up your first-born to Jehovah, or redeem him for five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is five *gerah?*" The father, of course, answers that he wishes to redeem his child. "This is my first-born," says he; "here, take unto thee the five shekels due for his redemption." As he hands the money to the rabbi, he praises God for the day, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast maintained us, and preserved us, to enjoy this season." The rabbi then takes the money, and, after passing the coin round the child's head, as a symbol of redemption, lays his other hand on its brow, with the words, "This child is instead of this money, and this money instead of this child: may this child be brought to the life, to the Law, and to the fear of Heaven; and as he has been brought to be ransomed, so may he enter into the Law and good deeds." He then places both his hands on the child's head and prays, "God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh. The Lord help and preserve thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Length of days, years, and peace be gathered to thee: and God keep thee from evil, and save thy soul."

25. **The consolation of Israel.** "A common phrase for the Messiah, who was to be the everlasting consolation of the Israel of God. **The Holy Ghost was upon Him**—that is, He was a prophet"—WESLEY.

27. **By the Spirit**—"by a particular revelation or impulse from Him"—WESLEY.

30. **Thy salvation**—"thy Christ, thy Saviour"—WESLEY.

32. **And the glory of Thy people Israel.** "For after the Gentiles are enlightened, 'all Israel shall be saved'"—WESLEY.

33. **Joseph and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken**—"for they did not yet thoroughly understand them"—WESLEY.

34. **Simeon blessed them**—"Joseph and Mary. **This child is set for the fall and rising again of many**—that is, He will be 'a savour of death' to some, to unbelievers; 'a savour of life to others, to believers. **And for a sign which shall be spoken against**—a sign from God, yet rejected of men; but the time for declaring this at large was not yet come. **That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed**—the event will be, that, by means of that contradiction, the inmost thoughts of many, whether good or bad, will be made manifest"—WESLEY.

35. **A sword shall pierce through thy own soul**—"so it did, when He suffered; particularly at His crucifixion"—WESLEY.

RECOGNITION OF THE INFANT SAVIOUR.—Legend has been busy with the name of Simeon. In the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, he recognises Jesus because he sees Him shining like a pillar of light in His mother's arms. Scripture is reticent, according to its custom. He was "a just man and devout," says S. Luke. "Too old to care for longer life, so far as earth alone was concerned, his heart yet beat warmly for his downtrodden nation, and for man at large, sunk in heathen darkness. He would fain wait among the living till the appearance of the **Consolation of Israel**—the familiar name by which his race, in their deep yearning for deliverance, had come to speak of the long-expected Messiah, as the sure Restorer of its glory. He had a premonition, divinely sent, that he should have this joy, and had come this morning, 'by the Spirit,' into the Temple. How he knew it, we cannot tell; but, as Mary stood presenting her child, he recognised in Him the Messiah of God. Anna the prophetess caught his words of welcome as she passed, and told to all who looked for the Redemption of God that the Salvation of the ages had come. In the night of age, Simeon and Anna sang unto the Lord; in the night of national decadence they heralded a good time coming."

37. **Fourscore and four years.** "These were the years of her life, not her widowhood only. **Who departed not from the Temple**—who attended there at all the stated hours of prayer. **But served God with fastings and prayers**—even at that age. **Night and day**—that is spending therein a considerable part of the night, as well as of the day"—WESLEY.

38. **To all that were waiting for redemption.** "The sceptre now appeared to be departing from Judah, though it was not actually gone; Daniel's weeks were plainly near their period; and the revival of the spirit of prophecy, together with the memorable occurrences relating to the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus, could not but encourage and quicken the expectation of pious persons at this time. Let the example of those aged saints animate those whose hoary heads, like theirs, are 'a crown of glory,' being 'found in the way of righteousness.' Let those venerable lips, so soon to be silent in the grave, be now employed in the praises of their Redeemer. Let them labour to leave those behind, to whom Christ will be as precious as He has been to them, and who will be waiting for God's salvation, when they are gone to enjoy it"—WESLEY.

The joy awakened in the shepherds, the Magi, Simeon, and Anna, is a prophecy of the ministry of Christianity. The world is yet to rejoice in the Lord.

40. **And the child grew**—"in bodily strength and stature. **And waxed strong in spirit**—the powers of His human mind daily improved. **Filled with wisdom**—by the light of the indwelling Spirit, which gradually opened itself in His soul. **And the grace of God was upon Him**—that is, the peculiar favour of God rested upon Him even as man"—WESLEY.

43. **The child Jesus.** "S. Luke describes in order, Jesus 'the fruit of the womb' (ch. 1. 42); 'an infant' (ch. 2. 12); 'a little child' (ver. 40); 'a child' here; and afterwards 'a man.' So our Lord passed through and sanctified every stage of human life. Old age only did not become Him"—WESLEY.

44. **Supposing Him to be in the company**—"as the men and women usually travelled in distinct companies"—WESLEY.

46. **After three days.** The first day was spent in their journey, the second in their return to Jerusalem, and the third in searching for Him there. **They found Him in the Temple**—in an apartment of it. **Sitting in the midst of the doctors.** "Not one word is said of His disputing with them, but only of His asking and answering questions, which was a very usual thing in these assemblies, and indeed the very end of them. And if He was, with others, at the feet of these teachers, where learners generally sat, He might be said to be in the midst of them, as they sat on benches of a semicircular form, raised above their hearers and disciples"—WESLEY.

49. **Why sought ye Me?** "He does not blame them for losing, but for thinking it needful to seek Him; and intimates that He could not be lost or found anywhere but doing the will of an higher Parent"—WESLEY.

50. "It is observable that Joseph is not mentioned after this time, whence it is probable he did not live long after"—WESLEY.

52. **Jesus increased in wisdom**—"as to His human nature—**and in favour with God**—in proportion to that increase. It plainly follows, that though a man were pure, even as Christ was pure, still he would have room to increase in holiness, and, in consequence thereof, to increase in the favour as well as in the love of God"—WESLEY.

THE HOLY CHILD AT HOME.—Almost every traveller who has visited Nazareth speaks of it with enthusiasm. One, long ago, compared it to a rose; like the rose, it has the same rounded form, enclosed by mountains, as the flower by its leaves. A modern traveller says Nazareth was a small town in a hollow, opening broadly at the summit of a group of mountains which close the plain of Esdraelon on the north. The population is now from three to four thousand, and it can never have varied much. The cold is sharp in winter, and the climate very healthy. The town, like all small Jewish towns at this period, was a heap of huts built without style. The environs are charming, and no place in the world was so well adapted for dreams of perfect happiness. In our times Nazareth is still a delightful abode, the only place, perhaps, in Palestine, in which the mind feels itself relieved from the burden which oppresses it in this unequalled desolation. "To the question," says Dr. WHEDON, "what sort of a boy was Jesus? this brief passage from the whole Scripture answers. He had a true human soul as well as body. He was a genuine natural child, infant, and boy. When as an infant the shepherds paid to Him their homage, and the Magi presented their gifts, He was, probably, totally unconscious of the nature of the transactions. When at the age of two and a half years His parents brought Him from their flight into Egypt to the hills of Nazareth, His body grew; and amid the bold scenes of hill and dale, with the blue Mediterranean in the distance, His mind received its expansion. As the synagogue and the lessons at home unfolded the truths of the Old Testament to His view, telling of the Messiah to come, it is wonderful to think what may have been the first presentiments to His mind that He was Himself that Messiah." "Christ," says Mr. VALLINGS, "passed through all the stages of life, to redeem and consecrate all. He was a real Child, as well as a real Man. He spake as a child, thought as a child, understood as a child. The history of the Divine Childhood is summed up in the words of S. Luke (ch. 2. 40, 52). There was a natural development of body, soul, and spirit. None of the Nazarene townsfolk remembered or recorded any extraordinary feats of mind or body on His part. As upon Samuel, the grace of God was upon Him. It was a permanent, not a special or official, endowment. The attractiveness of transparent innocence, the beauty of ideal holiness, drew ever the increasing favour of men. The divineness of child-life, and of the eternal childhood, which with all other perfectness exists in God, was here exhibited. The Epiphany of the Divine Boyhood follows in nature and in spirit the Epiphany of the Divine Infancy. The darkness lifts for a moment, and the light breaks upon a boyish figure and character. He is seen in His Father's house. The act is typical. It is the Epiphany of the Divine Boyhood." "And so," as Bishop RYLE says, "He who died on the cross was once a boy Himself, and feels a special interest in boys and girls."

THE FIRST VISIT TO THE METROPOLIS.—It was a critical age for a Jewish boy. Up to this period he was called little; afterwards he was called grown-up, and became a son of the Law. At twelve, according to Jewish traditions, Moses left the house of Pharaoh's daughter; Samuel heard the voice of God; Solomon judged between the contending women; and Josiah dreamed of his great reformation. In going from Nazareth to Jerusalem they would pass through fields made sacred by many a struggle for freedom, and hallowed by recollections of Divine intervention. At the setting and striking of the tents many a lesson concerning God's guidance and governance in national affairs would be taught the children of the encampment. And when they neared the city there would be the same fascination as is felt by a boy coming from the provinces to London. The city of Jerusalem was the Holy City; but the Temple was the Holy Place. Thither they went. There the Holy Child remained. Lost to His earthly parents, He was found in His Heavenly Father's house. He was not disputing with the doctors, but **sitting in their midst, both hearing them and asking them questions.** "A lecturing, demonstrating child would have been an anomaly, which the God of order would never have exhibited"—OLSHAUSEN.

THE FIRST RECORDED WORDS.—**How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?** He never said Our Father, although He taught us to say it. This *My* is a profound word. The Child of Nazareth was the Child of Heaven. He must be about His Father's matters. The must was an inward must. The Law of God was in His heart. It is as if He had said, "Where should a child be but in his father's house?" The parents understood not—then. **He went down with them, and came to Nazareth: and He was subject unto them.**

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISM AND PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—"S. Luke here gives a sixfold intimation of the date—a method characteristic of his learned and careful research. If the accession of Tiberius be dated from the death of Augustus, Aug. 19, A.U.C. 767, this would

make our Lord thirty-two at His baptism. S. Luke, however, follows a common practice in dating the reign of Tiberius from the period of his association with Augustus as joint Emperor, A.U.C. 765. (*Tac. Ann.* i. 3; *Suet. Aug.* 97; *Vell. Paterc.* 103.) Our Lord's baptism thus took place in A.U.C. 780. By thus giving precise dates, S. Luke becomes, as Ewald says, 'the first writer who frames the Gospel history into the great history of the world'" —C. B. (Parallel accounts.—The Ministry of John in the wilderness (vers. 1-18) is also described in Matt. 3. 1-12, and Mark 1. 1-8; the baptism of Jesus (vers. 21, 22) in Matt. 3. 13-17; Mark 1. 9-11; John 1. 33; the imprisonment of John (vers. 19, 20) in Matt. 4. 12; 14. 3-5; Mark 1. 14; 6. 17-20.)

1. **The fifteenth year of Tiberius**—"reckoning from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire. **Herod being tetrarch of Galilee.** The dominions of Herod the Great were, after his death, divided into four parts or tetrarchies. This Herod, his son, was tetrarch of Galilee, reigning over that fourth part of his dominions. His brother reigned over two other fourth parts, the region of Iturea and that of Trachonitis, that tract of land on the other side Jordan, which had formerly belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. **And Lysanias** (probably descended from a prince of that name, who was some years before governor of that country) was **tetrarch** of the remaining part, Abilene, which was a large city of Syria, whose territories reached to Lebanon and Damascus, and contained great numbers of Jews"—WESLEY.

2. **Annas being high priest and Caiaphas.** "There could but be one high priest, strictly speaking, at once: Annas was the high priest at that time, and Caiaphas his sagan or deputy"—WESLEY.

3. JOHN'S BAPTISM.—The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance. It was intended first as a symbol of purification, and then as an initiation into the kingdom which was at hand; it was a public confession of sin, and a public profession of religiousness. John the Baptist is the Elijah of the New Testament. Both suddenly appeared. Both dwelt apart from men. Both scourged the evil-doers of their times. Note the close connection between repentance and forgiveness (vers. 7-14). We have in these verses a specimen of John the Baptist's ministry. How direct, intense, personal, stern, dauntless, and practical it was.

5. **Every valley shall be filled**, etc.—"that is, every hindrance shall be removed" —WESLEY.

6. **The salvation of God**—"the Saviour, the Messiah"—WESLEY.

8. **Say not within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father**—"that is, trust not in your being members of the visible Church, or in any external privileges whatsoever; for God now requires a change of heart; and that without delay"—WESLEY.

11. **He answering.** "It is not properly John, but the Holy Ghost, who teaches us in the following answers, how to come ourselves, and how to instruct other penitent sinners to come to Christ, that He may give them rest. The sum of all is, 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well.' These are the 'fruits worthy of repentance'"—WESLEY.

15. The deep impression made by John's preaching was only temporary. There was a general expectation that the Messiah would speedily come.

16, 17. JOHN'S SELF-FORGETFULNESS.—He was only the servant, the Master was yet to come. He would baptize them in the Holy Spirit and with fire. This baptism by the Spirit had been foretold in Isa. 44. 3; Joel. 2. 28. Its first obvious fulfilment was at Pentecost, but it is fulfilled to all Christians.

18. **And many other things.** The record gives but specimens of John's preaching through the almost two years of his mission.

19. **Herod the tetrarch.** A title of the governors of any smaller Roman provinces. Herod Antipas became tetrarch soon after the birth of Jesus. **Being reproved by him concerning Herodias.** Herod Antipas put away his true wife, the daughter of Aretas, an Arabian king, and then stole the affections of his beautiful niece Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. **All the evils which Herod had done.** His revellings, oppressions, and murders. He was notoriously evil.

20. **He shut up John.** "This circumstance, though it happened after, is here mentioned before, our Lord's baptism, that His history (that of John being concluded) may then follow without interruption"—WESLEY.

21, 22. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.—S. Luke's narrative must be supplemented by particulars derived from S. Matthew (3. 13-17), who alone narrates the unwillingness of the Baptist, and the memorable conversation between him and Jesus. S. Mark (1. 9-11) mentions that Jesus went into the river, and that it was He who first saw the cleaving heavens and the Spirit descending. Why was Christ baptized? He Himself said, "To fulfil all righteousness." He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. The Church fathers have suggested other reasons, as (1) that He baptized the water "to sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin"; or (2) that He was baptized, as it were, vicariously, as Head of His body the Church; or (3) as a consecration of Himself to His work, followed by the special consecration from the Father; or (4) as a great act of humility.

21. **Jesus praying, the heaven was opened.** "It is observable that the three voices from heaven (see Luke 9. 35, 36; John 12. 28) by which the Father bore witness to Christ were pronounced, either while He was praying, or quickly after it"—WESLEY.

S. Luke, more than all the Evangelists, calls attention to the prayers of Jesus.

22. **The Holy Ghost descended.** This was seen by John the Baptist (John 1. 34), and by Jesus (Mark 1. 10), but not apparently by others. **In a bodily shape.** This addition is peculiar to S. Luke, and is probably added to show the distinctness and reality of what Theodoret calls the Spiritual Vision.

23, *et seq.* THE GENEALOGY.—23. **And Jesus was.** "John's beginning was computed by the years of princes; our Saviour's by the years of His own life, as a more august era. **About thirty years of age.** He did not now enter upon His thirtieth year, as the common translation would induce one to think, but He now entered on His public ministry; being of such an age as the Mosaic Law required. Our great Master attained not, as it seems, to the conclusion of His thirty-fourth year. Yet what glorious achievements did He accomplish within those narrow limits of time! Happy that servant who with any proportionable zeal despatches the great business of life; and so much the more happy, if his sun go down at noon! For the space that is taken from the labours of time shall be added to the rewards of eternity. **The son of Heli**—that is, the son-in-law; for Heli was the father of Mary. So S. Matthew writes the genealogy of Joseph, descended from David by Solomon; S. Luke, that of Mary, descended from David by Nathan. In the genealogy of Joseph, recited by S. Matthew, that of Mary is implied, the Jews being accustomed to marry into their own families"—WESLEY.

38. **Adam** the son **of God**—"that is, whatever the sons of Adam receive from their human parents, Adam received immediately from God, except sin and misery"—WESLEY.

The genealogy opens with the name **Jesus**, and closes with the name **Son of God.** Our Lord had many names—Jesus, Christ, Second Adam, Advocate, Amen, High Priest, Author of our Faith, Bread of Life, Captain of our Salvation, Dove, Firstborn, Forerunner, Foundation, Judge, King, Lamb, Light, Lord, Master, Mediator, the Resurrection and the Life, Shepherd, Teacher, the Way, the Truth, Vine, Bright and Morning Star.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **The wilderness**—"supposed by some to have been in Judea; by others to have been that great desert of Horeb or Sinai, where the children of Israel were tried for forty years, and Moses and Elijah fasted forty days"—WESLEY.

"*Time.*—Probably about January, A.D. 27, directly after His baptism.

"*Place.*—There is no hint given as to the place where Jesus went to be tempted, but most authorities incline to the northern part of the wilderness of Judea, between Jerusalem and Jericho on the west and the Jordan and the upper part of the Dead Sea on the east. Tradition places it in Mount 'Quarantania,' not far from Jericho, near the Jordan. It was named 'Quarantania' (which means a space of forty days), because Jesus was supposed to have passed His forty days of fasting in one of its caves. It is high and precipitous, and abounds in caves. Others think that He went into the wilderness of Sinai, where Moses had his forty years of training in solitude (Ex. 3. 1-6; Acts 7. 30), and fasted forty days (Ex. 34. 28), and where Elijah fasted forty days and had a marvellous experience with God. (1 Kings 19. 8-14.) (Parallel accounts.—Matt. 4. 1-11; Mark 1. 12, 13.)

"*Source of this Account.*—There can be but one source, and that is the Lord Himself. He must have revealed to His disciples, with His own lips, the story of His temptations, for there was no one there to witness it and to report. The private life of Jesus in His Nazareth home, and His long, silent preparations, ended when He was about thirty years old. Then by His baptism He stood upon the threshold of His great life work, consecrated and made ready by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But one thing yet remained. As the first Adam, the head of the race, must be tempted and tested at the beginning of his career, so must the Second Adam, the Head of the redeemed people of God, be tempted and tested at the beginning of His work; the first Adam failed, and changed Paradise into a desert; the Second Adam gained the victory, and changed a desert into a paradise"—*From Peloubet's Select Notes.*

I. PREPARATION.—Our Lord was prepared both without and within. Having fasted and become weakened and wearied, He was the more ready for assault. Having been filled with the Spirit of God, He was the better able to confront the spiritual foe. He did not go into the wilderness of His own accord. He was **led by the Spirit** in the wilderness. S. Mark uses a strong phrase, "Straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness." He who taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," did not go thither except by a Divine command. It is safe to go anywhere when God bids us. The tense in the original implies a continuous leading during all the forty days, as well as a continuous temptation. A Divine impulse led Him to face the hour of peril alone. S. Mark uses the more intense expression, "immediately the Spirit *driveth Him forth.*" He only devotes two verses (Mark 1. 12, 13) to the Temptation, but adds the graphic touch, that "He was with the wild beasts" (comp. Ps. 91. 13), and implies the *continuous* ministration of angels to Him"—C. B. Our Lord was always in the power of the Spirit, for to Him the Spirit was given without measure. As Milton sings—

"Thou Spirit, who ledd'st this glorious Eremite
Into the desert, His victorious field,

Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st Him thence,
By proof the undoubted Son of God."

II. THE TEMPTATION.—We had better not confuse ourselves by rash intrusions into the mysteries of our Lord's Divine and human natures by inquiring whether Christ's sinlessness arose from a "*possibility* of *not* sinning," or from an "*impossibility* of sinning." It is enough for us to know that "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Nor need we concern ourselves as to the degree of *outwardness* in the Temptation. Was Satan visibly present? Or did he merely suggest, as he does to us? The temptation is equally real, whether it came from without or from within. As Dr. STALKER reverently says, "It is with awe we think of these suggestions presenting themselves to the holy soul of Jesus. Could He be tempted to distrust God, and even to worship the Evil One? No doubt the temptations were flung from Him, as the impotent billows retire broken from the breast of the rock on which they have dashed themselves. But these temptations pressed in on Him, not only at this time, but often before in the valley of Nazareth, and often afterwards in the heats and crises of His life. We must remember that it is no sin to be tempted, it is only sin to yield to temptation. And, indeed, the more absolutely pure a soul is, the more painful will be the point of the temptation, as it presses for admission into his breast." In the life of Abraham we read, "After these things God did tempt Abraham." Then follows the offering up of Isaac. But many trials preceded this greatest trial of all. So Christ's temptation did not stand alone.

The Tempter.—"The Greek word is *diabolos* —slanderer, accuser; the Hebrew, *Satan*, is one who opposes—an adversary. The Greek word conveys the additional ideas of—(1) deceiving, (2) calumniating, (3) accusing"—C. B. "It is no more unreasonable to believe in a personal devil than in bad men, bad leaders on earth. To deny the existence of the devil is to lay much heavier charges of evil on the nature of man than does the belief in Satan"—PELOUBET. "Satan and his angels were once in heaven (2 Pet. 2. 4; Jude 6). (2) Satan is the father of lies (John 8. 44). (3) Satan blinds men's spiritual vision (2 Cor. 4. 4). (4) Satan can assume very winning forms (2 Cor. 11. 14). (5) Satan is the great tempter and adversary of men (1 Pet. 5. 8; Luke 22. 31). (6) Satan is very powerful (Eph. 6. 12)"—A. F. SCHAUFFLER, D.D. Let us, however, avoid idle discussion concerning the form and appearance of Satan. He comes to us; he came to Christ.

The First Temptation—*To distrust God.*—**If Thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread** (R.V.). "Forty days and nights He had fasted and was hungry. Had God forgotten Him? Was He to be left to perish?" "Art Thou Son of God?" said Satan, "then exercise Thy right. Show Thyself. Be independent. Command." The answer came from the Book—**It is written.** The words of all three answers to the tempter came from two chapters of Deuteronomy. He used the word of God, which we may use too.

Second Temptation.—*To be independent of God.*—The tempter **showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time**, and said, **To Thee will I give all this authority and the glory of them; for it hath been delivered unto me.** He had come as Messiah, to be the world's Conqueror. Now, by one stroke, He may achieve the victory. Bow, and all shall be Thine. But He will not have to-day what belongs to to-morrow. He has His day, His hour. God's time is best. With another **It is written** He spurns the temptation.

Third Temptation—*To presume on God.* —**He set Him on the pinnacle of the Temple, and said, Cast Thyself down.** The devil has an "It is written." But he quotes partially and thus falsely. (See Ps. 91. 11.) Another word of God is His defence. **Thou shalt not** is sufficient for Him; it must be for us.

III. VICTORY.—Satan retired, and angels appeared. He who came to destroy sin and conquer death had vanquished Satan.

6. I give it to whomsoever I will. "Not so, Satan. It is God, not thou, that puttest down one, and setteth up another; although sometimes Satan, by God's permission, may occasion great revolutions in the world"—WESLEY.

13. A convenient season—"in the garden of Gethsemane. (Luke 22. 53)"—WESLEY.

14. Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit—"being more abundantly strengthened after His conflict"—WESLEY.

15. Being glorified of all. "So God usually gives strong cordials after strong temptations. But neither their approbation continued long, nor the outward calm which He now enjoyed" —WESLEY.

16. He stood up—"showing thereby that He had a desire to read the Scriptures to the congregation. On which the book was given to Him. It was the Jewish custom to read standing, but to preach sitting"—WESLEY.

It behoved Him to fulfil all righteousness. He was found in His seat in the synagogue. Now He is no longer the learner, but the Teacher. Many important events have taken place, but their record is reserved for the other Evangelists. He has been baptized at the Jordan, and tempted in the desert. He has selected His disciples, wrought the miracle at Cana of Galilee, attended the Passover, instructed Nicodemus, proclaimed Himself to the woman at the well, and healed the son of the nobleman. Now He reappears in His native place, and in the seat of the synagogue, perhaps where He had sat before. The public reading in the synagogue consisted of a portion

of the Law, which in regular order was followed by a section of the Prophets. A priest or a Levite, or a respectable stranger, was invited by the reader to be the expositor. The attendant handed our Lord the roll. The lesson for the day was in Isaiah. For aught we know to the contrary, it was the very portion He expounded; or He may have selected the passage for its special signification. He quoted the well-known passage: — **The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.** It was the ministry of the Lord Jesus in outline; the gospel of the grace of God in brief. And the manner as well as the matter was gracious and winning. For ■ while the audience listened as under a spell; but when He had shown the sterner side of His gospel, they cast Him forth out of the city, and He came to the synagogue at Capernaum, and showed Himself a Prophet in deed as well as in word.

JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE.—Hitherto He had been a silent worshipper: now He becomes a public teacher. "A synagogue (a congregation, a gathering together, and hence a place of assembling) was in the form of a common modern church, nearly square. The platform and pulpit for preaching was at one end, and behind it was the ark containing the rolls or books. The reading-desk was on a platform in the centre. At the end opposite to the pulpit was the women's gallery. The arrangement can be seen in the modern synagogues of the Jews. The men always wear their hats while in the synagogue. The services consist of prayers in the form of liturgy, with responses by the people standing; singing of psalms; the reading of the Law and the Prophets, followed by an address, the service closing with a short prayer. It did not require ordination to preach in the synagogue; but any prominent man or distinguished rabbi, known to be in town, was asked to speak, usually before the time of service. This practice, and the absolute liberty of teaching, subject to the authority of the chief ruler of the synagogue, formed important links in the Christianisation of the world. The popular preacher was one who had a good figure and melodious voice, his words like those of the bride to the bridegroom, his speech sweet as honey, his diction richly adorned, like a bride on her wedding-day"—Condensed from EDERSHEIM. "It is supposed that the little village only possessed a single synagogue. After our Lord, or another, had read the first lesson, which was always from the Pentateuch, the clerk handed to him the roll of Isaiah, which contained the second lesson. The word used leaves it uncertain whether the *finding* was what man calls accidental, or whether it was the regular lesson of the day. Our Lord seldom used texts as the basis of His discourses, more often He made events the occasion of His speech. But here He selected a great text, from which He preached a gracious sermon. He proclaimed Himself as the World's Hope. He declared that He came to the least and lowliest. He opened up the long dim vista of a better time coming. Help for the helpless, succour for the needy, freedom for those in bondage, vision for the blind, consolation for the sufferers,—these elemental truths, so familiar to us now, were strange then.

"1. Poor. 2. Captives. 3. Blind—Representatives of suffering humanity.
1. Light. 2. Health. 3. Liberty—Images of Christ's Salvation"—VAN DOREN.

Gracious words fell from His lips that day. "The word grace does not here mean mercy or favour, but beauty and attractiveness. This verse and John 7. 46 are the chief proofs that there was in our Lord's utterance an irresistible majesty and sweetness. (Comp. Ps. 45. 2; John 1. 14)"—FARRAR. Alford thinks we have here merely the substance of a more expanded discourse.

17. **He found.** "It seems, opening upon it, by the particular providence of God"—WESLEY.

18. **He hath anointed Me** — "with the Spirit. He hath, by the power of His Spirit which dwelleth in Me, set Me apart for these offices. **To preach the gospel to the poor**—literally and spiritually"—WESLEY.

"How is the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity interwoven even in those scriptures where one would least expect it? How clear a declaration of the great Three-One is there in those very words, **The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me! To proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised.** Here is a beautiful gradation, in comparing the spiritual state of men to the miserable state of those captives who were not only cast into prison, but, like Zedekiah, had their eyes put out, and were laden and bruised with chains of iron"—WESLEY.

19. **The acceptable year**—"plainly alluding to the year of jubilee, when all, both debtors and servants, were set free"—WESLEY.

21. **To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears**—"by what you hear Me speak"—WESLEY.

22. **The gracious words which proceedeth out of His mouth.** "A person of spiritual discernment may find in all the discourses of our Lord a peculiar sweetness, gravity, and becomingness, such as is not to be found in the same degree, not even in those of the apostles"—WESLEY.

23. **Ye will surely say** — "that is, your approbation now outweighs your prejudices. But it will not be so long. You will soon ask, Why My love does not begin at home? Why

I do not work miracles here, rather than at Capernaum? It is because of your unbelief. Nor is it any new thing for Me to be despised in My own country. So were both Elijah and Elisha, and thereby driven to work miracles among heathens, rather than in Israel"—WESLEY.

24. **No prophet is acceptable in his own country**—"that is, in his own neighbourhood. It generally holds, that a teacher sent from God is not so acceptable to his neighbours as he is to strangers. The meanness of his family, or lowness of his circumstances, bring his office into contempt. Nor can they suffer that he, who was before equal with or below themselves, should now bear a superior character"—WESLEY.

25. **When the heaven was shut up three years and six months.** "Such a proof had they that God had sent Him. In 1 Kings 18. 1, it is said, 'The word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year,' namely, reckoning not from the beginning of the drought, but from the time when he began to sojourn with the widow of Sarepta. A year of drought had preceded this, while he dwelt at the brook Cherith. So that the whole time of the drought was (as S. James likewise observes) three years and six months"—WESLEY.

28. **And all in the synagogue were filled with fury**—"perceiving the purport of His discourse, namely, that the blessing which they despised would be offered to, and accepted by, the Gentiles. So changeable are the hearts of wicked men! So little are their starts of love to be depended on! So unable are they to bear the close application even of a discourse which they most admire!"—WESLEY.

30. **Passing through the midst of them**—"perhaps invisibly; or perhaps they were overawed; so that though they saw, they could not touch, Him"—WESLEY.

31. **He came down to Capernaum**—"and dwelt there, entirely quitting His abode at Nazareth"—WESLEY.

JESUS ON THE HILL.—There were mutterings in the synagogue, **Is not this Joseph's son?** "The Jews, in their synagogues, did not sit in silence, but were accustomed to give full expression to their feelings, and to discuss and make remarks aloud"—C. B. He answered these by showing the method of the Divine selection (vers. 23-27). A sudden irruption of anger possessed them, and they led Him to the brow of the hill. But His time was not yet come. And some have thought it unnecessary to call in the aid of the miraculous here. They have pointed to His calmness, to the majesty of His personality, and assumed that He walked quietly through the hostile crowd. They have reminded us of the power of Wesley and Whitefield, in dealing with angry mobs. "He beholds them," says Stier, "with a look of His hitherto restrained majesty, by which they are bound and incapable of touching Him." Be this as it may, it was not at Nazareth that the end was to come. He had work to do, and time in which to do it.

Vers. 33-37. In the synagogue there was a man which had the spirit of an unclean demon. We know too little of the unseen world to be sure that we understand all that is implied in this and similar narratives. Let it be sufficient to learn that Christ is Lord of the unseen as well as of the seen, of the world of spirit as of the world of nature. We know, too, that acts become habits, and men may speak impure words and do impure deeds until impurity is the atmosphere in which they live. The man was healed: the impure spirit exorcised.

34. **What have we to do with Thee?** "Thy present business is with men, not with devils. **I know Thee who Thou art**—but surely he did not know a little before that He was 'God over all, blessed for ever,' or he would not have dared to tell Him, 'All this power is delivered to me, and I give it to whomsoever I will.' **The Holy One of God**—either this confession was extorted from him by terror (for 'the devils believe and tremble'), or he made it with a design to render the character of Christ suspected. Possibly it was from hence the Pharisees took occasion to say, 'He casteth out devils by the prince of the devils'"—WESLEY.

Vers. 38, 39. THE HEALER IN THE HOME.—Simon's wife's mother was holden with a great fever. They besought Him for her. He stood over her, rebuked the fever, and it left her. S. Mark notes that He took her by the hand. Christ was the Life, and He seized the hand of sickness. He came into contact with sufferers. In this we may follow Him. And in her devotion to the common task, as soon as this sufferer was healed, we may imitate her.

Vers. 40, 41. BENEFICENT ACTIVITY.—**When the sun was set**—"and, consequently, the Sabbath ended, which they reckoned from sunset to sunset"—WESLEY.

All that had any sick brought them, and He healed every one. In the by-ways of the Gospels we shall find lessons of life. **All that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them.** "All." When we speak of the miracles of Christ, we usually think of thirty-three recorded wondrous works; but these are only specimens. His life was as full of deeds of mercy as the sky of stars. Let us place together a few passages. "Jesus went about all Galilee healing *all manner* of disease and *all manner* of sickness among the people. And they brought unto Him *all that were sick*, holden with *divers* diseases and torments, possessed with devils, and epileptic, and palsied; and He healed them" (Matt. 4.). And if any distinction need be made when the Son of God puts forth the right hand of power, great diseases are specially enumerated: the demon-possessed, the epileptic, and the palsied; Peter's wife's mother had "a great fever"; the

centurion's servant was "grievously tormented." "*Wheresoever* He entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the market-places, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of His garment: and as many as touched Him were made whole" (Mark 6.). "Jesus withdrew Himself, and many followed Him; and He *healed them all*" (Matt. 12.). "There came unto Him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at His feet; and He healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing" (Matt. 15.). What a variety of diseases! But He was not baffled. His ministry was a ministry of healing. The great majority of His miracles were miracles of healing. He was the Saviour of the body as well as the soul. And in this He hath left us an example. We must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the outcast, as well as erect schools and circulate Bibles. Sometimes we can only save the soul by saving the body. Our Lord's miracles were parables, acted instead of spoken. Behind the diseases of the body we behold the diseases of the soul. Blindness, dumbness, deafness, paralysis, death—these terms have a moral application; and as the eye is often a better teacher than the ear, we may preach the gospel of the grace of Jesus through these pictures of bodily salvation. The Great Physician is able and willing to heal every kind of disease of mind and heart. To Him only must we turn.

Vers. 42–44. The miracles were only breaks in the ministry of teaching. The great Itinerant resumed His task.

CHAPTER V.

Vers. 1–11. A MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES. (Comp. John 1. 35–42; Matt. 4. 18–22).—S. John records the first call of the disciples, or perhaps, more strictly, their first communion with Jesus. S. Matthew narrates the second call. Some Bible students hold this to be an abbreviated statement, of which S. Luke's, in these verses, is a vivid and circumstantial account. The important point is that the calls were progressive, as has often been God's method from that time to this. If we regard S. Matthew's and S. Luke's narratives as identical, the third call was in the choice of the Twelve to be apostles. Adopting this view, these stages have been thus arranged:—

1. Reception as disciples in the most general sense—*Catechumens.*
2. Selection for service by continuous following of the Lord—*Evangelists.*
3. Selection to be the representatives of the Lord, with bestowal of the power to work miracles—*Apostles.*

It has been said, "He commands them to **launch out into the deep,** partly to exhibit the miraculous draught of fishes as contrary to all the rules of fishing, and partly also to withdraw from the eyes of the people the miracle, which was a sign given to the apostles, in confirmation of the promise accompanying their call." It was a test of faith, and a call to labour. The fishes were sent into the net, not directly into the boat. Heaven helps those who help themselves. Our Lord revealed Himself to Peter along the line of his calling. Fear spoke loftily (ver. 8) concerning the Master's glory; it mistook the Master's pity. Fear is not a safe guide. Fear not is spoken with a different accent in the word of truth. Labour is unproductive without God's blessing, but labour cannot be dispensed with. Peter, James, and John were not disobedient to the heavenly vision (ver. 11). They rose, went forth, and followed Christ. Thus the miracle of wonder became a message of salvation. It always is.

6. **Their net brake**—"began to tear"—WESLEY.

8. **Depart from me, for I am a sinful man**—"and therefore not worthy to be in Thy presence"—WESLEY.

11. **They forsook all, and followed Him.** "They had followed Him before (John 1. 43), but not so as to forsake all. Till now, they wrought at their ordinary calling"—WESLEY.

Vers. 12–26. THE SAVIOUR OF THE BODY.—**In one of the cities,** "probably the village of Hattîn, for we learn from S. Matthew's definite notice that this incident took place on descending from the Mount of Beatitudes. (See Matt. 8. 1–4; Mark 1. 40–45.) S. Mark seems to imply that it was in a house. Chronologically, the call of S. Matthew, the choosing of the Twelve, and the Sermon on the Mount, probably intervene between this incident and the last"—C. B. We must remember that this is not the first proof of the Physician's skill. The wonderful healing of a demoniac and of the sick at sunset find record in the fourth chapter. S. Luke, being a physician, is especially at home in delineating the Saviour of the body. And in pondering the marvellous deeds of Christ, we must remember the wise words of Mozley, "Miracles are not *contrary* to nature, but *beyond* and *above* it." The picture of Jesus moving about among the sick and tortured crowd, with word and touch of healing, is worthy Him who came the world to save. Godet speaks of periods when the miraculous power of Jesus was most abundantly displayed. He cites ch. 4. 40, 41. He finds also a similar rhythm in the career of the apostles. "Peter at Jerusalem (Acts 5. 15, 16), and Paul at Ephesus (19. 11, 12), exercise their miraculous power to a degree in which they appear to have exhibited it at no other time in their life; it was at the same time the culminating point of their ministry of the word." And we may agree with the beautiful expression of JEAN

PAUL. "Miracles on earth are nature in heaven." The Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of evil. There are many sicknesses, but only one Physician: many souls, but one Saviour: many sorrows, but one sympathizer—

> "The Great Physician now is near,
> The sympathising Saviour."

The Leper (vers. 12–16).—"Leprosy was in every point of view a most frightful malady: (1) In its physical aspects it was a whitish pustule, eating away the flesh, attacking member after member, and at last eating away the very bones; it was attended with burning fever, sleeplessness, and nightmare, without scarcely the slightest hope of cure. Such were its physical characteristics: it was a living death. (2) In the social point of view, in consequence of the excessively contagious nature of his malady, the leper was separated from his family, and from intercourse with men, and had no other company than that of others as unhappy as himself. Lepers ordinarily lived in bands, at a certain distance from human habitations. (2 Kings 7. 3; Luke 17. 12.) Their food was deposited for them in convenient places. They went with their head uncovered, and their chin wrapped up; and, on the approach of any persons whom they met, they had to announce themselves as lepers. (3) In the religious point of view, the leper was Levitically unclean, and consequently excommunicate. His malady was considered a direct chastisement from God. In the very rare case of a cure, he was only restored to the theocratic community on an official declaration of the priest, and after offering the sacrifice prescribed by the Law"—GODET. **And behold a man.** His approach was not expected: he comes like an apparition. It was only by stealth that he could get so near. He was **full of leprosy**: his countenance was lividly white. Having discovered Jesus, he rushes towards Him; the moment he recognises Him he is at His feet. S. Luke says, "falling on his face"; S. Mark, "kneeling down"; S. Matthew, "he worshipped." All the Evangelists say "cleanse" instead of "heal," on account of the notion of uncleanness attached to this malady. **He stretched forth His hand and touched him.** Leprosy was so contagious, that this act excited the liveliest emotion in the crowd. Christ confronted the impurity of our nature, and yet remained unsullied. S. Matthew says, "his leprosy was cleansed"; regarding it from a ceremonial point of view. S. Luke simply says, "the leprosy departed from him"; looking at it from a human point of view. To prevent popular excitement, our Lord imposed silence upon the healed man. Leprosy has always been regarded as a type of *sin*. But over "this sacrament of death," leprosy, our Lord's power was supreme. Hence we may come to Him for the removal of our moral maladies. Christ's miracles of healing have been regarded as—(1) Witness of His gospel, (2) Works of love, (3) Seals of His power, (4) Signs of New Testament freedom, (5) Keys of Divine glory, and (6) Revelations of God to man. The leper said, **Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.** The Lord said, **I will: be thou made clean.** Two words only, our Lord spoke; "a prompt echo to the ripe faith of the leper." The leper carried his malady in his face, so the drunkard shows his lack of self-control; the impure his unholiness. Sin writes its marks on the fleshly tablets of the body. But Christ is all powerful: Christ is nigh at hand. "Our Lord's first miracles were done with a glad spontaneity in answer to faith. But when men had ceased to believe in Him, their lack of faith rendered His latter miracles more sad and more delayed (Mark 6. 5; Matt. 13. 58). We never, however, hear of a moment's delay in attending to the cry of a leper. When the sinner cries from his heart, 'I have sinned against the Lord,' the answer comes instantly, 'The Lord also hath put away thy sin' (2 Sam. 12. 13)"—C. B. Although great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by Him of their infirmities, **He withdrew Himself in the deserts, and prayed.** Virtue was going out of Him, therefore strength must enter into Him. S. Luke, above other Evangelists, notes the prayers of Jesus Christ. We who work for God must take care to pray to God. "S. Luke's," says Farrar, "is eminently the Gospel of prayer and thanksgiving."

16. **He withdrew.** "The expression in the original implies that He did so frequently"—WESLEY.

The Paralytic (vers. 17–26).—"A threefold miracle demands our attention in these verses. At one and the same time we see our Lord forgiving sins, reading men's thoughts, and healing a palsy. He that could do such things, and do them with such perfect ease and authority, must indeed be very God. Power like this was never possessed by man"—RYLE. "It is a remarkable instance on the human side of triumph over hindrances. They were partly in the man—a paralytic; helpless and practically incurable. In the circumstances: the occasion and the crowd. But the hindrances were triumphed over by resolution born of necessity and ingenuity, bold enough to execute itself. On the Divine side it was human weakness coming to Omnipotence, and not coming in vain. The miracle was momentarily deferred because of the strange inward questionings of the scribes and the Pharisees. Anyone might *say*, thy sins have been forgiven, without any visible sign, whether his words had any power or not; no one could by a word make a man rise and walk, who had not received power from God. But our Lord had purposely used words which, while they brought the *earthly* miracle into less pro-

minence, went to the very root of the evil, and implied a yet loftier prerogative"—C. B. All the Evangelists who narrate the miracle emphasise the carrying the bed whereon the paralytic lay. It is in contrast with the man's previous helplessness—"borne of four." While he departed to tell his friends and glorify the God of deliverance, the onlookers were astonished and filled with fear, saying, **We have seen strange things to-day.**

17. **Sitting by**—"as being more honourable than the bulk of the congregation, who stood. **And the power of the Lord was present to heal them**—to heal the sickness of their souls, as well as all bodily diseases"—WESLEY.

19. "Not being able to **bring him in through the multitude, they went** round about by a back-passage, and going up the stairs on the outside they came **upon** the flat-roofed **house, and let him down through the** trap-door, such as was on the top of most of the Jewish houses; doubtless with such circumspection as the circumstances plainly required" WESLEY.

26. **We have seen strange things to-day**—"sins forgiven, miracles wrought"—WESLEY.

27–39. This section relates the call of Levi, the feast he provided, and the table-talk of Jesus.

27, 28. THE CALL.—Levi was a publican, a tax-collector. Those who, like Matthew, were of Jewish origin were hated and despised by their fellow-countrymen, more even than the heathen themselves. The Levi of this Gospel is the Matthew the publican of the other Gospels. Probably his former name was Levi, and Jesus gave him the surname of Matthew, "Gift of God," just as He gave Simon the surname of Peter.

29–32. THE FEAST.—Levi gave up his wealth to follow Christ. **Leaving all**—"his business and gain"—WESLEY.

This feast has been called Levi's first missionary effort. He strove to bring his old friends and Jesus together. Eating together all the world over, is the sign of close intimacy. The house of an Oriental is perfectly open, and anyone who likes may enter it, hence the presence of the Pharisees and scribes.

29. **And Levi made Him a great entertainment**—"it was necessarily great, because of the great number of guests"—WESLEY.

33–39. INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING FASTING.—In ver. 32 our Lord announced His mission to the outcasts. His enemies asked, **Why do not your disciples fast, like the disciples of John and of the Pharisees?** Jesus compares the days of His presence on the earth to a marriage feast. (See John 3. 29.) In the midst of this feast the heart of Jesus is overflowing with joy, but "the shadow of a painful vision passes across His brow."

35. **The days will come.** The veil of the future is not often lifted.

36. A PARABLE. — **He spake also a parable** — "taken from clothes and wine; therefore peculiarly proper at a feast"—WESLEY.

Our Lord delighted in these homely metaphors, which brought the truth within the comprehension of the humblest. **To put a piece of a new garment upon an old would rend the new to patch the old, and increase the rent of the old, and after all be a strange mixture.** Christianity would supersede Judaism.

37–39. SECOND PARABLE. — Teaching the same lesson. Our Lord often illustrates two aspects of the same truth by a pair of parables (*e.g.* The Hid Treasure and The Pearl, The Sower and the Tares).

39. **And no man having drunk old wine**—"and, besides, men are not wont to be immediately freed from old prejudices"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER VI.

1. **The first Sabbath** — "so the Jews reckoned their Sabbaths, from the Passover to Pentecost; the first, second, third, and so on, till the seventh Sabbath after the second day. This immediately preceded Pentecost, which was the fiftieth day after the second day of unleavened bread"—WESLEY.

(See on Matt. 12.) Our Lord was walking along in a path between two fields. He was walking apart from His disciples, and did not Himself pluck the corn. Jesus would have had no difficulty in showing that the act of the disciples, although opposed perhaps to the Pharisaic code, was in perfect agreement with the Mosaic commandment (Deut. 23. 25). But our Lord raised the question. He knew how eagerly and instantly the Pharisees would clutch at the chance of finding fault. He refers to the conduct of David, showing that when a moral obligation clashes with a ceremonial law, the latter ought to yield (vers. 3–5).

Vers. 6–11. A SECOND SABBATH SCENE.—In nothing did our Lord come into collision with His enemies more than the Sabbath. They watched Him, not to see the miracle of healing, and give God thanks, but to note any breaking of the least of their commandments. His answer was sharp and clear, **Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to destroy it?**

9. **To save life, or to kill.** "He just then, probably, saw the design to kill Him rising in their hearts"—WESLEY.

A word of command bidding the man what seemed impossible, and the miracle of mercy was accomplished.

Vers. 12–19. THE SELECTION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.—Our Lord commenced and closed all great occasions with prayer.

12. **In the prayer of God.** "The phrase is singular and emphatical, to imply an extraordinary and sublime devotion"—WESLEY.

LISTS of the TWELVE APOSTLES are given in four passages of Scripture in the following order:—

MATT. X. 2-4.	MARK III. 16-19.	LUKE VI. 14-16.	ACTS I. 13.
Simon	Simon	Simon	Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	James
James	John	James	John
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James of Alphæus	James of Alphæus	James of Alphæus	James of Alphæus
Lebbæus	Thaddeus	Simon Zelotes	Simon Zelotes
Simon the Canaanite	Simon the Canaanite	Judas of James	Judas of James
JudasIscariot	JudasIscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot

First Section.—Active men, leaders of the sacred band. *Second Section.*—Contemplative men. *Third Section.*—Comparatively unknown men. Christian disciples who never wholly broke from Judaism. Simon Zelotes is called by S. Matthew the Canaanite. He belonged to a sect of fanatics, who thought any deed of violence justifiable to obtain national freedom.

Vers. 20-49. THE SERMON.—This is a shortened form of the Sermon on the Mount. "The main differences between S. Matthew's and S. Luke's record of the Sermon on the Mount are explained by the different objects and readers of these Gospels; but in both it is the Inaugural Discourse of the Kingdom of Heaven:—(1) S. Matthew writes for the Jews, and much that he records has special bearing on the Levitic Law (vers. 17-38), which S. Luke naturally omits as less intelligible to Gentiles. Other parts here omitted are recorded by S. Luke later on (ch. 11. 9-13; Matt. 7. 7-11). (2) S. Matthew, presenting Christ as Lawgiver and King, gives the Sermon more in the form of a code. Kurn Hattîn is for him the new and more blessed Sinai; S. Luke gives it more in the form of a direct homily, **Yours**, etc., not 'Theirs' (ch. 6. 20; Matt. 5. 3; and comp. 6. 46, 47 with Matt. 7. 21, 24). (3) Much of the Sermon in S. Matthew is occupied with the contrast between the false righteousness—the pretentious orthodoxy and self-satisfied ceremonialism — of the Pharisees, and the true righteousness of the Kingdom, which is mercy and love. Hence, much of his report is occupied with spirituality as the stamp of true religion, in opposition to formalism, while S. Luke deals with love in the abstract. (4) Thus in S. Matthew, we see mainly the law of love as the contrast between the new and the old; in S. Luke the law of love as the central and fundamental idea of the new"—C. B. "The Sermon may be thus arranged: (1) The members of the new society (vers. 20-26; Matt. 5. 1-12). (2) The fundamental principle of the new society (vers. 27-45; Matt. 5. 13; 7. 12.) (3) The judgment of God on which it rests (vers. 46-49; Matt. 7. 13-27),—in other words (1) the appeal; (2) the principles; (3) the sanctions"—GODET. As the Sermon has been fully expounded in S. Matthew, it will be sufficient here simply to append Mr. Wesley's Notes:—

17. **On a plain**—"at the foot of the mountain"—WESLEY.

20. "In the following verses, our Lord, in the audience of His newly-chosen disciples, and of the multitude, repeats, standing on the plain, many remarkable passages of the Sermon he had before delivered sitting on the Mount. He here again pronounces the poor and the hungry, the mourners and the persecuted, happy; and represents as miserable those who are rich and full and joyous and applauded, because generally prosperity is a sweet poison, and affliction a healing, though bitter, medicine. Let the thought reconcile us to adversity, and awaken our caution when the world smiles upon us; when a plentiful table is spread before us, and our cup is running over; when our spirits are gay; and we hear (what nature loves) our own praise from men. **Happy are ye poor**—the word seems here to be taken literally; ye who have left all for Me"—WESLEY.

24. Miserable are **ye rich**—"if ye have received or sought your consolation or happiness therein"—WESLEY.

25. **Full**—"of meat and drink and worldly goods. **That laugh**—that are of a light, trifling spirit"—WESLEY.

26. **Woe to you, when all men shall speak well of you**—"but who will believe this?" WESLEY.

27. **But I say to you that hear.**—"Hitherto our Lord had spoken only to particular sorts of persons; now He begins speaking to all in general"—WESLEY.

29. **To him that smiteth thee on the cheek—taketh away thy cloak.** "These seem to be proverbial expressions, to signify an invasion of the tenderest points of honour and property. **Offer the other—forbid not thy coat**—that is, rather yield to his repeating the affront or injury than gratify resentment in righting yourself, in any method not becoming the Christian love"—WESLEY.

30. **Give to every man**—"friend or enemy, what thou canst spare, and he really wants. **And of him that taketh away thy goods**—by borrowing, if he be insolvent, **ask them not again**"—WESLEY.

32. "It is greatly observable, our Lord has so little regard for one of the highest instances of natural virtue, namely, the returning love for love, that He does not account it even to deserve thanks. **For even sinners**, saith He, **do the same**—men who do not regard God at all. Therefore he may do this who has not taken one step in Christianity"—WESLEY.

38. **Into your bosom**—"alluding to the mantles the Jews wore, into which a large quantity of corn might be received. **With the same measure that ye mete with, it shall be**

measured to you again. Amazing goodness! So we are permitted even to carve for ourselves! We ourselves are, as it were, to tell God how much mercy He shall show us. And can we be content with less than the very largest measure? Give, then, to man what thou designest to receive of God"—WESLEY.

39. **He spake a parable.** "Our Lord sometimes used parables, when He knew plain and open declarations would too much inflame the passions of His hearers. It is for this reason that He uses this parable. **Can the blind lead the blind**—can the scribes teach this way which they know not themselves? Will not they and their scholars perish together? Can they make their disciples any better than themselves? But as for those who will be My disciples, 'they shall be all taught of God,' who will enable them to 'come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of' their Master. Be not like their disciples, censuring others, and not amending yourselves"—WESLEY.

46. **And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord**—"what will fair professions avail, without a life answerable thereto?"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1. CAPERNAUM.—Capernaum was a fishing and agricultural and a mercantile centre. It was a bright and populous little town, at the very centre of what has been called the manufacturing district of Palestine; from it roads branched to the chief cities. Capernaum is in all probability Tell Hûm. It is now a heap of desolation, with little to mark it except the ruins of one white synagogue, possibly the very one built by the friendly centurion.

Vers. 1–10. HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT. — The healing of the centurion's servant gave the occasion for the most striking instance of faith that Jesus had met with up to this time; and, what was most astonishing, He was indebted for this surprise to a Gentile. Only twice do we read in the Gospel that the Saviour marvelled: once at the unbelief of His fellow-citizens at Nazareth (Mark 6. 6); once at the faith of this heathen. The centurion was probably a Roman soldier in the service of Herod; he was a proselyte, and had even manifested special zeal on behalf of his new faith (ver. 5). He sent a deputation of the elders to Jesus. They could more easily explain to Jesus "the honourable facts which made in favour of the centurion than he could himself." When the centurion saw Jesus approaching, his veneration made him afraid to receive Him under his roof; he sends therefore a second deputation (vers. 6–8). "Faith vies with humility in this man." As ALFORD says: "The centurion heard that the Lord was coming, and sent friends to Him with this second and still humbler message. He knew and felt himself to be out of the fold of God, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, and therefore unworthy to receive under his roof the Redeemer of Israel." "But," as S. AUGUSTINE says, "while owning himself unworthy the Lord should enter his house, he was accounted worthy the Lord should enter his heart. The more humility, the more room, and the more fulness. The proud hill-tops let the rain run off; the lowly valleys are richly watered." The centurion was accustomed to brief command and prompt obedience, and to him there was no difficulty in the thought that this King of the hosts of Heaven should speak and be obeyed. A word of commendation was scarcely spoken ere they that were sent returned to the house and found the servant whole. The centurion stood before a threefold tribunal—(1) The judgment of men, **He is worthy**; (2) The judgment of conscience, **I am not worthy**; (3) The judgment of the Lord, **I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.** The cure of the nobleman's son, recorded in S. John (ch. 4), is similar, and the recollection of it may have inspired the centurion's faith. For the first time we find here in the Gospel of Luke witnesses of a miracle *at a distance.* The moral significance of this and similar works of mercy is well expressed in Stalker's *Life of Christ*:—"His miracles were symbols of His spiritual and saving work. You have only to consider them for a moment to see that they were, as a whole, triumphs over the misery of the world. Mankind is the prey of a thousand evils, and even the frame of external nature bears the mark of some past catastrophe. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain. This huge mass of physical evil in the lot of mankind is the effect of sin. Not that every disease and misfortune can be traced to especial sin, although some of them can. The consequences of past sin are distributed in detail over the whole race. But yet the misery of the world is the shadow of its sin. Material and moral evil, being thus intimately related, mutually illustrate each other. When He healed bodily blindness, it was a type of the healing of the inner eye; when He raised the dead, He meant to suggest that He was the Resurrection and the Life in the spiritual world as well; when He cleansed the leper, His triumph spoke of another over the leprosy of sin; when He multiplied the loaves, He followed the miracle with a discourse on the bread of life; when He stilled the storm, it was an assurance that He could speak peace to the troubled conscience. Thus His miracles were a natural and essential part of His messianic work. They were an excellent means of making Him known to the nation. They bound those whom He cured to Him with strong ties of gratitude; and without doubt, in many cases, the faith in Him as a miracle-worker led on to a higher faith. So it was in the case of His devoted follower, Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils." And, referring to the fact that our Lord healed without entering the house, Wordsworth re-

marks: "Christ did not enter the centurion's house, but his servant was healed by Him, present in majesty but absent in body; so to Israel and to them alone He showed Himself in the flesh, but to the Gentiles He was preached by others." "A greater miracle of healing than this," says Bishop RYLE, "is nowhere recorded in the Gospels. Without even seeing the sufferer, without touch of hand or look of eye, our Lord restores health to a dying man by a single word. He speaks, and the sick man is cured. He commands, and the disease departs. We read of no prophet or apostle who wrought miracles in this manner. We see here the finger of God." Word and work are united in the ministry of Jesus.

Vers. 11–17. THE RAISING OF THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN.—"This narrative is one of those which clearly revealed our Lord's tenderness of heart, and the power which human grief exerted over Him. It is only related by S. Luke. The life of Jesus presented such a rich storehouse of miraculous incidents, that no one ever dreamed of giving a complete record of them. Jesus alludes to miracles performed at Chorazin, none of which are related in our Gospels. With a single exception, we are equally ignorant of all that were wrought at Bethsaida. It is very remarkable that, amongst all the miracles which are indicated summarily in our Gospels (ch. 4. 23, 40, 41; ch. 6. 18, 19, and parall.; ch. 7. 21, etc.; John 2. 23; 4. 45; 6. 1; 20. 30; 21. 25), one or two only *of each class* are related in detail. It appears that the most striking example of each class was chosen, and that from the first no attempt was made to preserve any detailed account of the others. For edification, which was the sole aim of the popular preaching, this was sufficient. Ten cures of lepers would say no more to faith than one"—GODET. "The unique faith of the straightforward soldier was the spark which kindled the prophetic fire. By a natural association of ideas, Jesus already saw in him the march of a vast army of like-minded soldiers of Christ (Matt. 8. 10–12). The reward of faith was followed by a miracle where no faith could have found place, or is unrecorded (Luke 7. 11). Victory over death follows victory over disease. On the next day, or shortly after, still accompanied by crowds, sailing perhaps down the lake, and then taking one of the still existing roads, Christ came to what was then a city, Nain, some twenty miles from Capernaum. Nain, in 'its green nest' on the edge of 'Little Hermon,' well deserved its descriptive name, 'the pleasant.' The name Nain still lingers over the squalid huts which mark the site. The two streams met at the gate, probably on the east, where 'the rough rock was full of sepulchral caves, which still exist.' The only Son of His mother feels for the mother of an only son—and she a widow. The body lay face upwards and hands folded on the breast, like an effigy on a cathedral sepulchre. The bier was open. Jesus came and touched it. The initiative was His own. In an instant the spirit of life returned to the dead young man. Fear falls upon the whole multitude, mourners with the tears yet upon their cheeks, and these who had now witnessed a greater triumph than any that went before. What was the spiritual link between the Divine power and the lifeless youth? Some think he died with an intense prayerful yearning for life. We would rather leave it among the unrevealed mysteries and suggested potencies of blessed hope"—VALLINGS. If there be any difference of degree, where all is miraculous, this was one of the greatest miracles of our Lord. But it was a miracle of pity. When He felt compassion, He instantly brought relief. He was **the Lord**, as He is sublimely described in ver. 13, a mode of description almost peculiar to S. Luke among the Evangelists. Ponder it, and parable and miracle become harmonious. Christ is the Vanquisher of Death.

Vers. 18–25. THE MESSAGE FROM THE BAPTIST. (See on Matt. 11.)—"Scripture never presents the saints as ideally faultless, and therefore with holy truthfulness never conceals any sign of their imperfection or weakness. Nothing is more natural than that the great Baptist—to whom had been granted but a partial revelation—should have felt deep anguish at the calm and noiseless advance of a kingdom for which, in his theocratic and messianic hopes, he had imagined a very different proclamation. Doubtless, too, his faith, like that of Elijah (1 Kings 19. 4), of Job in his trials (Job 3. 1), and of Jeremiah in prison (Jer. ch. 27), might be for a moment eclipsed"—C. B. The Church to-day has her miracles to show, and when men come asking for proofs of Christianity, she can answer, like her Master, **The dead in sin are quickened, the blind are restored to sight, and the poor have glad tidings proclaimed to them.**

22. **To the poor the gospel is preached**—"which is the greatest mercy, and the greatest miracle of all"—WESLEY.

24. **When the messengers were departed.** "He did not speak the following things in the hearing of John's disciples, lest He should seem to flatter John, or to compliment him into an adherence to his former testimony. To avoid all suspicion of this kind, He deferred His commendation of him till the messengers were gone, and then delivered it to the people, to prevent all imaginations, as if John were wavering in his judgment, and had sent the two disciples for his own rather than their satisfaction"—WESLEY.

28. **There is not a greater prophet than John**—"a greater teacher. **But he that is least in the kingdom of God**—the least teacher whom I send forth"—WESLEY.

29. **And all the people.** "Our Lord continues His discourse. **Justified God**—owned

His wisdom and mercy in thus calling them to repentance, and preparing them for Him that was to come"—WESLEY.

30. **But the Pharisees and scribes**—"the good, learned, honourable men—**made void the counsel**—the gracious design—**of God toward them.** They disappointed all the methods of His love, and would receive no benefit from them"—WESLEY.

32. **They are like children sitting in the market place**—"so froward and perverse, that no contrivance can be found to please them. It is plain our Lord means that they were like the children complained of, not like those that made the complaint"—WESLEY.

35. **But wisdom is justified by all her children.** "The children of wisdom are those who are truly wise—wise unto salvation. The wisdom of God in all these dispensations, these various methods of calling sinners to repentance, is owned and heartily approved by all these"—WESLEY.

Vers. 36–50. JESUS IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON.—This incident is related only by S. Luke. It is not the anointing at the house of Simon, spoken of in Matt. 26. 6–13; Mark 14. 3–9; John 12. 2–9. For the two similar anointings were—(1) *At different places:* this one in Galilee; that at Bethany, near Jerusalem. (2) *At different times:* this one in the middle of His ministry; that at the close. (3) *With different people:* this at the house of Simon the Pharisee; that at the house of Simon who had been a leper. Simon was a very common name; at least fifteen persons of that name are mentioned in the New Testament. (4) *By different women:* this was a woman of bad life; that by the pure Mary, the sister of Lazarus.

36. **And one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him.** "Let the candour with which our Lord accepted this invitation, and His gentleness and prudence at this ensnaring entertainment, teach us to mingle the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence and sweetness of the dove. Let us neither absolutely refuse all favours, nor resent all neglects, from those whose friendship is at best very doubtful, and their intimacy by no means safe"—WESLEY.

37. **A woman**—"not the same with Mary of Bethany, who anointed Him six days before His last Passover"—WESLEY.

40. **And Jesus said, Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee.** "So tender and courteous an address does our Lord use even to a proud, censorious Pharisee!"—WESLEY.

43. **Which of them will love him most?** "Neither of them will love him at all before he has forgiven them. An insolvent debtor, till he is forgiven, does not love, but fly his creditor"—WESLEY.

44. **Thou gavest Me no water.** "It was customary with the Jews to show respect and kindness to their welcome guests, by saluting them with a kiss, by washing their feet, and anointing their heads with oil, or some fine ointment"—WESLEY.

47. **Those many sins of hers are forgiven; therefore she loveth much**—"the fruit of her having had much forgiven. It should be carefully observed here, that her love is mentioned as the effect and evidence, not the cause, of her pardon. She knew that much had been forgiven her; and therefore she loved much"—WESLEY.

50. **Thy faith hath saved thee**—"not thy love. Love is salvation"—WESLEY.

THE PHARISEE.—**One of the Pharisees.** The name is given in ver. 40. Our Lord did not often pronounce names. He used race-words (man, woman) to indicate the brotherhood of man and the universality of His gospel of hope. Simon was "one of the better class of Pharisees, which had a certain measure of respect for our Lord's teaching, and were half inclined (comp. ver. 39) to acknowledge Him as a prophet. Of such S. John tells us (ch. 12. 42) there were many among the chief rulers. We find another example of the same kind in ch. 11. 37"—PLUMPTRE. "We are still in that epoch of transition, when the rupture between our Lord and the Pharisees, although already far advanced, was not complete. A member of this party could still invite Him without difficulty. It has been supposed that this invitation was given with a hostile intention. But this Pharisee's own reflection (ver. 39) shows his moral state. He was hesitating between the holy impression which Jesus made upon him, and the antipathy which his caste felt against Him. Jesus speaks to him in a tone so friendly and familiar, that it is difficult to suppose him animated by malevolent feelings. Further, ver. 42 proves unanswerably that he had received some spiritual benefit from Jesus, and that he felt a certain amount of gratitude towards Him; and ver. 47 says expressly that he loved Jesus, although feebly"—GODET. Let us learn to distinguish between position and principle; between classes and individuals. There were noble Pharisees and upright publicans. Our Lord went to their houses as the Friend of publicans and sinners. "This exquisite narrative," as FARRAR says, 'is peculiar to S. Luke, and well illustrates that conception of the universality and free gift of grace which predominates in this gospel, as in S. Paul." But Simon the Pharisee was not large-hearted enough to receive this at present. Hence there was a measure of censoriousness in the tone, if not in the language, when he said within himself, **This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth Him, that she is a sinner.** And Bishop RYLE gives it modern-day application: "We shall do well to remember the case of this Pharisee. It is quite possible to have a decent form of religion, and yet to know nothing of the gospel of Christ; to treat Christianity with

respect, and yet to be utterly blind about its cardinal doctrines; to behave with great correctness and propriety at church, and yet to hate justification by faith, and salvation by grace, with a deadly hatred. Do we really feel affection toward the Lord Jesus? Can we say, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee'? Have we cordially embraced His whole gospel? Are we willing to enter heaven side by side with the chief of sinners, and to owe all our hopes to free grace? These are questions which we ought to consider. If we cannot answer them satisfactorily, we are in no respect better than Simon the Pharisee; and our Lord might say to us, **I have somewhat to say unto thee.**" We must not imagine that the Pharisaic spirit is dead with the Pharisees. The New Testament narratives still test our loyalty to conscience and Christ.

THE SINNER.—This woman has long been identified with Mary Magdalene. The identification is not certain. So that the question, "Who was she?" must be left unanswered. That she entered the dining-hall is not surprising, as in the East the houses were practically open, and our Lord's invitations partook of the nature of public banquets. We must recollect, in order to understand the scene which is here described, that the guests lay with their heads turned toward the table in the centre, their feet being turned away from the table, and toward the outer part of the room, where servants waited. The sandals would be laid aside, and the feet of each guest would be bare, The woman would, therefore, be able to approach unseen, to stand at the feet of Jesus, and to anoint them while He was engaged in conversation. (Read vers. 37, 38.) "As she bent over His feet her tears began to fall on them, perhaps accidentally at first, and she wiped them off with the long dishevelled hair, which showed her shame and anguish, and then, in her joy and gratitude in finding herself unrepulsed, she poured her unguent over them" —FARRAR. "She might have been drawn by the ineffable pity and tenderness of His words and looks, perhaps by the very taunt which suggested that He was the Friend of Sinners" —PLUMPTRE. One of our own poets has put the scene into rhythmic form—

"She sat and wept beside His feet. The weight
Of sin oppressed her heart; for all the blame
And the poor malice of the worldly shame
To her were past, extinct, and out of date;
Only the sin remained—the leprous state.
She would be melted by the heat of love,
By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
And purge the silver ore adulterate.
She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
She wiped the feet she was so blest to touch;
And He wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much."

THE SAVIOUR.—Read straight through the sublimely simple parable of forgiveness and pity (vers. 39-50).

Simon and the sinner were both debtors and bankrupt. They had nothing to pay with—even if they had the wish to pay. Forgiveness was full and frank. Gratitude must find expression, and if it be keen will carve its own methods. The alabaster box of Mary's devotion is here present, and in addition love expresses itself in the unknown woman's strange bath of tears. She is forgiven not because she loved: being forgiven, she loved much. "Her love and her forgiveness were mingled with each other in mutual exchange. She loved because she was forgiven: she was forgiven because she loved. Her faith and her love were one: it was faith working by love, and the love proved the faith"—FARRAR. "Her love was the effect of her forgiveness, not the cause,—the consequence of her forgiveness, not the condition,—the result of her forgiveness, not the reason,—the fruit of her forgiveness, not the root"—RYLE. "What is wanting to the best of us, in order to love much, is not sin, but the knowledge of it"—GODET. Comp. with this parable that of the uncompassionate servant, Matt. 28. 23-35, and we may add with Jacobus, "Observe the four steps in Christ's revealing Himself to this penitent believing sinner—(1) Silently He accepted her coming. He knew her heart. (2) The light of His countenance He turned to her, and encouraged her. (3) He spoke to her, especially His assuring word of forgiveness. (4) He sent her away in the peace of faith and Divine love." In the old slavery days, a gentleman from the North, out of compassion, bought a slave on the auction block in the South, and took him to his own home. The man thenceforth spent his life in working for the one who had ransomed him. He was free, but would never forsake his new master. "He redeemed me," was his answer to all inquiries. In every coloured man's house in the United States, whether it be a cabin in the swamp, or a room in the city, there is a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. One of the many descriptive names of Jesus is *Christ, our Redeemer.*

CHAPTER VIII.

Vers. 1-3. THE MINISTERING WOMEN.—**It came to pass soon afterwards.** "The expression marks a new phase, a new departure in Christ's mode of action. Hitherto He had made Capernaum His headquarters; regarded it as 'His own city,' and not gone to any great distance from it. At this period—the exact beginning of which is only vaguely marked—He began a wider range of wandering and of missions"—C. B. **Certain women.** S. Luke dwells on the graciousness and tenderness of Christ to women, as a class despised and neglected in the East. **Mary of Magdala.** She has been generally identified with "the woman which was a sinner" of the previous chapter. "Probably the person mentioned in the last chapter"—WESLEY.

Joanna. Mentioned only in ch. 24. 10.

Chuza. Some have thought he was the "nobleman" of John 4. 46. **Ministered of their substance.** This throws light upon our Lord's means of livelihood. He emphasises His poverty and dependence. "For our sakes He became poor."

Vers. 4-15. THE SOWER.—(See on, Matt. 13, 1-23.) S. Luke here only reports the parable of the sower, and its interpretation. S. Mark adds that of the seed growing secretly (Mark 4. 26, 29), and that of the grain of mustard seed (ch. 4. 30-32; Luke 13. 18-21). S. Matthew (ch. 13. 3-53) gives his memorable group of seven parables.

5. **Trodden underfoot.** This touch is found in S. Luke only.

8. S. Luke passes over the growing and increasing of the fruit, and its various degrees of productiveness.

10. **Mysteries.** Mystery is now generally used to imply something which we cannot understand; in the New Testament it always means something *once* hidden and now revealed. (Col. 1. 26; 1 Tim. 3. 16; Matt. 11. 25, 26; Rev. 17. 5.) "The parables," it has been said, "resembled the pillar of fire, which was to the Egyptians a pillar of cloud." They instructed and softened some; they hardened others. "A parable," Lord BACON said, "has a double use: it tends to *veil*, and it tends to *illustrate* a truth; in the latter case it seems designed to teach, in the former to conceal."

12. **Taketh away** ("Snatches"). (Matt. 13. 19.) "It is done in a moment by a smile at the end of the sermon; by a silly criticism at the church door; by a foolish gossip on the way home. These are 'the fowls of the air' whom the evil one uses in this task"—FARRAR.

15. **Who keep it**—"not like the highway side." **And bring forth fruit**—"not like the thorny ground." **With perseverance**—"not like the stony"—WESLEY.

Vers. 16-18. PRACTICAL CONCLUSION.—16. **No man having lighted a candle.** "As if He had said, And let your good fruit appear openly"—WESLEY.

17. **For nothing is hid.** "Strive not to conceal it at all; for you can conceal nothing long"—WESLEY.

18. "The word commonly translated **seemeth**, wherever it occurs, does not weaken, but greatly strengthens, the sense"—WESLEY.

Vers. 19-21. VISIT OF THE MOTHER AND BRETHREN OF JESUS.—Joseph is never mentioned after the scene in the temple. **His brethren**—"James, Joses, Simon, Judas." Our Lord's answer (ver. 21) signifies, not that family ties are in His eyes of no value, but that they are subordinate. He makes no mention of father; this place belongs in His eyes, to God alone. The question whether the brethren of our Lord were actual brothers, children of Joseph and Mary, or cousins of the Lord, is an open one.

Vers. 22-25. THE STILLING OF THE STORM. (See Matt. 8. 23-27.)—This miracle fixed the attention upon the Lord: it strengthened the faith of the disciples; it held up before them a sensible image of that which would afterwards befall them. The young Church, at whose head they stood, would be often threatened, but as often delivered.

Vers. 26-39. THE DEMONIAC HEALED. (See on, Matt. 8. 28-34; Mark 5. 1-21.)—To the storm on the sea succeeds the contest with the world of spirits. Christ came to destroy the powers of evil.

29. **For many times it had caught him**—"therefore our compassionate Lord made the more haste to cast him out"—WESLEY.

31. **The abyss**—"that is, the bottomless pit."—WESLEY.

32. **To enter into the swine**—"not that they were any easier in the swine than out of them. Had it been so, they would not so soon have dislodged themselves, by destroying the herd"—WESLEY.

Vers. 40-56. THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS, AND THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD. (See Matt. 9. 18-26; Mark 5. 22-43.)

52. **She is not dead, but sleepeth.** "Her soul is not separated finally from the body; and this short separation is rather to be called sleep than death"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER IX.

Vers. 1-6. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE. (See on Matt. 10.)

4. **There abide, and thence depart**—"that is, stay in that house till ye leave the city"—WESLEY.

"There is something greater than preaching—that is, to make preachers; there is something greater than performing miracles—this is, to impart the power to perform them. It is this new stage which the work of Jesus here reaches"—GODET. "These verses contain our Lord's instructions to His twelve apostles, when He sent them forth the first time to preach the gospel. The passage is one which throws much light on the work of Christian ministers in every age. No doubt the miraculous powers which the apostles possessed made their position very unlike that of any other body of men in the Church. No doubt, in many respects they stood alone, and had no successors. Yet the words of our Lord in this place must not be confined entirely to the apostles. They contain deep wisdom for Christian teachers and preachers for all time"—RYLE.

7-9. THE FEAR OF HEROD.—Fuller accounts are in the other Gospels, but S. Luke alone has preserved the detail, that Herod sought to have a private interview with Jesus.

7. **It was said by some**—"and soon after by Herod himself"—WESLEY.

8. **That Elijah had appeared.** "He could not rise again, because he did not die"—WESLEY.

Vers. 10–17. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND.—This narrative is the only one in the entire Galilean ministry which is common to the *four* Evangelists. (See on the parallel passages in Matt. 14. 13–21; Mark 6. 30–44; John 6. 1–14.) "What is that multitude which surrounded our Lord in the wilderness, poor and helpless, and destitute of food? It is a figure of mankind. The whole miracle is a picture. It is a great acted parable of the glorious gospel"—RYLE.

Vers. 18–27. THE CROSS FORESEEN.—This conversation is reported also by S. Matthew and S. Mark—(1) "the Christ, (2) the suffering Christ, (3) the disciples of the suffering Christ"—GODET. The confession of S. Peter is differently expressed in the three narratives: "the Christ the Son of the living God" (Matthew); "the Christ" (Mark); **the Christ of God** (Luke).

18. **Apart**—"from the multitude. **And He asked them**—when He had done praying, during which they probably stayed at a distance"—WESLEY.

22. **Saying.** Ye must prepare for a scene far different from this.

23. **Let him deny himself and take up his cross.** "The necessity of this duty has been shown in many places; the extent of it is specified here, **daily**—therefore that day is lost wherein no cross is taken up"—WESLEY.

Vers. 28–36. THE TRANSFIGURATION.—Our Lord had reached the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, the northernmost point of His wanderings, when He asked the important question, and spoke of the great renunciation (see verses preceding). The primary reference of ver. 27 was to the three apostles who were to witness the Transfiguration. It was again fulfilled at the Resurrection and Ascension; and in the person of S. John when he lived to witness the close of the old dispensation, on the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ will come again, and then every eye shall see Him. For one thousand years the Mount of Transfiguration was supposed to be Tabor, but modern research decides in favour of Hermon, at whose foot lies Cæsarea Philippi and the sources of the Jordan. Its top is partially covered with snow. Its name Hermon means "a peak," but the Sidonians call it Sirion, "glittering," as a coat of mail in the sun. Jesus took His three favoured disciples and went up into a mountain to pray. While He prayed He was glorified. Suddenly two heavenly visitors appeared and talked with Him, and the theme was His approaching death. All this is easily written, quickly read. But surely it requires a great **Behold**—an index-finger to arrest our attention, and deepen our awe. We ought to take off the shoes of our earthliness, for the place on which we stand is holy ground. Heaven and earth are here united. Christ is glorified before our eyes. Here, as so often in the life of Christ, it is necessary to read the narrative straight through, and then pause to let it make its own deep impression upon the mind. For Bishop RYLE truly says: "The event described in these verses, commonly called 'the Transfiguration,' is one of the most remarkable in the history of our Lord's earthly ministry. It is one of those passages which we should always read with peculiar thankfulness. It lifts a corner of the veil which hangs over the world to come, and throws light on some of the deepest truths of our religion." One hesitates to analyse or interpret a scene like this. It seems almost sacrilege. It is like pulling a rose to pieces, so much perishes. But we may remind ourselves—

1. *Of the connection between the path of duty and the path of glory.*—**As He was praying, the fashion of His countenance was altered.** It was night—His hour of prayer. It would confuse us to ask, Did He go to be transfigured? Or did He go to pray and was then transfigured? The mystery of the two natures reappears here. He prayed, and while He prayed He was transfigured. S. Luke lays especial stress upon the prayers of Jesus. "The fact," says PLUMPTRE, "is profoundly significant. It was in that act of communion with His Father that the Divine glory flowed out into visible brightness. Transcendent as the manifestation was, it has its lower analogies in the radiance which made the face of Stephen as the face of an angel (Acts 6. 15); yet more in the glory which shone in the face of Moses when he came down from the mount (Ex. 34. 29); in some faint measure, in what may be called the metamorphic power of prayer which invests features that have no form of comeliness with the rapture of devout ecstasy." What is true of Him is true of us. Prayer has a transforming, transfiguring force. What has been called "the solar look" which is upon the face of devout worshippers is the outward and visible form of the inward and spiritual change that passes upon every true Christian. We gather glory when we commune with the Source of light and life. There is a depth of utterance in these simple words so often spoken: "Let us pray." The narrative reminds us also—

2. *That character fits for service.*—Only the three disciples—those who were with Him by the bedside of Jairus' daughter and in the garden of agony—saw His glory in the Mount of Transfiguration. These pillars of the Church were the eyewitnesses of His majesty. The man of enthusiasm—S. Peter; the disciple of love—S. John; the first martyr to conviction—S. James—ascended the mount. All are not fit for high places, even though they be true disciples. The same authority which chose Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Hezekiah, Cyrus, and S. Paul, separated to special service, and lifted to high honour, Peter, James, and John. "At the first glance it would seem as if Jesus exercised some favouritism among

His disciples. But this is not the fact. He simply advanced to higher studies those who, by faithfulness in the lower, had made it possible for them to understand and use the higher. These three were the most advanced in the knowledge of Jesus and His kingdom, and were thus fitted to receive new revelations of truth, new means of usefulness, new hopes and visions. Only to those who have been faithful in the lesser things comes the call to come up higher and to receive the wider kingdom"—PELOUBET. We may also ponder—

3. *The mystery of the change.*—Resolve it we cannot till we are changed into the same image in heaven. S. Matthew compares the whiteness of His robes to "the light"; S. Mark to "the snow"; and S. Luke to "the lightning." They are conscious that they are trying to speak unspeakable words; to describe the indescribable. A change passed upon Him. He came from God; He was going to God. Heaven was His home; to Him its glory was natural. "S. Matthew says He 'was transfigured before them.' The original word is elsewhere in the New Testament rendered 'transformed' (as Rom. 12. 2; 2 Cor. 3. 18), and is used of a spiritual change. It is a change not of *substance*, but of quality and appearance. The fashion of His countenance was altered by being lighted with radiance both from without and from within"—ALFORD. "The infinite fulness of the Spirit was poured out over His whole being; the heavenly glory of His nature, which was still concealed under His earthly appearance, now *broke forth*"—LANGE. The Baptism, the Temptation, and the Transfiguration were turning-points in the life of Jesus. The Transfiguration was the anticipation of the glory of heaven.

4. *How closely heaven and earth are united.*—Moses, Elias, and Jesus were on the Mount. The great lawgiver and the great prophet, of whom we are told that God buried the one (Deut. 34. 6), and the other had passed to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2. 1). The two were the chief representatives of the old dispensation. They were talking of His "decease" (R.V. *margin*, "departure"), His exodus: an unusual word for death, occurring again in this connection in 2 Pet. 1. 15. It is, as Bengel says, a very weighty word, involving His Passion, Cross, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. Here we have a glimpse into the other world. The dead are not lost, only gone before. They are not alone. They are not ignorant of or indifferent to our earthly life. Moses and Elijah knew Christ: they must have known each other. If they knew each other, may not we?

31. **In glory**—"like Christ with whom they talked"—WESLEY.

32. **They saw His glory**—"the very same expression in which it is described by S. John (ch. 1. 14); and by S. Peter (2 Pet. 1. 16)"—WESLEY.

34. **A cloud came and overshadowed them all. And they**—"the apostles, **feared, while they**—Moses and Elijah—**entered into the cloud**—which took them away"—WESLEY.

Vers. 37–48. THE DEMONIAC BOY. THE LESSON OF MEEKNESS.—37. **On the next day.** Proving that the Transfiguration took place at night. (See ver. 32.) **A great multitude met Him.** S. Mark records their amazement at seeing Him. He may have had some lingering traces of the Transfiguration glory upon Him. (See the case of Moses, Ex. 34. 29–35.)

39. **A spirit taketh him.** "This was the supernatural aspect of his deafness, epilepsy, and madness. S. Matthew gives the natural aspect when he says, 'he is a lunatic, and sore vexed' etc. (ch. 17. 15.)"—C. B. S. Mark adds three items to the description of the malady—dumbness, grinding of the teeth, and wasting away. (See the details and the memorable cry of the poor father in Mark 9. 21–24.)

43. **All were marvelling.** The power of the miracle rekindled some of their messianic enthusiasm.

44. **Let these sayings sink down into your ears**—"that is, consider them deeply. In joy remember the cross. So wisely does our Lord balance praise with sufferings"—WESLEY.

This is the second announcement of our Lord's Passion.

45. **They understood not.** The blindness of the disciples seems to us remarkable, but we are apt to read into the New Testament the result of nineteen centuries of teaching.

46. **And there arose a reasoning among them.** "This kind of reasoning always arose at the most improper times that could be imagined"—WESLEY.

Which of them should be greatest? Jealousy had been awakened by the recent distinctions bestowed on Peter, James, and John.

47. **Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart.** "He asked the subject of their dispute, and when shame kept them silent, He sat down, and, calling a little child, made the Twelve stand round while He taught this solemn lesson"—FARRAR. Legend has thought that this child was the future martyr, S. Ignatius. This is very doubtful.

48. **And said to them.** "If ye would be truly great, humble yourselves to the meanest offices. He that is least in his own eyes shall be great indeed"—WESLEY.

On the Transfiguration mount, pre-eminence had been given to Peter, James, and John. S. Peter, too, had been spoken of in connection with the rocky foundation on which the Church is built. The human heart is the same in all ages. It easily harbours revenge, or flames out in anger, according to the exact and vivid account of S. Mark. He Himself first asks after the cause of their dispute, which they scarcely venture to name to Him. They had allowed a question which should have been

driven from them like a wild animal, to find a home in their little circle. The links that bound them to each other and to their Lord were snapping. He called the Twelve to Him. And then **He took a child and set him in the midst of them** (S. Mark). Our Lord's point of comparison is the child's humility, by which the mind is saved from vain rivalry and the will from stubborness. **Whosoever shall receive this little child in My name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth Him that sent Me: for he that is least among you all, the same is great.** Our Sunday and day schools, our schools for ragged children, our orphanages and refuges, have grown out of our Lord's association of child-life with Himself, and with the spirit of His religion. We are to receive the children in His name. We are to receive the child-spirit, that we may become true followers of Him who was meek and lowly in heart; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again.

Vers. 49–50. EXCLUSIVENESS REBUKED.—The link of connection with the previous incident lies in the words **in My name** (ver. 48). **As to that**, said John, a young and impulsive disciple, **we saw one casting out demons in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.** Were we wrong? Ye were wrong; **for he that is not against you is for you.** A partial explanation is given in S. Mark's narrative: "There is no man which shall do a mighty work in My name, and be able quickly to speak evil of Me." If he does good, is it not fair to assume that he is good? And if such a person cannot be supposed to be "against us," you are to hold him "for us." "Sometimes indifference is opposition; sometimes neutrality is aid." On another occasion, Christ had said what seemed to be the reverse of this, viz., "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Matt. 12. 30). But the two truths are complementary. "He that is not with Me is against Me." By this we judge ourselves. "He that is not against you is for you." By this we judge others. Christ does not say the man should not; He does not say he will not ultimately follow with them. Attempts have been made to bring all Christ's sheep into one fold. They have failed. (See the noble spirit of Moses described in Num. 11. 24–29.)

Vers. 51–56. REVENGE SHAMED.—**It came to pass, when the days were well nigh come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.** The connection of time is here broken. Some of the parables recorded in S. Matthew were spoken between vers. 50 and 51. "Received up." This majestic expression is in the New Testament only employed with reference to our Lord's Ascension. In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, "the day that He was received up" is spoken of as a new era in history. And S. Paul, writing to Timothy, and describing the mystery of godliness, lays emphasis upon our Lord's being "received up into glory." His way lay through Samaria. But the Samaritans would not receive Him. His face was set towards Jerusalem, and between Jew and Samaritan there was the bitterest hatred. The anger of James and John flamed forth. They loved their Master. They had just seen His transfiguration glory. They had had a glimpse of the glorified Elijah. They recalled his fiery zeal, and said, **Lord, wilt Thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?** But He turned and rebuked them. **Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save.** The answer reminds us of the Child's Prayer—"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." It is a golden sentence of Tillotson, "Let us never do anything for religion which is contrary to religion."

51. **The days were fulfilled that He should be received up**—"that is, the time of His Passion was now at hand. S. Luke looks through this, to the glory which was to follow. **He steadfastly set His face**—without fear of His enemies, or shame of the cross (Heb. 12. 2)"—WESLEY.

52. **He sent messengers to make ready** "a lodging and needful entertainment for Him and those with Him"—WESLEY.

53. **His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.** "It plainly appeared He was going to worship at the Temple, and thereby, in effect, to condemn the Samaritan worship at Mount Gerizim"—WESLEY.

54. **As Elijah did.** "At or near this very place, which might put it in the minds of the apostles to make the motion now, rather than at any other time or place where Christ had received the like affront"—WESLEY.

55. **Ye know not what manner of spirit**—"the spirit of Christianity is. It is not a spirit of wrath and vengeance, but of peace and gentleness and love"—WESLEY.

Vers. 57–62. THE THREE DISCIPLES.—58. **But Jesus said to him**—"first understand the terms. Consider on what conditions thou art to follow Me"—WESLEY.

61. **Suffer me first to bid them farewell that are in my house**—"as Elisha did, after Elijah had called him from his plough (1 Kings 19. 19), to which our Lord's answer seems to allude"—WESLEY.

62. **Is fit for the kingdom of God**—"either to propagate or to receive it"—WESLEY.

FOUR TEMPERAMENTS. — (1) *The choleric* (vers. 51–56)—James and John desiring fire from heaven. The Sons of Thunder would borrow the aid of lightning. Religion controls temperament. S. John became the beloved disciple, and S. James laid down his life for Christ. (2) *The sanguine* (vers. 57, 58)—**I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.**

He had not counted the cost. (3) *The melancholic* (vers. 59, 60)—**Suffer me to go and bury my father.** The former was precipitate; this procrastinating. (4) *The phlegmatic* (vers. 61, 62)—**Suffer me to bid farewell.** This man was irresolute.

CHAPTER X.

Vers. 1-24. THE SENDING OF THE SEVENTY DISCIPLES.—"Though Jesus proceeded slowly from city to city, and from village to village, He had but little time to devote to each place. It was therefore of great moment that He should everywhere find His arrival prepared for, minds awakened, hearts expectant of His visit. This precaution was the more important, because this first visit was to be His last. Accordingly, as He had sent the Twelve into the northern parts of Galilee at the period when He was visiting them for the last time, He now summons a more numerous body of His adherents, to execute a similar mission in the southern regions of the province. They thus serve under His eyes, in a manner, the apprenticeship to their future calling. The recital of this mission embraces—(1) the sending (vers. 1-16), (2) the return (vers. 17-24). The essential matter always is the discourse of Jesus, in which His profoundest emotions find expression"—GODET. "The verses before us relate a circumstance which is not recorded by any Gospel writer except by S. Luke. That circumstance is our Lord's appointment of seventy disciples to go before His face, in addition to the twelve apostles. We do not know the names of any of these disciples. Their subsequent history has not been revealed to us. But the instructions with which they are sent forth are deeply interesting, and deserve the close attention of all ministers and teachers of the gospel"—RYLE. It has been assumed that, after the accomplishment of their charge, the Seventy were absorbed in the wider circle of our Lord's followers. For, as VAN DOREN remarks, "The kingdom of Christ is aggressive, progressive, expansive. First twelve apostles; then seventy preachers; then five hundred brethren; then thousands." The twelve apostles had been chosen long before, and sent out once on a similar mission through Galilee. Seventy (or perhaps seventy-two—see R.V. *margin*) were sent forth. The number had reference to the elders of Moses (Num. 11. 16); the number of the Sanhedrim; and the Jewish belief (derived from Gen. 10.) as to the number of the nations of the world. Between Old Testament and New there are many points of comparison and interest. There is a mystical completeness in the number. Both 70 and 72 are multiples of numbers very frequently used in sacred symbolism—7 times 10 and 6 times 12. Fancy has also recalled the seventy palm trees at Elim. Many of the seventy may have been among the one hundred and twenty of Acts 1. 15. The word translated "appointed" is only found in one other place in the New Testament (Acts 1. 24), where it is rendered "shew." The word signifies to mark out or appoint to an office by some outward sign. At the time of writing, the president of the Conference and others are appointing ministers by the sign of an ordination service.

Vers. 1, 2. TWO BY TWO.—**After these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place.** He had at an earlier period sent forth *the Twelve*, and said, Into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. Not so to the *seventy evangelists* whom He now sends forth. When he talked with the woman of Samaria, He saw the harvest there ready for the sickle. In His parable of the good Samaritan He reproves narrowness. The world was now to be the parish of apostles and evangelists—*missionaries and martyrs of the Cross.* Note the majesty of the word LORD in this connection, **the Lord appointed.** The word meant to show by raising aloft, like a torch; to appoint by some outward sign. (Comp. ver. 3, **I send.**) They were Christ's ambassadors. He saith to one, "Go," and he goeth; and to another, "Come," and he cometh. **He sent them two and two before His face.** For mutual aid, friendly counsel, and helpful sympathy. God led Israel out of Egypt by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Joshua and Caleb, Paul and Barnabas, were united together. John the Baptist sent two disciples to Jesus. The fancy of the early Church saw, or thought it saw, many other reasons. The testimony of two is true. They were to preach out of two—the Law and the Gospel; the love of two—God and our neighbour; to preach by two—doctrine and good life; to save two—body and soul; to join two—heaven and earth, God and man.

2. **Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He would thrust forth labourers**—"for God alone can do this; He alone can qualify and commission men for this work"—WESLEY.

3. AS LAMBS AMONG WOLVES.—The instructions which our Lord gave the Seventy closely resemble those which He had issued to the Twelve. They are briefer as referring to a more transitory office; they omit the restriction then laid down, and they hardly bestow such miraculous power. **He said unto them, The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest. Go your ways, behold, I send you forth.** Prayer and labour must go together. "We are labourers together with God"—**God's fellow-workers** the Revised Version has it. "Pray and work" was carved in Latin on a peasant's house in the Vierland. "It must be French," said a neighbour's wife, as Dr. Wichern stood looking at the legend, "but you know it just means—

'With this hand work, and with the other pray,
And God will bless them both from day to day."

The glorious company of the apostles; the goodly fellowship of the prophets; the noble army of martyrs; and the holy Church throughout all the world, have united these two things — prayer and toil. **I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. Go. I send you.** Here is authority. Here is inspiration. For Christ goes with us when He sends us. One has called this Christ's "safe-conduct," as when a general permits the bearer of a message to pass through his lines. "As sheep in the midst of wolves." Innocent and harmless in the midst of a cold, unfriendly, and cruel world. Naturalists describe wolves as crafty, greedy, ravenous, fierce, and of a quick smell. They dwell in forests, and hunt in packs. When hungry they will fall on man and beast. Under Diocletian, 17,000 Christians are said to have been slain in one month. S. Paul fell into the hands of Nero. All the rest of the apostles are reported to have died by the hands of tyrants, save only S. John. In our own national history blood has often been shed in the name of religion. Martyr fires are not now lighted, but they who well do their duty must count upon opposition and misrepresentation.

4. AN EMPTY PURSE.—**Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes, and salute no man on the way.** The confidence of those who would be servants of Christ is put to the test. Shepherds and travellers not only carried money in their purse, but victuals in their wallet. But those who travelled in Christ's name, the shepherds of His flock, were to trust in those whose hearts God had touched. They were to believe that He who feedeth the birds will not fail His children. They must travel, too, in haste. Eastern forms of civility were very tedious. As they lived in the street, and, thanks to a bountiful Providence, had a harvest without excessive toil, they had time to spend upon trifles. But Christ taught the earnestness of life; the value of decision and action. **Salute no man by the way.** "The salutations usual among the Jews took up much time. But these had so much work to do in so short a space, that they had not a moment to spare"—WESLEY.

Vers. 5-12. RECEIVED OR REJECTED.—**Into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house. If a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall turn to you again. In that same house remain. The labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.** Like would rather gather to like. Where welcomed, there they should remain until they moved forward. If rejected, let them enter elsewhere. The house suggests the city. **Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat; heal the sick; and say, The kingdom of God is come nigh. If they receive you not, wipe off the dust from your feet.** They might fail. But He had outwardly failed. (Vers. 12-16.)

5, 6. **And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall turn to you again.** "Peace" is the usual Oriental salutation. "A son of peace" is a Hebraism for a man of peaceful disposition.

7-9. **And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give. The labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. Into whatsoever city ye enter, eat such things as are set before you. Heal the sick. Say, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.** Neither were they to refuse hospitality from false delicacy, nor to be discontented with it and search for luxury. The minister of Christ is a pilgrim of the invisible.

10-12. **Into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, shake off the dust from your feet. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city.** The act was symbolical. (See Acts 13. 51; 18. 6.) The words "in that day" are left vague. "The cities that stood out, in the history of the world, as the most conspicuous for their infamy, were yet less guilty (as sinning less against light and knowledge) than those who rejected the messengers of the King"—PLUMPTRE. Christ has work for us to do. We are to go **before His face.** Our business is to be faithful, and leave the results to God.

11. **The kingdom of God is at hand**—"though ye will not receive it"—WESLEY.

13. **Woe to thee, Chorazin.** "The same declaration Christ had made some time before. By repeating it now, he warns the Seventy not to lose time by going to those cities"—WESLEY.

Vers. 17-20. THE PLEDGE OF VICTORY.—They went as bidden, and returned conquerors. **Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in Thy name.** It was matter of rejoicing. But success is dangerous. To correct their error, He rejoiced with them. **I beheld Satan fallen as lightning.** He knew their success. He saw the ultimate victory. He gave them increased authority. And then added, **Rejoice** (most) **that your names are written in heaven.**

18. **I beheld Satan**—"that is, when ye went forth, I saw the kingdom of Satan, which was highly exalted, swiftly and suddenly cast down"—WESLEY.

19. **I give you power**—"that is, I continue it to you—**and nothing shall hurt you**—neither the power nor the subtlety of Satan"—WESLEY.

20. "**Rejoice not** so much **that the devils are subject to you, as that your names are written in heaven.** Reader, so is thine, if

thou art a true believer. God grant it may never be blotted out!"—WESLEY.

21. **Lord of heaven and earth**—"in both of which Thy kingdom stands, and that of Satan is destroyed. **That Thou hast hid these things.** He rejoiced not in the destruction of the wise and prudent, but in the display of the riches of God's grace to others, in such a manner as reserves to Him the entire glory of our salvation, and hides pride from man"—WESLEY.

22. **Who the Son is**—"essentially one with the Father. **Who the Father is**—how great, how wise, how good!"—WESLEY. (See on Matt. 11. 20–30.)

Vers. 25–37. THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.—27. **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God**—"that is, thou shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul to render Him the most intelligent and sincere, the most affectionate and resolute, service. We may safely rest in this general sense of these important words, if we are not able to fix the particular meaning of every single word. If we desire to do this, perhaps **the heart**, which is a general expression, may be explained by the three following: **with all thy soul**, with the warmest affection; **with all thy strength**, the most vigorous efforts of thy will; and **with all thy mind**, or understanding; in the most wise and reasonable manner thou canst, thy understanding guiding thy will and affections"—WESLEY.

28. **Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.** "Here is no irony, but a deep and weighty truth. He, and he alone, shall live for ever, who thus loves God and his neighbour in the present life"—WESLEY.

29. **To justify himself**—"that is, to show he had done this"—WESLEY.

30. **From Jerusalem to Jericho.** "The road from Jerusalem to Jericho (about eighteen miles from it) lay through desert and rocky places; so many robberies and murders were committed therein, that it was called 'the bloody way.' Jericho was situated in a valley; hence the phrase of **going down** to it. About twelve thousand priests and Levites dwelt there, who all attended the service of the Temple"—WESLEY.

31. "The common translation is, **By chance**, which is full of gross improprieties. For if we speak strictly, there is no such thing in the universe as either chance or fortune. **A certain priest came down that way, and passed by on the other side.** And both he and the Levite, no doubt, could find an excuse for passing over on the other side, and might perhaps gravely thank God for their own deliverance, while they left their brother bleeding to death. Is it not an emblem of many living characters, perhaps of some who bear the sacred office? O house of Levi and of Aaron, is not the day coming when the virtues of heathens and Samaritans will rise up in judgment against you?"—WESLEY.

33. **But a certain Samaritan came where he was.** "It was admirably well judged, to represent the distress on the side of the Jew, and the mercy on that of the Samaritan. For the case being thus proposed, self-interest would make the very scribe sensible how amiable such a conduct was, and would lay him open to our Lord's inference. Had it been put the other way, prejudice might more easily have interposed, before the heart could have been affected"—WESLEY.

34. **Pouring in oil and wine**—"which, when well beaten together, are one of the best balsams that can be applied to a fresh wound"—WESLEY.

36. **Which of these was the neighbour to him that fell among the robbers**—"which acted the part of a neighbour?"—WESLEY.

37. **And he said, He that showed mercy on him.** "He could not for shame say otherwise, though he thereby condemned himself, and overthrew his own false notion of the neighbour to whom our love is due. **Go, and do thou in like manner**—let us go and do likewise, regarding every man as our neighbour who needs our assistance. Let us renounce that bigotry and party zeal which would contract our hearts into an insensibility for all the human race, but a small number whose sentiments and practices are so much our own, that our love to them is but self-love reflected. With an honest openness of mind, let us always remember the kindred between man and man; and cultivate that happy instinct whereby, in the original constitution of our nature, God has strongly bound us to each other"—WESLEY.

I. THE REQUIREMENT OF LOVE.—The lawyer, perhaps, with the hope of showing his own superiority, and possibly with the expectation of trapping Christ in His reply, stood up and tempted Him, saying, **Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?** But whatever his motives, he put the great personal question of all ages—the highest question of life. This is such a changing world, that we, as by instinct, turn to the *eternal*.

> "Brief life is here our portion,
> Brief sorrow, short-lived care:
> The life that knows no ending,
> The tearless life, is there."

Life—eternal: these are two great words taken alone, but united they enlarge the conception of ourselves, of others, and of the destiny of all. Here we have no continuance—and yet we desire it. The life that is to be is a part of the life that is. We do not live here, in the truest meaning of life, unless we live to God and for God. No question more important than this lawyer's could possibly be asked. And the answer, **What is written in the Law? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart**, etc. This was the summary of the Law in Deut. 6. 5; 10. 12; Lev. 19. 18, and recited in the daily prayers of the

Jews. In Mark (ch. 12) and Matt. (ch. 22) Jesus unites the tables of commandment in these two statements. So closely did the Levite approach the words of Jesus. **How can I live?** was the question. **Thou shalt love,** is the answer. "The perfect tense of the verb *live* is love," says Dr. John Brown. "Some persons," says Chalmers, "would make religion to consist of little else than a self-denying course of the practice of virtue and obedience. They make it a kind of house-of-correction work. But no! I love the service of my God; like the bird I fly, at liberty on the wings of obedience to His holy will." **Heart** denotes, in general terms, the affection and will. **Soul** is the individual existence, the person himself. **Strength,** the full and entire devotion of all the powers. **Mind,** the intellectual nature. Every part of us belongs to God. God is the Supreme, and must be supremely loved. But "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Not as he *does* love himself, but as he *ought* to love himself. After the same manner, *i.e.*, freely and readily, unfeignedly and sincerely, tenderly and compassionately, constantly and perseveringly" — BURKITT. "Cases arise where man ought to love his neighbour more than his life—physical life—and has done so, sacrificing it for his fellows, his country, and the Church, in imitation of the example of Christ and the martyrs"—SCHAFF. This is the golden rule in life. All acknowledge its perfection even when they do not strive to exhibit it. **Thou hast answered right.** The unadulterated conscience of mankind echoes this approving word of Jesus. But the lawyer, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, **And who is my neighbour?**

II. THE MANIFESTATION OF LOVE.—Jesus made answer in one of the world's precious parables, a parable so natural, so beautiful, that some have thought it an actual incident. "The parable of the Good Samaritan is certainly one of the most beautiful," says OOSTERZEE. "The antithesis of the Samaritan on the one hand, of the Jew, the priest, and the Levite on the other; the extended description of his work of love in its full and entire compass; the perfect completion of the picture by the trait at the end—all this contributes to exalt the graphic vigour of the portraiture. No wonder that this parable has become one of the most popular, and that it has been seriously inquired whether here also an occurrence from actual life may not have been related, of which the Saviour, in some way or other, had obtained knowledge." The scenery and colouring are purely local. Down to modern times, the road from Jerusalem to Jericho has been dangerous. Jericho, in our Lord's time, was a city of priests. **By chance** here means "coincidence," that is, at the same time. Chance is not a scriptural conception. "Accident is God's own part" in human life. The Divine permits what He does not inflict. The priest shrank from the fear of incurring defilement by coming into contact with what might be a corpse, before he reached it. The Levite may possibly have thought he need not do what a priest had left undone. "Perhaps," says the Cambridge Bible, "the priest had been aware that a Levite was behind him, and left the trouble to him; perhaps the Levite said to himself, that he need not do what the priest had not thought fit to do." But the Samaritan—the man of a hated nation and an alien creed—was touched with the feeling of humanity, and ministered to the neglected sufferer. "Christ contrasts the Samaritan with the priest and Levite, not to honour Samaria, not to do despite to priests and Levites, but to teach that the most despised outcast who fulfils the law of love is better than the most honoured minister of religion who disregards it"—ABBOTT. The Samaritan gave time and effort and personal service. He did not weary of his task. And in his promise to return and pay the debt he charged himself with the responsibility of the sufferer. Many sympathise who do not help. Some help at the beginning, but grow weary in well-doing. Happy is he who is a Samaritan; happy is he who finds one. From time immemorial men have seen the noblest picture of the Good Samaritan in Jesus Christ. He stooped to save every man; to save the race. The man who feeds the hungry, who teaches the ignorant, who reclaims the fallen, who rescues the perishing, who preaches Christ to the heathen, is treading in the footsteps of the Good Samaritan.

Vers. 38–42. THE SISTERS OF BETHANY.—40. **Martha was encumbered.** "The Greek word properly signifies, 'to be drawn different ways at the same time,' and admirably expresses the situation of a mind surrounded (as Martha's then was) with so many objects of care, that it hardly knows which to attend to first"—WESLEY.

41. **Martha, Martha.** "There is a peculiar spirit and tenderness in the repetition of the word. **Thou art careful** inwardly, and **hurried** outwardly"—WESLEY.

42. **Mary hath chosen the good part**—"to save her soul. Reader, hast thou?"—WESLEY.

"Here in one or two lines," says FARRAR, "we have a most clear sketch of the contrasted characters of the two sisters."

CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 1–13. JESUS TEACHES PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER.—S. Luke, more than the other Evangelists, notes our Lord's devotions. He alone records His prayer for His murderers, and the dismissal of His spirit into His Father's hands. He alone records the two parables which show the success of frequent,

importunate prayer. Our Lord was praying when owned at His Baptism and Transfiguration. He opened and closed the day with the key of prayer. "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." "He went out into the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." He began and ended great occasions by prayer. After He had fed the multitude and sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray. On the eve of the calling of the Apostolic Twelve, He went into a mountain to pray. Jesus being baptized and praying, the Heaven was opened. On the mount of glory, as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered. He passed through the garden of agony on His knees. And so the generations have been able to kneel before Him, and say:—

"O Thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord! teach us how to pray."

It came to pass as He was praying in a certain place, that when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. The form of prayer taught by S. John has perished. It was common for Jewish teachers to deliver such forms to their disciples. We all need to be divinely taught to pray, for we do not know what things we have need of. Our necessities are one thing, our imaginations another. **Lord, teach us to pray.**

1. **Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.** "The Jewish masters used to give their followers some short form of prayer, as a peculiar badge of their relation to them. This it is probable John the Baptist had done. And in this sense it seems to be, that the disciples now asked Jesus to teach them to pray. Accordingly He here repeats that form which He had before given them in His Sermon on the Mount, and likewise enlarges on the same head, although still speaking the same things in substance. And this prayer, uttered from the heart and in its true and full meaning, is indeed the badge of a real Christian; for is not he such whose first and most ardent desire is the glory of God, and the happiness of man, by the coming of His kingdom? who asks for no more of this world than his daily bread, longing meantime for the bread that came down from heaven? and whose only desires for himself are forgiveness of sins (as he heartily forgives others), and sanctification?"—WESLEY.

2. **When ye pray, say.** "And what He said to them is undoubtedly said to us also. We are therefore here directed, not only to imitate this in all our prayers, but to use this very form of prayer"—WESLEY.

When ye pray. Remember the nature of prayer. "As a man, it is the language of worship. As a creature, it is the language of dependence. As a subject, it is the language of submission. As a sinner, it is the language of repentance. As a pardoned believer, it is the language of adoration and praise. As a needy man, it is the language of supplication. As a receiver of mercies, it is the language of thankfulness. As a grateful man, it is the language of obedience, desiring to do what the word of God enjoins, to believe what it declares, to rely on its promises"—VAN DOREN.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.—Our Lord gave it. It is lord of all prayers. Nothing that we say, worth saying, is more than an echo, a repetition, an amplification of this prayer of prayers. We may repeat the words, as some Christians and churches do; we may regard the words as pattern expressions, as other Christians and churches do; but the Lord's Prayer towers aloft. Forms of prayer are found in the Old Testament, hence it has been said, "The Lord of the Church did not seek unnecessary novelty." The Model Prayer hath dust of gold. Some fragments men have thought they found in Jewish writings. Be it so. Our Lord came not to destroy, but to fulfil. He gave a new and enlarged meaning to all He found. As, says the Cambridge Bible, "The Lord's Prayer had already been enshrined in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6. 9–13), but it was now more formally delivered as a model. Various parallels for the different petitions of the Lord's Prayer have been adduced from the Talmud; nor would there be anything strange in our Lord thus stamping with His sanction whatever was holiest in the petitions which His countrymen had learned from the Spirit of God. But note that (1) the parallels are only to *some* of the clauses, *e.g.*, not to the fourth and fifth; (2) they are most distant and imperfect; (3) there can be no certainty as to their priority, since even the earliest portion of the Talmud was not committed to writing till the second century after Christ; (4) they are nowhere blended into one incomparable petition. The transcendent beauty and value of the lessons in the Lord's Prayer arise from (1) *the tone of holy confidence:* it teaches us to approach God as our *Father* (Rom. 8. 15), in love as well as holy fear. (2) *Its absolute unselfishness:* it is offered in the plural, not for ourselves only, but for all the brotherhood of man. (3) *Its entire spirituality:* of seven petitions, one only is for any earthly boon, and that only for the simplest. (4) *Its brevity* and absence of all vain repetitions (Eccles. 5. 2). (5) *Its simplicity*, which requires not learning, but only holiness and sincerity for its universal comprehension. For these reasons the Fathers call it the "epitome of the Gospel and the pearl of prayers." Loving students of the Bible—and the Bible must be loved to be known—have pointed out that twice God wrote the Ten Commandments; twice Christ said this prayer.

The Decalogue is divided into two tables; this prayer is divided into two parts. Those parts contain seven clauses, three to God, and four for men. Three and seven with the Jews were sacred numbers. S. Augustine traces a connection between seven of the Beatitudes, and seven requests in the Lord's Prayer.

1. *The Invocation.*—**Our Father which art in heaven.** In the Old Testament, God is never addressed in prayer as father. At Sinai He said "thy God"; in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught us to say, "Our Father." A Father; a heavenly Father; our Father. The sentence strikes at the roots of selfishness. He made us; He preserves us; He redeemed us; He protects us. But others are in the hand of the same God. "Our Father" is the most endearing name under which God can be addressed.

2. *The upward petitions.* — **Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.** God first. "I am the Lord thy God." Heaven and earth is the Divine order. **Hallowed be Thy Name**—*i.e.*, "sanctified, treated as holy." "Holy, holy, holy" is the worship of the Seraphim. (Isa. 6. 3.) The name of God is used for all the attributes of His Being. God's name means "Himself as revealed and manifested." The third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," requires us to do what we here desire that all may do. **Thy kingdom come** — in the heart, in the home, in the Church, in the world. The kingdoms of this world are yet to be the kingdom of God. "Kingdom" was Christ's great word. **Thy will be done:** this was the one rule of the life of Christ (John 5. 30; 6. 38). It is done in the heavens. "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." In heaven they do the will of God constantly, perfectly, cheerfully, immediately. "Enable us, O Lord," S. Chrysostom prayed, "to follow the heavenly life, that whatever Thou willest, we may will also."

3. *The outward petitions.* — Daily Bread. Forgiveness. Deliverance. **Give us our daily bread.** "The prayer (1) acknowledges that we are indebted to God for our simplest boons; (2) asks them for all; (3) asks them only day by day; and (4) asks for no more. S. Luke's version brings out the continuity of the gift (be giving day by day). S. Matthew's, its immediate need (give to-day)"—C. B. The blessing of the Lord maketh rich. What we need is daily bread for body and soul. **Forgive us.** The best have need to pray this prayer daily. Sin is a mystery, but it is a fact. If we expect forgiveness from God, we must extend forgiveness to each other. Revenge is sweet, but it is wicked. **Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** God permits temptation, but we need not enter into it. A Christian man thus paraphrased this petition: "If the occasion of sinning presents itself, grant that the desire may not be found in me; if the desire is there, grant that the occasion may not present itself." The holy persistence with which we should approach God is illustrated in the little story of the Friend (vers. 6–13); and we are taught that parental love is Divine in origin, and suggests the infinite compassion and helpfulness of our Father in heaven.

Vers. 5–13. HOLY IMPORTUNITY.—The purpose of the parable is to encourage perseverance in prayer. The example is taken from daily life, and gives us a hint into the keen observations of the lives and ways of men and women our Lord was accustomed to make. Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the Throne of Grace.

4. **Forgive us; for we forgive**—"not once, but continually. This does not denote the meritorious cause of our pardon; but the removal of that hindrance, which otherwise would render it impossible"—WESLEY.

5. **At midnight**—"the most unseasonable time; but no time is unseasonable with God, either for hearing or answering prayer"—WESLEY.

13. **How much more shall your heavenly Father**—"how beautiful is the gradation—a friend, a father, God! **Give the Holy Spirit**—the best of gifts, and that which includes every good gift"—WESLEY.

Vers. 14–26. THE DUMB DEVIL AND THE PHARISEES' BLASPHEMY. (See on Matt. 12. 22, *seq.*).—14. **It was dumb**—"that is, it made the man so"—WESLEY.

15. **But some said, He casteth out devils by Beelzebub**—"These He answers (ver. 17). Others, to try whether it were so or no, **sought a sign from heaven.** These He reproves in the 29th and following verses. **Beelzebub** signifies, 'the lord of flies,' a title which the heathens gave to Jupiter, whom they accounted the chief of their gods, and yet supposed him to be employed in driving away flies from their temples and sacrifices. The Philistines worshipped a deity under this name, as the god of Ekron: from hence the Jews took the name, and applied it to the chief of the devils"—WESLEY.

17. **A house**—"that is, a family"—WESLEY.

20. **If I cast out devils by the finger of God**—"that is, by a power manifestly Divine. Perhaps the expression intimates further, that it was done without any labour. **Then the kingdom of God is come upon you**—unawares, unexpectedly; so the Greek word signifies"—WESLEY.

21. **The strong one armed**—"the devil, strong in himself, and armed with the pride, obstinacy, and security of him in whom he dwells"—WESLEY.

26. **The last state of that man becometh worse than the first.** "Whoever reads the

sad account Josephus gives of the temper and conduct of the Jews after the ascension of Christ, and before their final destruction by the Romans, must acknowledge that no emblem could have been more proper to describe them. Their characters were the vilest that can be conceived; and they pressed on to their own ruin, as if they had been possessed by legions of devils, and wrought up to the last degree of madness. But this also is fulfilled in all who totally and finally apostatise from true faith"—WESLEY.

Vers. 27-36. THE SOURCE OF TRUE BLESSEDNESS AND THE DANGER OF UNBELIEF AND BACKSLIDING.—27. **Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked.** "How natural was the thought for a woman! And how gently does our Lord reprove her!"—WESLEY.

28. **Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it**—"for if even she that bare Him had not done this, she would have forfeited all her blessedness"—WESLEY.

29. **It seeketh.** "The original word implies, 'seeking more,' or over and above what one has already"—WESLEY.

32. **They repented at the preaching of Jonah**—"but it was only for a season. Afterwards, they relapsed into wickedness, till, after about forty years, they were destroyed. It was remarkable that in this also the comparison held. God reprieved the Jews for about forty years; but they still advanced in wickedness, till, having filled up their measure, they were destroyed with an utter destruction"—WESLEY.

33. "The meaning is, God gives you this gospel light, that you may repent. Let your eye be singly fixed on Him, aim only at pleasing God: and while you do this your whole soul will be full of wisdom, holiness, and happiness"—WESLEY.

34. **But when thine eye is evil**—when thou aimest at anything else, thou wilt be full of folly, sin, and misery. On the contrary,

36. **If thy whole body be full of light**—"if thou art filled with holy wisdom—**having no part dark**—giving way to no sin or folly; then that heavenly principle will, like the clear flame of a lamp in a room that was dark before, shed its light into all thy powers and faculties"—WESLEY.

Vers. 37-54. CONTEST WITH THE PHARISEES. —39. **Now, ye Pharisees**—"probably many of them were present at a Pharisee's house"—WESLEY.

41. **Give what is in them**—"the vessels which ye clean. **In alms, and all things are clean to you.** As if He had said, By acts directly contrary to rapine and wickedness, show that your hearts are cleansed, and these outward washings are needless"—WESLEY.

42. **Woe to you**—"that is, miserable are you. In the same manner is the phrase to be understood throughout the chapter"—WESLEY.

44. **For ye are as graves which appear not**—"probably in speaking this our Lord fixed His eyes on the scribes. **As graves which appear not**—being overgrown with grass, so that **men are not aware**, till they stumble upon them, and either hurt themselves, or at least are defiled by touching them. On another occasion Christ compared them to 'whited sepulchres,' fair without but foul within (Matt. 23. 27)"—WESLEY.

45. **One of the lawyers**—"that is, scribes; expounders of the Law"—WESLEY.

48. **Whom they killed, ye build their sepulchres.** "Just like them, pretending great reverence for the ancient prophets, while ye destroy those whom God sends to yourselves. Ye therefore **bear witness** by this deep hypocrisy that ye are of the very same spirit with them"—WESLEY.

49. **The wisdom of God**, agreeably to this, **hath said**—"in many places of Scripture, though not in these very words—**I will send them prophets**—chiefly under the Old Testament. **And apostles**—under the New"—WESLEY.

50. **The blood of all shall be required of this generation**—"that is, shall be visibly and terribly punished upon it"—WESLEY.

51. "And so it was, within forty years, in a most astonishing manner, by the dreadful destruction of the Temple, the city, and the whole nation. **Between the Temple and the altar**—in the court of the Temple"—WESLEY.

52. **Ye have taken away the key of knowledge.** "Ye have obscured and destroyed the true knowledge of the Messiah, which is the key of both the present and the future Kingdom of Heaven; the kingdom of grace and of glory. **Ye have not entered in**—into the present Kingdom of Heaven"—WESLEY.

Ver. 53. The Pharisees in their anger followed Him out of the house, trying to catch Him in His talk.

CHAPTER XII.

Vers. 1-12. TRUE COURAGE IN GODLINESS. —1. **He said to His disciples first**—"but afterward (ver. 54) to all the people"—WESLEY.

4. **But I say to you, Fear not**—"let not the fear of man make you act the hypocrite, or conceal anything which I have commissioned you to publish"—WESLEY.

5. **Fear Him who hath power to cast into hell.** "Even to His peculiar 'friends' Christ gives this direction. Therefore the fearing of God as having power to cast into hell is to be pressed even on true believers"—WESLEY.

6. **Are not five sparrows.** "But 'trust,' as well as 'fear' Him"—WESLEY.

8. **And I say to you.** "If you avoid all hypocrisy, and openly avow My gospel—**the Son of Man shall confess you—before the angels**—at the last day"—WESLEY.

10. **And whosoever**—"as if He had said, Yet the denying Me in some degree may, upon true repentance, be forgiven; but if it rise so high as that of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it shall never be forgiven, neither is there place for repentance"—WESLEY.

11. **Take no thought.** "Be not solicitous about the matter or manner of your defence; nor how to express yourselves"—WESLEY.

On the unpardonable sin, see on Matt. 12. 31, 32.

Vers. 13-21. THE RICH FOOL.—13, 14. A man in the crowd profits by a moment of silence to submit a matter to Jesus. According to the civil law of the Jews, the eldest brother received a double portion of the inheritance, burdened with the obligation of supporting his mother and unmarried sisters. As to the younger members, it would appear, from the parable of the prodigal son, that they were sometimes paid in money. This man was perhaps one of those younger members. "As on other similar occasions, Jesus absolutely refuses to go out of His purely spiritual domain, or to do anything which might give Him the appearance of wishing to put himself in the place of the powers that be. The answer to the *Who?* is this: Neither God nor men"—GODET. "This was the most foolish and unwarrantable interpellation ever made to our Lord. The few words at once reveal to us an egotist incapable of caring for anything but his own selfishness"—FARRAR. The judge was a public officer; the divider and private arbitrator. Christ will not usurp their province. Christianity will change the social, selfish framework of the world, but its power is moral. It works from within outwardly. The man asked the division of the inheritance: the Lord gave a prohibition against covetousness.

15. **Take heed and beware of covetousness** (R.V. "Keep yourselves from all covetousness"). To covet is to desire inordinately, to desire that which it is unlawful to obtain or possess. "Not only beware of avarice, but of selfish possession. Both the Old and New Testaments abound with repetitions of this warning. Balaam, Achan, Gehazi are awful examples of this sin in the Old Testament; Judas Iscariot, the Pharisees, and Ananias in the New. (See 1 Tim. 6. 10-17)"—C. B. But possessions are not life, and do not make life truly enjoyable. A man's true life is decided by what he *is*. "How poor a rich man, and how rich a poor man may be"—LANGE.

AN EXAMPLE.—"The term 'parable' may signify an example as well as an image; when the image is fictitious, it is invented as an image of the abstract truth"—GODET. "The parable, like that of the Good Samaritan, reads like an actual history. There is dramatic vividness in the rich man's soliloquy. It was the very superfluity of the man's goods that became a new cause of anxiety. In such a case half was more than the whole. So far as life depended on property, it would have been better if the property had been less"—PLUMPTRE. The first lack in this man's life was complete contentment. There is no such thing as enough to some natures. Then followed anxiety to stow away and guard what he has gained. The difficulties of possessions only begin with the gaining of them. They are then the objects of others' covetousness and fraud, and need constant and complete watchfulness. "I have no room," said the man of the parable. To which S. Ambrose answers, "Thou hast barns—the bosoms of the poor, the homes of widows, the mouths of infants; these are the barns which will last for ever." But the foolish rich man lived a self-centred life: **my fruits, my barns, my goods, my soul.** There might have been no other but he in God's world, so far as his language leads us to understand his mind. In the American *Sunday School Times*, Dr. C. S. ROBINSON ingeniously places side by side the good and the evil in this man's life:—

"*The attractive characteristics of this man.* (1) For one thing, he was *wealthy*. Observe, the Bible never is found joining in with any wild tirade against riches. On the whole, it is a good thing to be rich; great usefulness can be attained by silver and gold. (2) He was *successful* in business. That shows well as an evidence of his shrewdness and industry. (3) Furthermore, this was a *prudent* man. He shows himself, in the recorded soliloquy here, as being thoughtful concerning the future (see ver. 17). We naturally feel distrust of all men who are content to spend as they go.

"*The extraordinary mistakes of this man.* (1) To begin with, he made a mistake in thinking there was no place for produce except in barns. (2) So we see another mistake he made: he supposed his riches would be a comfort to him when they were hoarded. Whereas they became then only a care and a burden. The nearest approach to the old disease of the possession of devils that we have in modern times, is exhibited when a man is possessed of the money he thinks he possesses. (3) The third mistake this man made was worse than any one of the others: he left out of his thoughts all consideration of the infinite God who made and owned him. He says 'my' barns, 'my' goods, 'my' fruits, and even 'my' soul. (4) But this mistake inevitably led to another: he seems to admit that his soul has no higher needs than his body." "His plans of felicity," as TRENCH says, "rise no higher than to this satisfying of the flesh; so that there is an irony as melancholy as it is profound in making him address this speech, not to his body, but to his soul." "What folly!" says S. BASIL. "Had thy soul been a sty, what else wouldest thou have promised to it? Art thou so bestial, so ignorant of the soul's goods, that thou pledgest it the foods of the flesh?"

He made all his calculations and forgot the disturbing element of death. He said, **Soul, rest, eat, drink, and be merry—for many years.** The decree said, **This night, soul, thou art required at the judgment bar of thy Maker.** "All things are now changed." What shall these things be? When a rich man died, the question was asked, "How much did he leave?" And the answer was given, "He left all he had." He had gathered much; but the gate of death is narrow, we do not take our possessions or burdens through.

14. **Who made Me a judge**—"in worldly things. His kingdom is not of this world"—WESLEY.

15. **He said to them**—"perhaps to the two brothers, and through them to the people—**a man's life**—that is, the comfort or happiness of it"—WESLEY.

17. **What shall I do**—"the very language of want. Do? Why, lay up treasure in heaven"—WESLEY.

20. **Thou fool.** "To think of satisfying thy soul with earthly goods! to depend on living **many years!** yea, one day! **They**—the messengers of death, commissioned by God, **require thy soul of thee!**"—WESLEY.

21. **Rich toward God**—"namely, in faith and love and good works"—WESLEY.

Vers. 22–34. These verses teach the secret of a happy confidence in God's providence. He who built the body will feed and cover it. He who gave the life will maintain it. He who feeds the birds will not forget you.

25. **Which of you can add the least measure.** "It seems, 'to add one cubit' to a thing (which is the phrase in the original) was a kind of proverbial expression for making the least addition to it"—WESLEY.

28. **The grass.** "The Greek word means all sorts of herbs and flowers"—WESLEY.

29. **Neither be ye of a doubtful mind.** "The word in the original signifies any speculations or musings in which the mind fluctuates, or is suspended, like meteors in the air, in an uneasy hesitation"—WESLEY.

32. **It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.** "How much more, food and raiment! And since you have such an inheritance, regard not your earthly possessions"—WESLEY.

33. **Sell what ye have.** "This is a direction not given to all the multitude (much less is it a standing rule for all Christians), neither to the apostles; for they had nothing to sell, having left all before; but to His other disciples, mentioned in ver. 22 and Acts 1. 15, especially to the Seventy, that they might be free from all worldly entanglements"—WESLEY.

A talk about anxiety.—**Take no thought.** That phrase might even be taken to mean a carelessness which is immoral. But when our Bible was translated, "thought" was used for "care." Hence the R.V. reads, "Be not anxious for your life what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment." "We note in the form of the precept," as PLUMPTRE points out, "the homeliness of the cases selected as illustrations. We hear the language of one who speaks to peasants with their simple yet pressing wants, not to the wider cares of the covetous or ambitious of a higher grade." "These instructions are built upon the parable just previously spoken. **Therefore** (ver. 22), since these things are so, let Me counsel you how to live. The first great points are negative, showing what not to do; how not to feel. **Take no thought as to your life, what to eat and what to wear,** for things should have our care according to their real and relative value; **the life is more than meat, the body more than raiment.** Therefore, give to the higher and better things the relative care and labour of which they are worthy: care more for soul-life than for bodily-life; more for soul-food than for the food of the body; more for the culture and growth of heart-benevolence, than for the development of any physical power; more for the adornment of the soul with the beauties of holiness, than for adorning the body that fades so soon away"—COWLES. The manner of life is more important than its duration. The soul is superior to the body. "Food and clothing absorb nine-tenths of men's cares. Yet the body is but the husk or shell, the soul is the kernel. The body is but the cask, the soul is the precious liquor. The body is but the cabinet, the soul is the precious jewel. The body is but the vessel or ship, the soul is the pilot. The body is but the tabernacle, the soul the tenant. The body is the machine only, the soul the animating principle. The body is the dark lantern, the soul the candle of the Lord that burns in it"—RAY. The birds are preachers of Providence: **Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn, and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds!** The foolish rich man of the parable was troubled because he had not barns enough; the birds are untroubled, although they have no barns at all. And, after all, our over-anxiety accomplishes little. **Which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto his stature?** (or "age," see *margin* of R.V.). The word may mean either. But perhaps "stature" is the meaning here. Plants which give themselves no care, yet make enormous increase, while ye by your anxieties do not in the least hasten your growth. Vers. 25, 26, correspond to ver. 23. The flowers are as dependent as the birds, and equally regarded by the Maker of them all. (Read vers. 27–32.) Will God feed birds and forget children? Will He watch flowers and neglect us? Bethink thyself! God made thee; feeds thee;

gave His Son to die for thee; opened heaven to thy entrance. God belongs to both worlds, and remembers that we have body and soul. He who claims all our service watches all our life. We may have a treasure in the heavens, and desire favour whilst on earth.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

The life of watchfulness (ver. 35-48).

35. **Let your loins be girt**—"an allusion to the long garments worn by the eastern nations, which they girded or tucked up about their loins, when they journeyed, or were employed in any labour; as also to the lights that servants used to carry at weddings, which were generally in the night"—WESLEY.

37. **He will come and serve them.** "The meaning is, He will show them His love in the most condescending and tender manner"—WESLEY.

38. "The Jews frequently divided the night into three watches, to which our Lord seems here to allude"—WESLEY.

41. **Speakest thou this parable to us**—"apostles and disciples? **Or to all**—the people? Does it concern us alone, or all men?"—WESLEY.

42. **Who is that wise and faithful servant.** "Our Lord's answer manifestly implies that He had spoken this parable primarily (though not wholly) to the ministers of His word. **Whom his lord shall make ruler over his household**—for his wisdom and faithfulness"—WESLEY.

43. **Happy is that servant.** "God Himself pronounces him wise, faithful, happy; yet we see he might fall from all, and perish for ever"—WESLEY.

46. **The Lord will appoint him his portion**—"his everlasting portion. **With the unfaithful**—as faithful as he was once, God Himself being the Judge"—WESLEY.

47. **And that servant, who knew his lord's will . . . shall be beaten with many stripes**—"and his having much knowledge will increase, not lessen, his punishment"—WESLEY.

There is a legend of S. Thomas, who in preaching the gospel came to the eastern kingdom of Gondoforus. There he was entrusted with large sums of money, for the purpose of building a palace for the king. On his return from a journey, Gondoforus found that S. Thomas had given all the money away to the poor, and, being angry at this, he put the apostle in prison. One night, in a dream, King Gondoforus received a message from his brother, lately dead, who reported that in heaven was an immense palace of wondrous beauty, which the angels said was the palace S. Thomas had built for the king with the money given to the poor. If this were a statement of fact, we should charge even S. Thomas with a breach of trust. But it is the pictorial form in which the early Christians shaped their conviction of the superiority of the heavenly. They took the sacrament every day, because they said Christ might come any day. **See that ye have and give alms** was taken very literally by the early Church. "It must not be forgotten that the Kingdom of God at this period was identified with the person of Jesus, and the society of disciples who accompanied Him. To follow Jesus literally in His peregrinations was the only way of possessing this treasure, and of becoming fit to spread it in consequence. Then it was an army, not merely of believers, but of evangelists, that Jesus was now labouring to form. If they had remained attached to the soil of their earthly property, they would have been incapable of following and serving Him without looking backwards. The essential character of such a precept alone is permanent. The form in which Jesus presented it arose from the present condition of the Kingdom of God. The mode of fulfilling it varies. There are times when to disentangle himself and practise Christian love the believer must give up everything; there are other times when, to secure real freedom and be the better able to give, he must keep and administer"—GODET. Such convictions lead to expectation, and impose the duty of watchfulness. Hence our Lord gives the parable of the Master returning to his house—**Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that when he cometh and knocketh they may straightway open unto him. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants.** Without a girdle active service is impossible in the loose flowing dress of the East (Ex. 12. 11; 1 Kings 18. 46); and spiritually for the Christian amid worldly entanglements (1 Pet. 1. 13; Eph. 6. 14). If it is night, it is further required that one have a lighted lamp in his hand, to walk quickly and securely to his destination. With girded loins and lighted lamp the servant is ready for his master's bidding. Standing sentinel-like, he waits for his master's return. Then comes the element of danger if the servants should be unwatchful—**But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.** If the hour of the attack were known, men would not fail to hold themselves ready against that hour; and therefore, when it is not known, the only way is to be always

ready. Never leave the post of duty. S. Peter, whose intercourse with his Lord was peculiarly frank and fearless, interposed with his question, **Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?** The reply was not direct: the lesson which the questioner needed was given—**Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant.**

Vers. 49-53. THE SEARCHING EFFECT OF CHRIST'S WORK.—The solemn doctrine of personal responsibility in ver. 48 casts light upon the penetrating power of Christ and His gospel, in vers. 49-53.

49. **I am come to send fire**—"to spread the fire of heavenly love over all the earth"—WESLEY.

50. **But I have a baptism to be baptized with.** "I must suffer first, before I can set up My kingdom. And how I long to fight my way through all!"—WESLEY.

51. **Suppose ye that I am come to send peace upon earth**—"that universal peace will be the immediate effect of My coming? Not so; but quite the contrary"—WESLEY.

52. **There shall be five in one house, three against two, and two against three**—"there being an irreconcilable enmity between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world"—WESLEY.

53. **The father against the son**—"for those who reject Me will be implacable toward their very nearest relations who receive Me. At this day also is this scripture fulfilled. Now, likewise, there is no concord between Christ and Belial"—WESLEY.

Vers. 54-59. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.—54. **And He said to the people also.** "In the preceding verses He speaks only to His disciples. **From the west**—In Judea, the west wind, blowing from the sea, usually brought rain; the south wind, blowing from the deserts of Arabia, occasioned sultry heat"—WESLEY.

56. **How do ye not discern this season**—"of the Messiah's coming, distinguishable by so many surer signs"—WESLEY.

57. **Why even of yourselves,** "without any external sign, **judge ye not what is right**—why do ye not discern and acknowledge the intrinsic excellence of My doctrine?"—WESLEY.

58. **When thou art going.** "As if He had said, And ye have not a moment to lose. For the executioners of God's vengeance are at hand; and when he hath once delivered you over to them, ye are undone for ever"—WESLEY.

59. "A **mite** was about the third part of our farthing"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XIII.

Vers. 1-9. THE MORAL OF ACCIDENT, AND THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE.—1. **The Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices**—"some of the followers of Judas Gaulonites. They absolutely refused to own the Roman authority. Pilate surrounded and slew them, while they were worshipping in the Temple at a public feast"—WESLEY.

3. **Ye shall all likewise perish**—"all ye of Galilee and of Jerusalem shall perish in the very same manner. So the Greek word implies. And so they did. There was a remarkable resemblance between the fate of these Galileans and of the main body of the Jewish nation; the flower of which was slain at Jerusalem by the Roman sword, while they were assembled at one of their great festivals. And many thousands of them perished in the Temple itself, and were literally buried under its ruins"—WESLEY.

6. **A man had a fig-tree.** "Either we may understand God the Father by him that had the vineyard, and Christ by him that kept it; or Christ Himself is He that hath it, and His ministers they that keep it"—WESLEY.

7. **Three years.** "Christ was then in the third year of His ministry. But it may mean only several years; a certain number being put for an uncertain. **Why doth it also cumber the ground**—that is, not only bear no fruit itself, but take up the ground of another tree that would"—WESLEY.

A Discourse of Severity.—Is there a secret pleasure in being the first teller of evil tidings? Both the Greeks and the Germans coined a word to express some such feeling, and the report in this chapter indicates it. There arrived **at that very season.** They had come on purpose to announce this catastrophe. These Galileans may have been the followers of Judas of Galilee, who, some twenty years before this, taught that Jews should not pay tribute to the Romans, and of whom we learn, from Acts 5. 37, that he drew after him a multitude of followers, who, on his being slain, were all dispersed. Pilate may have put them to death as they were offering their sacrifices at one of the festivals, thus mingling their blood with their sacrifices. Such incidents were frequent enough. The Roman soldiers often hurried down from Fort Antonia to quell a sudden riot. At one Passover, during the sacrifices, three thousand Jews had been massacred like victims, and the Temple courts filled with dead bodies; and at another Passover no less than twenty thousand had perished. On one occasion Pilate sent disguised soldiers with daggers among the crowd. That men should perish in the Temple, and in the act of worship, would fire the Jewish imagination. Such men must have come under the just judgment of God, they would think. It was an article of their creed that sin and suffering were inseparable. They are connected. "Be sure your sin will find you out." But no eye but God's can trace the connection

in every individual case. Nothing is so common as an accident. And often the accident is traceable to somebody's wrong-doing. But the innocent often suffer, and the guilty one escapes. Judgment belongs to God. His Providence at times vindicates His justice. But the most guilty are not always punished in this life. There is another judgment. **He answered, Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.** He who a little later wept over the doomed city, now warns the nation. The first meaning of the words was doubtless prophetic. The Jewish nation did not repent; and myriads of them in the siege of Jerusalem perished by a doom closely analogous to that of these Galileans. But human life is alike everywhere; the human heart the same in all ages. The laws of life, the laws of God, have an eternal signification. The message is to every nation, to every household, to every one. **Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell.** It is an ingenious, but of course uncertain conjecture, that the death of these workmen was connected with the notion of retribution, because they were engaged in building part of the aqueduct to the pool of Siloam, for the construction of which Pilate had seized some of the sacred corban money. Of this incident nothing is certainly known, save the fact as here stated. But the lesson from the Divine lips is worthy and weighty. While none might attribute a pre-eminence in guilt to those who were crushed by the falling tower, yet in all such sudden and strange catastrophes all might recognise a call to repentance and reformation. The uncertainty of life; the suddenness with which one's own day of opportunity might end; the sense of discord in outward nature, and of danger to human life by change and chance; and the needs-be for dependence on a higher power—these lessons, true nineteen hundred years ago, are true to-day.

A Parable of Mercy.—**He spake this parable.** The discourse of severity ends in a parable of mercy. "Here the Jewish nation is compared to the fig-tree (Hos. 9. 16; Jer. 24. 3), as in the *acted* parable of the barren fig-tree (Matt. 21. 19); more often Israel is compared to the vine in the vineyard (Ps. 80. 8–11; Isa. 5. 2)"—FARRAR. But the parable is as applicable to Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and Americans. He came seeking fruit thereon. He had a right to it, and required it. Jehovah is the owner of the vineyard, Christ the vine-dresser. The fruit God expects from every one of us is a noble Christian character. The fruit of a tree is from within. It is not fastened on from without. So character is the result of the inner life. We do good by being good. He came seeking fruit, and found none. Long ago the prophets had upbraided the people because they had not brought forth the fruits of good living, to the glory and praise of God. What does God find in us when He comes on a visit of inspection and inquiry? **These three years I come seeking fruit.** Many suppose an allusion to the length of our Lord's ministry. Others explain it as of the periods of the Judges, Kings, and High Priests. Some see a reference to God's coming to the people by Moses, by the Prophets, and in the person of Jesus Christ. Probably it is only a part of the drapery of the parable. But for our own practical consideration we may think of childhood, manhood, and age. God visits us at all periods. **Cut it down.** At once. It is useless, is injurious.

"The noisome weeds that without profit suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers."

"I have done no harm." "But have you done any good?" No man liveth to himself. If we live uselessly, we live injuriously. **Let it alone this year also.** The Lord is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Divine judgments are sometimes noiseless in their approach, but God often warns before He strikes. He delights in blessing and saving. **If it bear fruit thenceforth.** The conclusion is left for the imagination. The word *well* is printed in italics.

Vers. 10–17. A MIRACLE OF PITY.—The suffering woman amid the synagogue crowd was not overlooked by Jesus. He knew the value of one life; reverenced every personal history; honoured all men. The ruler of the synagogue was more concerned about forms than about men and women. Our Lord uttered the word of healing, **Woman, thou art loosed;** the ruler of the synagogue, **There are six days . . . in them come and be healed.** Christ instructed his ignorance and defended the woman's honour. **His adversaries were put to shame: the multitude rejoiced.**

11. **She was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.** "The evil spirit which possessed her, afflicted her in this manner. To many, doubtless, it appeared a natural distemper. Would not a modern physician have termed it a nervous case?"—WESLEY.

15. **Thou hypocrite**—"for the real motive of his speaking was envy, not, as he pretended, pure zeal for the glory of God"—WESLEY.

16. **And ought not this woman.** "Ought not any human creature, which is so far better than an ox or an ass; much more **this daughter of Abraham**, probably in a spiritual as well as a natural sense, **to be loosed?**"—WESLEY.

Vers. 18–21. PARABLE TEACHING. (See on Matt. 13.)

Vers. 22–30. A SERIOUS ANSWER TO A CURIOUS QUESTION. Our Lord's constant reference to life as a time of probation, and to the great judgment and final separation of truth and falsehood, deepen the natural interest of

men in these partly soluble questions. Curiosity concerning the future may be inspired by one of three motives: scornful contradiction, good-natured interest, despondent hope. But the only curiosity that is justifiable is connected with an earnest longing to shape one's own life according to God's will and commandment. Life is too real, death is too solemn, duty is too imperious, sorrow is too sharp, to make it rational for any man to spend his life in idle questioning. Perhaps the questioner in this narrative was unconsciously moved by a fancy similar to that expressed in the Book of Esdras: "The Most High made this world for many, but the world to come for few, as He made much common earth, but little gold." Without giving a distinct decision, the Saviour brings the question immediately from the sphere of abstract theory to that of pure practicalness. He does not even address His words to the questioner alone, with whom He does not further converse, but to all who were to-day listening to Him. He said in effect: Few or many are relative terms. Waste not the precious opportunities of life in idle wonderment, but strive. Through that narrow gate none can enter without earnest effort. This is the law of life. The alphabet puzzles the child first, and then awakens effort. A narrow gate stands at the entrance to every path of success. Artist and agriculturist, poet and preacher, counsel and carpenter, all must strive. Well-wishing is not well-doing. If wishes were horses, beggars would ride. Our Lord applies this well-known and constantly recognised law to character and destiny. Strive! seeking is insufficient. Slothful wishes accomplish little. S. Paul afterwards made great use of the idea of the athlete and the contest. Our own times emphasise the need and the value of earnestness, calm, if not impassioned. Opportunity, God's white-handed angel, does not stand waiting and inactive for ever. Our Lord represents the door as open to all who strive, but not open always. **When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us: and He shall answer and say to you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say, We did eat and drink in Thy presence, and Thou didst teach in our streets; and He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.** They knock and call, but too late. Lost time cannot be recalled. Lost youth cannot recover itself in manhood. Lost health will not return at our beckoning finger. Now has an awful significance! To-day soon becomes yesterday, and to-morrow brings its own burden. What thou doest, do quickly. There is no work, nor wisdom, nor device in the grave whither thou goest. Awful words of rejection may fall from the loving lips of the rejected Saviour: "I know not whence ye are: depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity." With these words the Lord in the most decided way denies that they, let them be otherwise what they would, are members of His family. The declaration is repeated with greater emphasis. Men may outwardly stand very near to Christ, and yet inwardly be very strange to Him. It is one thing to be in the Church; it is another thing to be in Christ. In striking and suggestive language the Bible speaks of the wrath of the Lamb; in plain and repeated passages it speaks of the rejection of those who reject. Let us take heed to ourselves.

24. **Strive to enter in**—"agonise. Strive as in an agony. So the word signifies. Otherwise, none shall enter in. Barely seeking will not avail"—WESLEY.

25. "And even agonising will not avail, after the door is shut. Agonise therefore now by faith, prayer, holiness, patience. **And ye begin to stand without**—till then, they had not thought of it. Oh how new will that sense of their misery be! how late, how lasting! **I know not whence ye are—I know not**; that is, I approve not of your ways"—WESLEY.

29. **They shall sit down in the Kingdom of God**—"both the kingdom of grace and glory"—WESLEY.

30. **But there are last.** "Many of the Gentiles who were latest called shall be most highly rewarded, and many of the Jews who were first called shall have no reward at all"—WESLEY.

Vers. 31-33. THE KINGLET AND THE KING.—Jesus knew not the name of fear. The Pharisees in assumed solicitude came to Him, and said, **Get Thee out, and go hence: for Herod would fain kill Thee.** His answer was calmness embodied: **Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected. Howbeit I must go on My way to-day and to-morrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.** A day or two yet remained, and then the cross awaited Him. But there is more than a literal meaning. He was in God's hands. Every man is. A man is immortal until his work is done. The humblest has a kingly dignity while he stands where God placed him, and does what God bids him.

31. **Herod is minded to kill thee**—"possibly they gave Him the caution out of good-will"—WESLEY.

32. **And He said, Go and tell that fox.** "With great propriety so called, for his subtlety and cowardice. The meaning of our Lord's answer is, Notwithstanding all that he can do, I shall, for the short time I have left, do the works of Him that sent me. When that time is fulfilled, I shall be offered up; yet not here, but in the bloody city. **Behold, I cast out devils.** With what majesty does He speak to His enemies! with what tenderness to His

friends! **The third day I am perfected.** On the third day He left Galilee, and set out for Jerusalem, to die there. But let us carefully distinguish between those things wherein Christ is our pattern, and those which were peculiar to His office. His extraordinary office justified Him in using that severity of language, when speaking of wicked princes and corrupt teachers, to which we have no call, and by which we should only bring scandal on religion, and ruin on ourselves, while we irritated rather than convinced or reformed those whom we so indecently rebuked.

33. **It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem**—"which claims prescription for murdering the messengers of God. Such cruelty and malice cannot be found elsewhere"—WESLEY.

Vers. 34, 35. THE DOOM OF THE FAIR CITY. —He who wept over Jerusalem in the hour of His triumph, warned it in the hour of seeming defeat. Changes of fortune left unchanged His pity and unselfishness. The woe has been marvellously fulfilled. Every Jewish pilgrim who enters Jerusalem to this day has a rent made in his dress, and says, Zion is turned into a desert, it lies in ruins! Here, says a Jewish poet, pointing to the modern city, all is dust. After the destruction of the city, the whole earth blossoms from its ruins, but here there is no verdure, no blossom, only a bitter fruit—sorrow. Look for no joy here, either from men or from mountains. The pages of Josephus are red with blood, as the historian narrates the destruction of city and Temple.

34. **How often would I have gathered thy children together.** "Three solemn visits He had made to Jerusalem, since His baptism, for this very purpose"—WESLEY.

35. **Your house is left to you desolate** —"is now irrevocably consigned to desolation and destruction. **And verily I say to you,** after a very short space, **Ye shall not see Me till the time come when,** taught by your calamities, ye **shall** be ready and disposed to **say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.** It does not imply that they should then see Jesus at all, but only that they would earnestly wish for the Messiah, and in their extremity be ready to entertain any who should assume that character"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XIV.

Vers. 1–14. HUMILITY AND UNSELFISHNESS. —1. *Host and Guest.*—Jesus as guest in the Pharisee's house is a picture to be gazed upon with interest. We have seen Jesus in the Temple; in the street; in the house of sickness; by the open grave: here is Jesus in another man's house, the recipient of hospitality. Jesus in the house. He sanctified all relations of life. His host was a Pharisee, and a chief among Pharisees. Many of this class were the embittered foes of Jesus. He knew their malice, but he did not spurn them. He came to save the lost, and to save He must seek. May we not learn a lesson of forbearance and kindness to those who are not kind to us? It is our duty to love our enemies. This is a hard lesson. It is easy to think kindly towards those who treat us kindly. But duty takes us along hard and thorny paths. Remember that the Son of Man was also Son of God. The Creator became a guest of the creature. His human nature was real. He ate and drank, and slept, and died.

Malice and Misery (vers. 1–6). — **They were watching Him. And behold there was before Him a certain man which had the dropsy.** Perhaps the invitation was a crafty one to entrap Jesus. Some have even thought that the poor sufferer was brought there on purpose to destroy Jesus. "The verse represents, with inimitable vividness, the flash of recognition with which the Lord at once grasped the whole meaning of the scene. The dropsical man was not one of the guests; he stood as though by accident in the promiscuous throng which may always enter an oriental house during a meal. But his presence was no accident. The dropsy is an unsightly, and was regarded as an incurable, disease. The Pharisaic plot had, therefore, been concocted with that complex astuteness which marks in other instances (ch. 20. 19–38; John 8. 5) also the deadliness of their purpose. They argued that he would not ignore the presence of a man conspicuously placed in front of Him; that perhaps He might fail in the cure of a disease exceptionally inveterate; that if He did heal the man on the Sabbath day there would be room for another charge before the synagogue or the Sanhedrim. One element which kindled our Lord's indignation against the Pharisees for these crafty schemes, was the way in which they made a mere tool of human misery and human shame"—FARRAR. The Pharisees watched Him as a wild beast watches its prey. If He did not heal the man, it would look as though He feared them, and the people would doubt His power and His sympathy. If He did heal the man, they would raise the cry, "The Sabbath is in danger." If they watched Jesus, ought we to complain if the world watches us? The servant is not greater than his lord. Because we attend the house of God, and find our way to the Sunday-school, many eyes follow us; some in sympathy, others in scorn. In this we are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Pharisees did not say all they thought, so our Lord broke the silence and answered their unspoken thoughts. **Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?** He did not put the question out of ignorance, but out of charity. Not to do good is sometimes to do evil. He was often accused of healing on the Sabbath day. His foes made the means to an end more important than the end of the means. The Sabbath did not exist for itself, but for its worship, its freedom from earthly

care, its opportunities of usefulness. Compare this incident with others in which our Lord was involved in the casuistry of narrow minds concerning Sabbath duties and Sabbath privileges:—The healing at Bethesda (John 5. 10); the scene in the cornfield (Mark 2. 23–28); the healing of the withered hand (Matt. 12. 10–14); of the blind man at Siloam (John 9. 14); and of the paralytic woman (Luke 13. 14–17). The Christian Sabbath admits of works of piety, charity, and necessity. It is necessary for the body, the mind, and the soul. When, during the French Revolution, it was temporarily deposed from its throne, the house of God was turned into a stable, and the streets of Paris into a battle-field. The Day of Light, the Day of Silence, the Day of Rest, the Praying Day, the Queen of Days, is indispensable to health and quietude, to morals and religion. **They held their peace. And He took him, and healed him, and let him go.** The miracle is represented as instantaneous. Took, healed, dismissed. How wondrously God works. There is no sign of effort when winter bursts into spring, and yet what a creation! So in this miracle Jesus works as the Son of God, without effort, without excitement. He spake, and it was done! He touched, and the man was healed. He asked a single question, received no answer, and turned from the silently-angry foes.

2. **There was a certain man before Him.** "It does not appear that he was come thither with any insidious design. Probably he came hoping for a cure; or perhaps was one of the family"—WESLEY.

3. **And Jesus answering, spake**—"answering the thoughts which he saw rising in their hearts"—WESLEY.

Vers. 7–11. PRIDE AND HUMILITY.—A struggle for precedence was going on. The guests were picking out for themselves the chief seats. **He spake a parable unto them.** By Divine right He was the great Guest. But He did not strive. And, as the world's Teacher, He enforced the lesson, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." The ancient house of honour is entered by stooping, bending low. And so is the life divine and the heaven beyond.

> "Humble we must be, if to heaven we go;
> High is the roof there, but the door is low."

Humility is the queen of Christian graces. It is the special adornment of the young. Even the angels "veil their faces with their wings."

7. **He spake a parable.** The ensuing discourse is so termed, because several parts are not to be understood literally. The general scope of it is, not only at a marriage feast, but on every occasion, **he that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**

Vers. 12–14. HOSPITALITY AND GENEROSITY.—Having spoken to the guests, He turns to the host, to teach him the lesson of generosity. Hospitality is good. Scripture recommends it. Our Lord does not forbid it. But there is something better than mere hospitality: unselfish generosity. The **not** here means "not only also" or "not so much . . . as." It denies not absolutely but conditionally. Hospitality feeds those who are needy; generosity waits upon hunger and nakedness and misery.

12. **Call not thy friends**—"that is, I do not bid thee 'call thy friends or thy neighbours.' Our Lord leaves these offices of humanity and courtesy as they were, and teaches an higher duty. But it is not implied herein, that we should be sparing in entertaining those that need it not, in order to assist those who do need, with all that is saved from those needless entertainments. **Lest a recompence be made.** This fear is as much unknown to the world, as even the fear of riches"—WESLEY.

14. **One of them that sat at table hearing these things**—"and being touched therewith—**said, Happy is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God**—alluding to what had been just spoken. It means, he that shall have a part in the resurrection of the just"—WESLEY.

Vers. 15–24. THE BANQUET REFUSED.—16. **Then said He**—"continuing the allusion, **A certain man made a great supper.** As if He had said, All men are not sensible of this happiness. Many might have a part in it, and will not"—WESLEY.

18. **They all began to make excuse.** "One of them pleads only his own will, **I go**; another, a pretended necessity, **I must needs go**; the third, impossibility, **I cannot come.** All of them want the holy hatred mentioned in ver. 26. All of them perish by things in themselves lawful. 'I must needs go.' The most urgent worldly affairs frequently fall out just at the time when God makes the freest offers of salvation"—WESLEY.

21. **The servant came and showed his Lord these things.** "So ministers ought to lay before the Lord, in prayer, the obedience or disobedience of their hearers"—WESLEY.

23. **Compel them to come in**—"with all the violence of love, and the force of God's word. Such compulsion, and such only, in matters of religion, was used by Christ and His apostles"—WESLEY.

24. "**For** refers to **go out** (ver. 23)"—WESLEY.

It was in harmony with Jewish ideas to present the festival of the consummated kingdom of heaven under the figure of a feast. The paschal meal gave them the type of it. Even heathen festivals and sacrificial feasts rested upon the same common foundation (Ex. 24. 11; Ps. 23. 5; Isa. 25. 6). "This feast of the kindgom of heaven is an image of the blessedness and fellowship of the life of faith, and assumes a threefold form: (1) it is

a feast in the future world (Luke 16. 22); (2) it is the future feast at the visible advent of the Messiah (Luke 14. 15; Matt. 25. 1); (3) it is the present spiritual feast which begins at once with the life of faith (Ps. 23.); and the parables (Matt. 20. 1-14), and in this section. The Jewish rabbinical mythology exhibited the feast at the end of the world, at the advent of the Messiah, with all the sensuous characteristics, and in colossal figures." The occasion for the representation of the kingdom of heaven under this image was given the Saviour by the remark of his fellow-guest and by the feast of the Pharisee. He Himself was the great Guest, but by His own inherent superiority He became the Teacher of the table, and this is a specimen of His table-talk—His household conversation. It would be an interesting Bible study to trace *Christ in other people's houses.* We should see how real spiritual life transmutes the common, and transfigures all things. But this is by the way. All spiritual blessings are, broadly speaking, implied in this illustration of a feast. The gospel is a word soiled by use, and robbed of its depth and breadth of meaning through want of thought. But when we measure it, it stretches away like the horizon. It is truly a great supper. For those who care to indulge in fanciful likenesses, Bible writers have called it great, because of the greatness of Him who has prepared it; because intended for the whole world; because of the company of angels and saints; because purchased at a great cost; because of the mercy and love which prepared it for the unworthy. We prefer the general conception, but cannot be a law to others. In scriptural interpretation every teacher in his own order. The first invitation was through the prophets; the Jews the first invited. Historically, the Jews were the called people—the guests of God. All preachers of the gospel—voiceless or otherwise, for nature is a most eloquent preacher to those who have ears to hear—have been, and still are, gathering the guests to the great Supper. From different nations, from sunny and leaden skies, from varying circumstances, and through unlike experience, these guests are gathering. It is a parable of the world's movement and the Church's work. The feast is for all people. The provisions are boundless; the invitation is free. Three excuses given, as specimens of the rest, answer to the **care of this world** (ver. 18), **the deceitfulness of riches** (ver. 19), and **the pleasures of this life** (ver. 20), which choke the word. Each differs from the other, and each has its own plausibility, but all come to the same result. We have other things to attend to more pressing just now.

Vers. 25-35. On Counting the Cost.—26. **If any man come to Me, and hate not his father**—"comparatively to Christ; yea, so as actually to renounce his field, oxen, wife, —all things, and act as if he hated them, when they stand in competition with Him"—Wesley.

28. **And which of you intending to build a tower**—"that is, and whosoever of you intends to follow Me, let him first seriously weigh these things"—Wesley.

31. **Another king.** "Does this mean the prince of this world? Certainly he has greater numbers on his side. How numerous are his children and servants!"—Wesley.

33. **So**—"like this man, who, being afraid to face his enemy, sends to make peace with him. **Every one who forsaketh not all that he hath**—(1) by withdrawing his affections from all the creatures; (2) by enjoying them only in and for God, only in such a measure and manner as leads to Him; (3) by hating them all, in the sense above mentioned. **Cannot be My disciple**—but will surely desist from building that tower; neither can he persevere in fighting the good fight of faith"—Wesley.

34. **Salt**—"every Christian; but more eminently every minister"—Wesley.

All is made solemn and emphatic by the proverbial expression (ver. 35)—**He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

CHAPTER XV.

Vers. 1-10. Lost and Found.—1. *Sinners seeking the Saviour.*—**Then drew near unto Jesus all the publicans and sinners,** drawn by the fascination of His personality, the pathos and hopefulness of His teaching. They were drawing near, not only at present, but this was their habit. (See R.V.) Though He came to save sinners, He required then, as now, that they drew near to Him. "Publicans" were for the most part apostate Jews, and were more abhorred than the heathen. "Sinners" were open and notorious offenders against the law of God. Tenderness towards the most abandoned is a sign of a God-like soul. A physician's special work is among the sick and the dying. And it is one of the peculiarities of the life of Jesus, that men and women who were helpless and outcast felt that in Him there dwelt a heart of pity. "Not without reason," as Oosterzee says, "does the eye rest with continually new interest on the picture: Jesus among the publicans and sinners. It is the gospel within the gospel, like John 3. 16; Rom. 1. 17; and some other passages. This of itself is remarkable, that the greatest sinners feel themselves drawn, as it were, with a secret attraction to Jesus; what an entirely unique impression must His personality have produced upon these troubled and smitten hearts. Thus does He reveal Himself at the same time as the Prince of Peace, of whom Ps. 72. 12-14, and so many other passages of the prophetic Scriptures, speak; and what the Pharisees impute to Him as a trespass, becomes for faith an occasion the rather for praise and thanks. The feast which He keeps with publicans is a striking symbol of the feast

in the kingdom of God (Luke 14. 21-23), and, at the same time, the happy prophecy of the heavenly feast which He will hereafter share with His redeemed in the fulness of bliss." The chief business of our life is to draw near to Jesus. For nearness begets resemblance—the life Divine in the soul that begins with Jesus, grows through Jesus, grows like Jesus. Christ is man's highest ideal realised, as well as God's revelation manifested. **All the publicans**—"that is, all who were in that place. It seems our Lord was in some town of Galilee of the Gentiles, from whence he afterwards went to Jerusalem (Luke 17. 11)"—WESLEY.

2. *Self-righteousness condemning sympathy.* **—The Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.** They were applying the rule—Tell me the company you keep, and I will tell you what you are. But they were uttering a blessed, though unconscious testimony to Christ. The thing they censured was His especial delight. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners. He came to seek and to save the lost. They that are whole need not a physician. Our Lord not only received sinners, but allowed them to receive Him. The Pharisees repelled the touch of the wicked as pollution; He actually encouraged their approach and confidence. He was not afraid of evil. The New Testament has instances of every kind and class welcomed and saved, as if He would make it impossible for any to doubt His willingness to receive all who came to Him.

"He will receive THE RICH—Joseph of Arimathæa, an example.
He will receive THE POOR—Lazarus, the beggar, an example.
He will receive THE LEARNED—Dionysius, the Areopagite, an example.
He will receive PHYSICIANS—Luke, an example.
He will receive SOLDIERS—the Roman Centurion, an example.
He will receive FISHERMEN—Peter, etc., examples.
He will receive EXTORTIONERS—Zacchæus, an example.
He will receive TAX-GATHERERS—Publicans, examples.
He will receive THIEVES—the dying robber, an example.
He will receive PERSECUTORS AND MURDERERS—Saul, an example.
He will receive PERSONS POSSESSED OF DEMONS—many examples.
He will receive BACKSLIDERS—Peter, an example.
He will receive PERSONS IN TRADE—Lydia, a seller of purple, an example.
He will receive STATESMEN AND COURTIERS—the Eunuch of Ethiopia, an example.
He will receive FAMILIES—that of Bethany, an example.
He will receive WHOLE MULTITUDES—those at the day of Pentecost an example"—VAN DOREN.

The Pharisees forgot the repentance these sinners showed who drew near to Jesus. He received them, not because they were sinners, but because they were sinners seeking to be saints. Different effects were produced by the presence and words of Jesus. The humble heard and learnt; the proud murmured and condemned, although they murmured amongst themselves. They thought their discontent. Fear, reverence, suspicion that He was something more than they willingly recognised, prevented them directing their words against the Holy One of God. To understand His parables spoken at this time, we must understand the Pharisees' feeling, and the self-estimate it implied. This man receiveth sinners; but we are not sinners. Sinners are they who commit outrageous acts. All tax-gatherers are such sinners. Do we not judge the class by its individuals? An irrational and uncharitable but not uncommon method. And He is with them—eating and drinking with them. Can He be a holy Prophet of God? Like gathers to like. **This man receiveth sinners**—is He not one? They were in the world to tell that God receiveth sinners, that the story of the world is a history of mercy. Had they been faithful, their work would have been like Christ's; their life confirmed the realness of His.

Vers. 3–10. PARABLES OF THE SEEKING SAVIOUR.—Starting from the objection of the Pharisees and scribes, our Lord says—Sinners are justified in seeking Me, for I came to seek them. The three parables are illustrations and confirmations, on which BENGEL says: "The three parables represent the sinner (1) in his stupidity; (2) as all-unconscious of his lost condition; (3) knowingly and willingly estranged from God." "The first two," TRENCH observes, "set forth the *seeking* love of God; the last, His *receiving* love." Stier sees God in Christ in the first parable; the Holy Spirit in the Church in the second; the Father Almighty and All Merciful in the third. Luther descries a picture of the Church in the woman sweeping the house. We leave these distinctions merely with a mention. The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin are the precious possessions of the universal Church. Elsewhere we may hold different opinions, see with different eyes; here disagreement is impossible. We see Jesus the love of God to all who are needy and guilty. The great Shepherd of the sheep is concerned about all who stray. Christ will not willingly allow the image of God that is stamped upon the soul to be defaced. He values the treasure too much to lose it willingly. He did not sit still in heaven bewailing the lost; He came down to earth seeking them. Self-denial, shame, suffering, lay in His path, but He went steadfastly forward. The Cross interprets the parables of seeking and finding. As He came into the world at His incarnation, so He comes now by every ministry of help and blessing. If He would not willingly lose us, let us not be unwilling to be saved. To save—here is boundless charity Divine; to seek that He might save—here is impassioned devotion. Christ hath left us an example!

3. **He spake** "three parables of the same import; for the sheep, the piece of silver, and the lost son, all declare, in direct contrariety to the Pharisees and scribes, in what manner God receiveth sinners"—WESLEY.

4. **Leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness**—"where they used to feed. All uncultivated ground, like our commons, was by the Jews termed **wilderness**, or 'desert.' **And go after.** In recovering a lost soul, God, as it were, labours. May we not learn hence, that to *let them alone* who are in sin, is both unchristian and inhuman?"—WESLEY.

7. **Joy shall be**—"solemn and festal joy. **In heaven**—first in our blessed Lord Himself, and then among the angels and spirits of just men, perhaps informed thereof by God Himself, or by the angels who ministered to them. **Over one sinner**—one gross, open, notorious sinner—**that repenteth**—that is thoroughly changed in heart and life—**more than over ninety and nine just persons**—comparatively just, outwardly blameless—**that need not such a repentance.** For they need not, cannot, repent of the sins which they never committed. The sum is, As a father peculiarly rejoices when an extravagant child, supposed to be utterly lost, comes to a thorough sense of his duty; or as any other person, who has recovered what he had given up for gone, has a more sensible satisfaction in it, than in several other things equally valuable, but not in such danger; so do the angels in heaven peculiarly rejoice in the conversion of the most abandoned sinners. Yea, and God Himself so readily forgives and receives them, that He may be represented as having part in the joy"—WESLEY.

Vers. 11-32. THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.—*The Pearl of the Parables.*—"If it were allowable," says STIER, "to introduce here the distinctions applicable to human things, we might term this parable the crown and the pearl of all our Lord's parables. How many words would it require to express all the feelings of reverent astonishment with which we ever contemplate and study it? How simple, yet how profound; how transparently artless as a chapter of human life, and yet how full of mystery, as a revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; how perfectly natural is the picture as a whole, and yet how full of significance, down to the slightest and minutest features and touches; how eternally riveted on the memory are the words, how inexhaustibly to be explored are their ever new evolutions of meaning; with what dramatic life is all related, so that every fresh clause suggests in itself a whole history, which one is involuntarily constrained to pursue for himself; and again, with what force does every word arrest the conscience, and point to the parabolical application of the whole;—in short, to sum all in one word, how Divine-human is this parable of the God-man. So individually characteristic is it, that no other is its fellow. So universally comprehensive is it, that we all, as Nitzsch remarks, must find ourselves reproduced in this parable in some sense, either as we have become, or as we have ever been, or as we are hoping and endeavouring to be. "There is no parable of the Saviour," OOSTERZEE being our witness, "whose beauty and high value have been so generally and openly acknowledged as that of the prodigal son. Nothing would be easier than to collect a series of enthusiastic eulogies on this parable, even from rationalists and unbelievers. But mindful that the Divine, least of anything, needs our human praise, we will rather direct the eye to that which is here portrayed." "Never," declares FARRAR, "certainly in human language was so much—such a world of love and wisdom and tenderness—compressed into such few immortal words. Every line, every touch of the picture, is full of beautiful eternal significance. Put in the one scale all that Confucius or Sakya Mouni, or Zoroaster, or Socrates, ever wrote or said,—and they wrote and said many beautiful and holy words,—and put in the other the parable of the prodigal son alone, with all that this single parable connects and means, and can any candid spirit doubt which scale would outweigh the other in eternal preciousness, in Divine adaptation to the wants of man?" "The parables of the lost sheep and of the lost piece of silver," remarks GEIKIE, "were enforced by the noblest of all the parables. Henceforth, for all ages, it was proclaimed beyond the possibility of misconception, that, in the teaching of Jesus, God looks with unspeakably greater favour on the penitent humility of the 'sinner,' with its earnest of gratitude and love, than on cold correctness in which the heart has no place."

A Parable of Human Passion.—All commentators agree that by the Father is meant God Himself, but "in regard of the great primary application of this parable," says TRENCH, "there always have been the two different views in the Church. There are those who have seen in its two sons, the Jew and Gentile; and in the younger son's departure from his father's house, the history of the great apostasy of the Gentile world; in his return, its reception into the privileges of the new covenant, as in the elder brother, a lively type of the narrow-hearted, self-extolling Jew, who grudged that the sinners of the Gentiles should be admitted to the same blessing as themselves. Others behold rather in the younger son a pattern of all those who—whether Jews or Gentiles, whether in that old dispensation, which was then drawing to an end, or brought up in the bosom of the Christian Church—have widely departed from God, and, after having tasted the misery which follows upon all departure from Him, have by His grace been brought back to Him, as to the one source of blessedness and life; while in the elder brother they have seen either a narrow form of real righteousness, or seeing (ver. 29)

only his own account of himself, pharisaical self-righteousness—one righteous in his own sight, not in the Lord's." The original relation of man to God is that of a son to a father. God the Father and Creator has sons, self-conscious, endowed with will, begotten in His likeness, and even in their apostasy they are children. We may apologise somewhat for the waywardness of youth. But it is the practical wisdom of young people to listen to those who have marked the way of folly with bleeding feet. For inexperience must pay its penalty. Sin and suffering are inextricable. The uncontrolled passion is madness. The prodigal in the parable did not return until he came to himself. "To depart from God is not to throw off the yoke, but to exchange a light yoke for a heavy one, and one gracious Master for a thousand imperious tyrants and lords"—TRENCH. Misery follows on sin. Wilful waste has ever been the forerunner of woeful want. Famine succeeds fierce indulgence. Passion makes its own scourge. "He who begins by using the world as a servant, to minister to his pleasure, ends by reversing the relationship." The prodigal could reach no lower depth. He was "perishing, unpitied, alone in the world, and ready to disappear from it unmissed." At length he began to think. And remembering that he was still a son, that he had yet a father, he turned his feet homeward. There was no want at home; there he will seek a welcome.

A Parable of Divine Patience.—"Said and done." Blessed association. He arose and came to his father. A long journey lay before him; many wild, confused thoughts would torture him, but his goal was HOME; his trust sole and sufficient was in his FATHER. His father was looking out for him; awaiting him. A welcome was offered before he could ask one. The father's feelings had been outraged, but the father's heart remained. **He fell on his neck and kissed him.** "What! in all his filth?—Yes. In all his rags?—Yes. In all his haggard, shattered wretchedness?—Yes. Our Father, which art in heaven, is this Thy portraiture? It is even so. (Jer. 31. 20.) And because it is so I wonder not that such incomparable teaching hath made the world new"—BROWN. He returned with a slave's prayer; he is acknowledged as a son, and restored to all forfeited privileges of sonship. The whole of the gospel plan is not here; the emphasis is in the enduring patience and abounding love of our heavenly Father, whose commandments we have broken, whose mercy we have slighted, whose justice we have spurned, whose voice we have disregarded. But in defiance of our folly, and notwithstanding the envy and discontent of the elder brothers in the Church and the world, there is mercy with God for all who think AND TURN, forsake sin, and follow after holiness and peace.

12. Give me the part of goods that falleth to me. "See the root of all sin,—a desire of disposing of ourselves; of independency of God!"—WESLEY.

13. He took a journey into a far country—"far from God: God was not in all his thoughts. **And squandered away his substance**—all the grace he had received"—WESLEY.

14. He began to be in want—"all his worldly pleasures failing, he grew conscious of his want of real good"—WESLEY.

15. And he joined himself to a citizen of that country—"either the devil, or one of his children; the genuine citizens of that country which is far from God. **He sent him to feed swine**—he employed him in the base drudgery of sin"—WESLEY.

16. He would fain have filled his belly with the husks—"he would fain have satisfied himself with worldly comforts. Vain, fruitless endeavour!"—WESLEY.

17. And coming to himself—"for till then he was beside himself, as all men are, so long as they are without God in the world"—WESLEY.

18. I will arise, and go to my father. "How accurately are the first steps of true repentance here pointed out! **Against heaven**—against God"—WESLEY.

20. And he arose, and came to his father. "The moment he had resolved, he began to execute his resolution. **While he was yet a great way off, his father saw him**—returning, starved, naked"—WESLEY.

22. But the father said—"interrupting him, before he had finished what he intended to say. So does God frequently cut an earnest confession short by a display of His pardoning love"—WESLEY.

23. Let us be merry. "Both here and wherever else this word occurs, whether in the Old or New Testament, it implies nothing of levity, but a solid, serious, religious, heartfelt joy; indeed, this was the ordinary meaning of the word two hundred years ago, when our translation was made'—WESLEY.

25. "The elder son seems to represent the Pharisees and scribes mentioned (ver. 2)"—WESLEY.

27. Thy father hath killed the fatted calf. "Perhaps he mentions this, rather than the robe or ring, as having a nearer connection with the music and dancing"—WESLEY.

28. He was angry, and would not go in. "How natural to us is this kind of resentment!"—WESLEY.

29. Lo, so many years do I serve thee. "So he was one of the instances mentioned (ver. 7). How admirably, therefore, does this parable confirm that assertion! **Yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends**—perhaps God does not usually give much joy to those who never felt the sorrows of repentance"—WESLEY.

31. Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. "This suggests a strong reason,

against murmuring at the indulgence shown to the greatest of sinners. As the father's receiving the younger son did not cause him to disinherit the elder, so God's receiving notorious sinners will be no loss to those who have always served Him; neither will He raise these to a state of glory equal to that of those who have always served Him, if they have, upon the whole, made a greater progress in inward as well as outward holiness"—WESLEY.

32. **This thy brother was dead, and is alive.** "A thousand of these delicate touches in the inspired writings escape an inattentive reader. In ver. 30 the elder son had unkindly and indecently said, 'This thy son.' The father in his reply mildly reproves him, and tenderly says, 'This thy brother.' Amazing intimation, that the best of men ought to account the worst sinners their brethren still, and should especially remember this relation when they show any inclination to return. Our Lord in this whole parable shows not only that the Jews had no cause to murmur at the reception of the Gentiles (a point which did not at that time so directly fall under consideration), but that if the Pharisees were indeed as good as they fancied themselves to be, still they had no reason to murmur at the kind treatment of any sincere penitent. Thus does He condemn them, even on their own principles, and so leaves them without excuse. We have in this parable a lively emblem of the condition and behaviour of sinners in their natural state. Thus, when enriched by the bounty of the great common Father, do they ungratefully run from Him (ver. 12). Sensual pleasures are eagerly pursued till they have squandered away all the grace of God (ver. 13). And while these continue, not a serious thought of God can find a place in their minds. And even when afflictions come upon them (ver. 14), still they will make hard shifts before they will let the grace of God, concurring with His providence, persuade them to think of a return (vers. 15, 16). When they see themselves naked, indigent, and undone, then they recover the exercise of their reason (ver. 17); then they remember the blessings they have thrown away, and attend to the misery they have incurred; and hereupon they resolve to return to their Father, and put the resolution immediately in practice (vers. 18, 19). Behold with wonder and pleasure the gracious reception they find from Divine, injured goodness! When such a prodigal comes to his Father, He sees him afar off (ver. 20). He pities, meets, embraces him; and interrupts his acknowledgments with the tokens of His returning favour (ver. 21). He arrays him with the robe of a Redeemer's righteousness, with inward and outward holiness, adorns him with all His sanctifying graces, and honours him with the tokens of adopting love (ver. 22). And all this He does with unutterable delight, in that he who was lost is now found (vers. 23, 24). Let no elder brother murmur at this indulgence, but rather welcome the prodigal back into the family. And let those who have been thus received wander no more, but emulate the strictest piety of those who for many years have served their heavenly Father, and not transgressed His commandments"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XVI.

Vers. 1–13. THE UNJUST STEWARD.—In reading the parable of the unjust steward we must note that the word lord is not spelt with a capital letter. Forgetfulness of this simple fact has caused many to misread the story. They have supposed that our Lord commended cunning, and almost connived at injustice. It is the lord or master of the servant who is speaking. The Lord Jesus does not utter His own words until ver. 9, **I say unto you.** No parable has caused more perplexity than this. And, in trying to apply every phrase, the steward has been regarded as representing the Pharisees, the publicans, Christ, Judas Iscariot, and even Satan. We shall be safe if we seize as the main lesson of the parable, the one which Christ Himself attached to it, the use of earthly gifts of wealth and opportunity for heavenly and not for earthly aims.

The Unjust Steward (ver. 1).—**There was a certain rich man which had a steward.** How dependent we are in life. The man was rich, but he could not do without a steward. Because he had so much he could not attend to it all. Our opportunities are responsibilities; our advantages create their own difficulties. Out of this dependence grows honour between man and man. The master must rely upon his servant's honesty. Hence our teachers are never tired of insisting upon the importance of truth, integrity, and devotion to duty. The rich man was in the hands of his steward. In ancient times stewards were often slaves; this was a freeman—capable of and liable to dismissal. Eliezer was ruler over all the house of Abraham. Ministers, teachers, wealthy men, clever people—all are stewards of God. Everything we have we hold in trust. Honesty is necessary, dishonesty is possible. The steward was dishonest. **He was accused unto his master that he was wasting his goods.** Probably as many have done since by luxurious living. He began by spending more than he earned. This is a species of dishonesty, and is the fruitful parent of crime. Many a youth who has been taught in our schools has allowed himself to overspend, and then borrowed from his master's till, intending to pay back again, until he coiled a net about him from which there was no escape, and ruin has stared him in the face. Never palter with the distinction between "mine and thine." Honesty, simple homely honesty, is a supreme virtue.

And He said also to His disciples—"not only to the scribes and Pharisees, to whom He had been hitherto speaking, but to

all the younger as well as the elder brethren; to the returning prodigals who were now His disciples. **A certain rich man had a steward.** Christ here teaches all that are now in favour with God, particularly pardoned penitents, to behave wisely in what is committed to them"—WESLEY.

Called to account (ver. 2).—A wrong course may be a long course, but it has an end. Convinced of the steward's guilt, the master **called him and said, What is this that I hear of thee? render the account of thy stewardship, for thou canst be no longer steward.** The truth of the accusation is presupposed. The rich man is convinced that the steward has robbed him, and he says, "Render the account." There may be some emphasis in "thee." Do I hear this of thee—my steward; so highly placed, so trusted, hast thou been a steward of injustice? Alas, the world is growing bad! Ingratitude would thus be added to injustice. What a falling off was here! The depth of degradation is in proportion to the height of honour and position.

Unspoken thoughts (vers. 3, 4).—Driven from his master's presence, discovered and disgraced, the man had time to think. **He said within himself.** What a realm this is—within himself. Every one of us is a king; self is our kingdom. Degradation issues when we resign our authority. Thought is unspoken speech; speech is spoken thought. Danger sharpened the steward's thinking faculties. There is no spur like necessity. **What shall I do?** He had done already—done wrong. He had lived easily, smoothly, prosperously. But there was a canker at the heart of his tree of life. The end was approaching. What shall I do—dig or beg? There was an alternative. But digging was hard, begging shameful. **I have not strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed.** Cannot, will not—what powerful forces these are in life! Suddenly the steward sees a way of escape. It comes to him in the midst of his thinking, and he probably spoke under the influence of his excitement. **I am resolved what to do.** What strength there is in resolve! Our will is next only to omnipotence. And just as in the parable the man's cleverness and not dishonesty is commended, so we may admire the resolution of many people in regard to things of which we cannot approve. Irresolution is a sign of weakness, and sometimes leads to serious consequences. **I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship they may receive me into their houses.** He had not enriched himself. He had spent as he gathered. Ill-gotten gains never last. Others had been associated with him in business and pleasure. He will now make them his debtors, and then eat the bread of dependence.

3. **To beg I am ashamed**—"but not ashamed to cheat! This was likewise a sense of honour!—'by men called honour, but by angels frowned'"—WESLEY.

4. **I know**—"that is, I am resolved—**what to do**"—WESLEY.

Partners in crime (vers. 5–7).—In the East rents are paid in kind, and a responsible steward would have amplest opportunity to defraud. **Calling to him each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?** Out of his own mouth he will judge him. He shall acknowledge his own indebtedness. **How much? A hundred. Take thy bond and sit down quickly, and write fifty. How much? Take thy bond and write fourscore.** There was haste; but there was astuteness. Some can be bought cheap; others only by a large bribe. Some, too, have not conscience enough to resist a small offer, but a large offer would shock them. The method was successful. **His lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely;** not nobly, but prudently. He had been clever in devising expedients. Hence some have called this, not the parable of the unjust or unrighteous steward, but the parable of the prudent steward.

A Lesson of Life (vers. 8–13).—**The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.** Worldly people are often more energetic, more fertile in resource, than Christian people. We may learn from our enemies. How indifferent we often are in promoting a good cause, in seeking to be good that we may be able to do good! So our Lord says, **Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness.** Mammon means wealth, and is called unrighteousness because the abuse of it is so common, and it often leads to unrighteousness. We turn mammon into a friend, and make ourselves friends by its means, when we use riches, not as our own to squander, but as God's to employ in deeds of usefulness and mercy. And what is true of wealth is true of all other gifts of God—ours they are not, except as God's stewards.

8. **And the lord commended the unjust steward**—"namely, in this respect, because he had used timely precaution; so that though the dishonesty of such a servant be detestable, yet his foresight, care, and contrivance about the interests of this life deserve our imitation with regard to the more important affairs of another. **The children of this world**—those who seek no other portion than this world—**are wiser**—not absolutely, for they are, one and all, egregious fools; but they are more consistent with themselves; they are truer to their principles; they more steadily pursue their end; they are wiser in their generation—that is, in their own way—**than the children of light**—the children of God, whose light shines on their hearts"—WESLEY.

9. **And I say to you.** "Be good stewards even of the lowest talents wherewith God hath

intrusted you. **Mammon** means riches or money. It is termed **the mammon of unrighteousness**, because of the manner wherein it is commonly either procured or employed. Make yourselves friends of this by doing all possible good, particularly to the children of God. **That when ye fail**—when your flesh and your heart faileth, when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, those of them who are gone before **may receive**—may welcome—**you into the everlasting habitations**"—WESLEY.

10. "And whether ye have more or less, see that ye be **faithful**, as well as wise, stewards. **He that is faithful** in what is meanest of all, worldly substance, is also faithful in things of an higher nature; and he that uses these lowest gifts unfaithfully is likewise unfaithful in spiritual things"—WESLEY.

11. **Who will intrust you with the true riches?** "How should God intrust you with spiritual and eternal, which alone are true, riches?"—WESLEY.

12. **If ye have not been faithful in that which was another's.** "None of these temporal things are yours; you are only stewards of them, not proprietors. God is the Proprietor of all; He lodges them in your hands for a season; but still they are His property. Rich men, understand and consider this. If your steward uses any part of *your* estate (so called in the language of men) any further or any otherwise than you direct, he is a knave; he has neither conscience nor honour. Neither have you either one or the other if you use any part of that estate, which is in truth God's, not yours, any otherwise than He directs. **That which is your own**—heaven, which, when you have it, will be your own for ever"—WESLEY.

13. "And you cannot be faithful to God if you trim between God and the world—if you do not serve Him alone"—WESLEY.

Vers. 14–31. PHARISEES REBUKED; DIVES AND LAZARUS. — *Covetous lovers of money* (ver. 14; R.V., 2 Tim. 3. 2).—**They derided Him**—"an expression of open insolence"—WESLEY.

15. **And He said to them, Ye are they who justify yourselves before men.** "The sense of the whole passage is, That pride wherewith you justify yourselves feeds covetousness, derides the gospel (ver. 14), and destroys the Law (ver. 18); all which is illustrated by a terrible example. **Ye justify yourselves before men**—ye think yourselves righteous, and persuade others to think you so"—WESLEY.

16. "**The Law and the Prophets were in force until John: from that time** the gospel takes place; and humble, upright men receive it with inexpressible earnestness"—WESLEY.

17. "Not that the gospel at all destroys the Law"—WESLEY.

18. "But ye do; particularly in this notorious instance"—WESLEY.

19. **There was a certain rich man**—"very probably a Pharisee, and one that justified himself before men: a very honest, as well as honourable gentleman; though it was not proper to mention his name on this occasion. **Who was clothed in purple and fine linen**—and, doubtless, esteemed on this account (perhaps not only by those who sold it, but by most that knew him) as encouraging trade, and acting according to his quality. **And feasted splendidly every day**—and consequently was esteemed yet more for his generosity and hospitality in keeping so good a table"—WESLEY.

20. **And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus**—"according to the Greek pronunciation, or Eleazar. By his name it may be conjectured he was of no mean family, though it was thus reduced. There was no reason for our Lord to conceal his name, which probably was then well known. Theophylact observes, from the tradition of the Hebrews, that he lived at Jerusalem. **Yea, the dogs also came and licked his sores.** It seems this circumstance is recorded to show that all his ulcers lay bare, and were not closed or bound up"—WESLEY.

22. **And the beggar**—"worn out with hunger and pain, and want of all things, **died, and was carried by angels** (amazing change of the scene!) **into Abraham's bosom**—so the Jews styled paradise, the place where the souls of good men remain from death to the resurrection. **The rich man also died, and was buried**—doubtless with pomp enough, though we do not read of his lying in state; that stupid, senseless pageantry, that shocking insult to ■ poor, putrefying carcase, was reserved for our enlightened age!"—WESLEY.

23. **He seeth Abraham afar off**—"and yet knew him at that distance. And shall not Abraham's children, when they are together in paradise, know each other?"—WESLEY.

24. **Father Abraham, have mercy on me.** "It cannot be denied, but here is one precedent in Scripture of praying to departed saints: but who is it that prays, and with what success? Will any who considers this be fond of copying after him?"—WESLEY.

25. **But Abraham said, Son**—"according to the flesh. Is it not worthy of observation, that Abraham will not revile even a damned soul? Shall living men revile one another? **Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things**—thou didst choose and accept of worldly things as THY GOOD, thy happiness. And can any be at a loss to know why he was in torments? This damnable idolatry, had there been nothing more, was enough to sink him to the nethermost hell"—WESLEY.

26. **Besides this, there is a great gulf fixed.** "Reader, to which side of it wilt thou go?"—WESLEY.

28. **Lest they also come into this place.** "He might justly fear lest their reproaches should add to his own torment"—WESLEY.

31. **Neither will they be persuaded**—"truly

to repent: for this implies an entire change of heart. But a thousand apparitions cannot effect this: God only can, applying His word" —WESLEY.

II. *The Rich Man and Lazarus* (vers. 19-31).—A page of contrasts. Let us mark them.

1. *In Life.*—**A certain rich man**—unnamed, perhaps unknown. That our Saviour drew a full-length portrait from real life is not quite proven. We think it would hardly be like Jesus, who had such perfect power of repression, to mark out some celebrity. We may regard the narrative as partly history and partly parable. At the gate of many a rich man beggars might be seen sitting anywhere at any time. A life of self-enjoyment is a picture the world has been familiar with through all the ages. Such a man as is here portrayed may have been a Pharisee in creed, but he was a Sadducee in life. He may have said, I believe in immortality and eternal life; but he lived as if there were no other world. A man of this world, forgetful that he is God's steward, such was the rich man of the parable. In strongest contrast, "serving as a foil to the worldly rich man," we have another, "stripped of all temporal good," in the most abject misery. He has a name, and that is almost all he has. He is laid at the rich man's gate, for he was too weak or too invalided to walk there. He cannot dig, and he begs rather with the eloquent, dumb tongue of need than with man's speech. His misery calls to the rich man's mercy, his poverty to the rich man's plenty. The dogs of the household came and licked his sores. They knew him whom their master left unnoticed. But the lesson is more than the picture. Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart. Dives shut himself within himself. The world of poverty and sorrow and crime was to him an outside world. If it did not intrude on him he would not regard it. Jesus Christ came into the world to seek as well as to save: to seek that He might save. And all gifts are for distribution: all opportunities are index fingers we neglect at the peril of our souls. We are responsible for what we leave undone, as well as for what we do. The gospel of Jesus places an infinite value on a single soul. The conversations of Jesus were often for the benefit of a few; now and then His words were addressed to one. Organisations are valuable: the individual is important. What is my responsibility? Where does duty bid me follow her? A rich man is not necessarily a godless man. A poor man is not, because of his poverty, a pious man. Piety has to do with character, although it may control circumstances. Dives might have been admitted into Abraham's bosom, and Lazarus might have missed the reward. The material things around the rich man were sufficient for him, and the thought seldom or never came to him, What am I doing? whither am I hastening? How many thousands are like Dives to-day! They commit no great crimes, but they are neglecters, triflers. They live a butterfly's life, passing from flower to flower. They live for nothing, and end by thinking there is nothing to live for. If they thought how many Lazaruses they could feed and clothe, they would be happier, the world brighter, and heaven nearer. Nothing glitters like generosity; nothing is so satisfying as a stainless conscience and the smile of God. To be rich, and rich toward God, is a noble goal.

2. *In Death.*—**And it came to pass. . . .** With this insignificant phrase what events of significance are ushered in: nothing less than death and judgment. **The beggar died; the rich man died.** That is to say, the world quietly faded from them. Realities that had become familiar to them through custom and use disappeared. All those things they touched and loved went like the fabric of a dream, leaving not a rack behind. On the great half-revealed world these two men went, each to meet his God, each to tell his tale, each to read or re-read his life in the light that knows no darkness. "The rich man died; the beggar died." The rich man died, and had a funeral, costly and gorgeous, worthy of the station and occasion. **He was buried.** The poor beggar's funeral is not mentioned. It was not worthy of record. He was buried anyhow, anywhere, by anybody. Death ended his pain, closed the page of the story of his poverty. The body was no doubt buried by friend or stranger. The essential Lazarus, who was in that body, is carried by other hands to other regions. In life he had the ministry of not unfriendly dogs; in death he has the ministry of angels. In life he craved help, and sometimes craved it in vain; in death he has help from unexpected quarters, given without his asking, and all-sufficient for his needs. "One angel," as CHRYSOSTOM preaches, "would have been strong enough for this service, but it is the joy and emulation of the angels in common to bring one sinner out of his last prison-house into the wealthy place." "They carry him into Abraham's bosom, which was most probably already in Christ's time the Jewish designation of the place of the blessed fathers in Hades. As S. John lay at the table in the bosom of Jesus, and the Eternal Son Himself, before the time began, was in the bosom of the Father, so shall they that are of the faith be blessed with faithful Abraham, when they are received into everlasting habitations. Lazarus before the rich man's gate was probably the final probation of his life, to try whether such a sight would move him to reflection; or was he the last and only intercessor who lengthened his days of grace?"—STIER. He died—how is not recorded; and was buried—in what manner is left to inference and imagination.

3. *In Eternity.*—Although the intention of the parable, as Oosterzee wisely says, is not to give special instruction about future retribution, we thankfully accept the rays of light that

fall upon this also. Yet it is immediately obvious that the whole parable is veiled in the costume of the Jewish conceptions of the last things. Without declaring that all is equally clear, we may at least contend that this parable gives us suggestions—enough to enliven hope, though not enough to satisfy curiosity concerning the future life. After death life continues. The soul does not sleep. Consciousness continues beyond the grave. The rich man knows who and where he is; he recognises Lazarus; can speak of the past, and interest himself in moral questions. The redeemed of the Lord is comforted. The soul is freed from suffering, translated to a place of happiness. Refreshment and fellowship are united. The entrance into the next world is into a congregation of like spirits. The word of God is the mightiest force in moral renewal. If a spirit appeared, scepticism would deny it, and would minimise its appearance. It could only speak of God, of duty, of immortality. The word speaks clearly and distinctly, and it is the word of God. Lazarus rose from the dead—did the Jews believe? Christ rose from the dead—has the world received Him? You have no right to prescribe to God. Accept the revelation He has given you.

CHAPTER XVII.

Vers. 1-10. VARIOUS SAYINGS.—"This piece contains four brief lessons, placed here without introduction: offences (vers. 1 and 2); the pardon of trespasses (vers. 3 and 4); faith (vers. 5 and 6); the non-meritoriousness of works (vers. 7-10)"—GODET. The peril of setting stumblingblocks in the path of others is described and denounced.

1. **It is impossible but offences will come**—"and they ever did, and do, come chiefly by Pharisees; that is, men who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others"—WESLEY.

2. **Little ones**—"weak believers"—WESLEY.

3. **Take heed to yourselves**—"that ye neither offend others, nor be offended by others"—WESLEY.

4. **If he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day return, saying, I repent**—"that is, if he gives sufficient proof that he does really repent, after having sinned ever so often, receive him just as if he had never sinned against thee. But this forgiveness is due only to real penitents. In a lower sense we are to forgive all, penitent or impenitent (so as to bear them the sincerest goodwill, and to do them all the good we can), and that not seven times only, but seventy times seven.

5. **Lord, increase our faith**—"that we may thus forgive, and may neither offend, nor be offended"—WESLEY.

6. **And He said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed**—"if ye had the least measure of true faith, no instance of duty would be too hard for you. **Ye would say to this sycamine tree**—this seems to have been a kind of proverbial expression"—WESLEY.

7. **But which of you?**—"But is it not meet that you should first obey, and then triumph; though still with a deep sense of your utter unprofitableness?"—WESLEY.

9. **Doth he thank that servant**—"does he account himself obliged to him?"—WESLEY.

10. **When we have done all, say, We are unprofitable servants**—"for a man cannot profit God. Happy is he who judges himself an unprofitable servant; miserable is he whom God pronounces such. But though we are unprofitable to *Him*, our serving Him is not unprofitable to *us:* for He is pleased to give by His grace a value to our good works, which, in consequence of His promise, entitles us to an eternal reward"—WESLEY.

Vers. 11-19. THE CLEANSED TEN: THE THANKLESS NINE. — 11. **And it came to pass as He went to Jerusalem.** "This is the first distinct note of time in S. Luke's narrative since ch. 9. 51. It appears to coincide with the journey of which we read in Matt. 19. 1; Mark 10. 1, and is the commencement of the last progress through the regions in which our Lord had already carried on His ministry. The fact peculiar to S. Luke, that it led him through Samaria, apparently through that part which lay on the borders of Galilee, is obviously reported in connection with the miracle that follows; the other Gospels dwelling on the departure from Galilee, and the continuance of the journey to Jerusalem, by the route on the east of the Jordan valley"—ELLICOTT.

12. **Ten men that were lepers.** "The rules of Lev. 13. 45 help us to bring the scene before the mind's eye—the group of the ten sufferers, full of leprous sores, their clothes rent, their heads bare, their upper lips covered, and crying, 'Unclean! unclean!' As only one of the ten was a Samaritan, it seems probable that the unnamed village was on the borderland of the two provinces. It is perhaps significant that our Lord takes neither of the usual caravan roads to Jerusalem,—one of which passed through Samaria, the other through Peræa,—but chooses one for Himself that led through the one district into the other. The herding together of those who were shut out from all other fellowship has its parallel in the four lepers of 2 Kings 7. 3"—PLUMPTRE.

13. **Jesus, Master.** "Although they do not yet know the Saviour's messianic dignity, yet they account Him a prophet, mighty in deed and word; their faith is sincere without being perfect, on which account also the Saviour does not repel them"—VAN OOSTERZEE.

17. **Were not the ten cleansed? But where are the nine?** "Were not the ten cleansed? but the nine—where? What worse leprosy or superstition, ignorance, eager selfishness, or more glaring ingratitude had kept back the others? We do not know"—FARRAR.

18. **Save this stranger.** "The word for 'stranger' means, literally, a man of another race—an alien. It implied, as indeed did the whole treatment of the Samaritans by the Jews, that the former were not recognised as being in any sense the children of Abraham"—ELLICOTT. "The best of us are far too like the nine lepers. We are more ready to pray than to praise, and more disposed to ask God for what we have not than to thank Him for what we have. Murmurings and complainings and discontent abound on every side of us. Few indeed are to be found who are not continually hiding their mercies under a bushel, and setting their wants and trials on a hill. These things ought not so to be"—RYLE.

19. **Thy faith hath made thee whole.** "The verb elsewhere rendered, as in ch. 7. 50, 'hath saved thee,' is obviously used here so as to include both its higher and lower meanings. The nine had had sufficient faith for the restoration of the health of their body; his had gone further, and had given a new and purer life to his soul"—PLUMPTRE.

Ver. 20 to ch. 18. 8. THE MESSIAH'S COMING.—"This piece embraces—(1) a question put by the Pharisees respecting the time of the appearance of the kingdom of God, and the answer of Jesus (vers. 20, 21); (2) a discourse addressed by Jesus to His disciples on the same subject (vers. 22–37); (3) the parable of the unjust judge, which applies the subject treated practically to believers (ch. 18. 1–8)"—GODET

20. **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation**—"with such outward pomp as draws the observation of every one"—WESLEY.

21. **Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there.** "This shall not be the language of those who are, or shall be, sent by Me to declare the coming of My kingdom. **For, behold, the kingdom of God is within,** or among *you*—look not for it in distant times or remote places. It is now in the midst of you; it is come: it is present in the soul of every true believer: it is a spiritual kingdom, an internal principle. Wherever it exists, it exists in the heart"—WESLEY.

22. **Ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man**—"one day of mercy, or one day wherein you might converse with Me, as you do now"—WESLEY.

23. **"They shall say, See,** Christ is **here, or there**—limiting His presence to this or that place"—WESLEY.

24. **So shall also the Son of Man be**—"so swift, so wide, shall His appearing be. **In His day**—the last day"—WESLEY.

26. **The days of the Son of Man**—"those which immediately follow that which is eminently styled 'His day'"—WESLEY.

31. **In that day**—"which will be the grand type of the Last Day, when ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies"—WESLEY.

32. **Remember Lot's wife**—"and escape with all speed, without ever looking behind you"—WESLEY.

33. "The sense of this and the following verses is, Yet as great as the danger will be, do not seek to save your life by violating your conscience: if you do, you will surely lose it. Whereas if you should lose it for My sake, you shall be paid with life everlasting. But the most probable way of preserving it now, is to be always ready to give it up. A peculiar Providence shall then watch over you, and put a difference between you and other men"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Vers. 1–8. THE UNJUST JUDGE.—1. **He spake a parable to them.** "This and the following parable warn us against two fatal extremes with regard to prayer: the former against faintness and weariness, the latter against self confidence"—WESLEY.

7. **And shall not God**—"the most just Judge—**vindicate His own elect**—preserve the Christians from all their adversaries, and in particular save them out of the general destruction, and avenge them of the Jews? **Though He bear long with them**—though He does not immediately put an end, either to the wrongs of the wicked, or the sufferings of good men"—WESLEY.

8. **Yet, when the Son of Man cometh, will He find faith upon earth?**—"yet notwithstanding all the instances both of His long suffering and of His justice, whenever He shall remarkably appear against their enemies in this age, or in after-ages, how few true believers will be found upon earth"—WESLEY.

The two parables of the judge and the widow, and the Pharisee and the publican, although they, perhaps, were not delivered immediately after one another, constitute, however, together, a complete whole. Both have reference to prayer; yet so that in the first, believing perseverance before, in the second humble approach to, the Throne of Grace is commended. In order to end like the widow, one must have begun like the publican, and in order to act as recklessly of conscience as the judge, one must have the heart of a Pharisee in his bosom"—OOSTERZEE.

The Judge and the Widow.—"In almost all our Lord's other parables, the truth which they intended to teach is stated at the close. We travel though the story before we arrive at the moral. Here that meets us at the entrance, standing like an inscription over the door of a public building to tell us its use and purpose, in these words, **He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.** As Matthew Henry says, 'This parable has its key hanging at the door'"—GUTHRIE. **Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.** This was the lesson the parable of the

importunate widow was designed to teach. Our Saviour had been speaking of His second coming. He said the fact was certain, the time uncertain. He emphasises these two things concerning it, namely, that it should be long delayed, and that it should occur when it was least expected. As in the history of individuals, so in the history of the Church, long patience would be needed, and prayerful confidence in the goodness and guidance of God. Deliverance would surely come; therefore let them pray without fainting, watch without distrust. **Praying always** here has not the same shade of meaning as the "Pray without ceasing" of S. Paul. It is not that we should never be doing anything else but pray for the coming of the Lord, but that we should not allow any circumstances, however dispiriting, or any delay, however long, to shake our faith in the appearing and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. This parable is sometimes called "The unjust judge," at other times "The importunate widow." With two strokes the character of the judge is drawn. **He feared not God, he regarded not man.** Hence he became what he is called, "The judge of injustice." Justice is the ornament of a judge. His robes are supposed to cover an uncorrupt heart. It is sometimes necessary to rise above the opinion of men; this man fell below it. He knew it. He had reached that depth that he could avow it to himself. **A widow in that city came, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.** Do me justice. The widow's presence ought to have been an appeal. She was a widow—her adversary was formidable, relentless, cruel. But he sent her away from the judgment-seat. She came again and again, and yet again. **Afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.** The word rendered "weary" in A.V., or "wear" in R.V., means "to strike under the eyes." It was as if the judge had said facetiously, "She'll come to blows by and by." This importunity is the point our Lord illustrates. The "judge of unrighteousness" does not represent God, nor is the widow in all respects the type of a true suppliant. The God of righteousness, says our Lord, will do justice to His elect who cry to Him night and day. In a simple and literal sense they cry night and day. For there is no hour of the night when some sleepless soul is not talking to God. He is not only always approachable, but He is also always being approached. **He is long-suffering over them.** He bears long with them. The answer to prayer does not always come immediately. It may be delayed on account of the petitioner. Trust and patience are tested, and strengthened by delay. It may be delayed on account of the petition. If every prayer against tyranny were answered at once, the tyrant would have no space for repentance. **He will avenge them speedily.** Time is long or short relatively. Long to us is short to God. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." "He will avenge." True of the individual; true, too, of the Church universal.

Vers. 9–14. THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.—12. **I fast twice in the week**—"so did all the strict Pharisees, every Monday and Thursday. **I give tithes of all that I possess**—many of them gave one full tenth of their income in tithes, and another tenth in alms. The sum of this plea is, I do no harm; I use all the means of grace; I do all the good I can"—WESLEY.

13. **The publican standing afar off**—"from the Holy of Holies. **Would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven**—touched with shame, which is more ingenuous than fear"—WESLEY.

14. **This man went down**—"from the hill on which the Temple stood. **Justified rather than the other**—that is, and not the other"—WESLEY.

The Pharisee and the Publican.—All is not prayer that calls itself by that name. Hence our Lord spake another parable to show what TRUE PRAYER is. He lets us see two men at their devotions. **Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican.** They went to the same place, for the same purpose; and there the comparison ends. **The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself.** In two senses he stood alone; his prayer was not really addressed to God. It was a soliloquy of self-praise. He expressed no wants. He offered no petition. It was a prayerless prayer. **God, I thank Thee.** Thanksgiving is good when it is real. It is proper and seasonable, and blessed in all places and at all times. The angels praise God. We have to thank God for creation, for preservation, and for redemption: for being and well-being. This man thanks God that he is other than others. His "I thank Thee" is a lifeless form. The publican, abashed in the presence of the God of the Temple, stood trembling, with downcast eyes and hand upon his breast, and put all his need into one short, sharp petition: **God be merciful to me, the sinner.** New Testament prayers are not long. "Lord, save me, I perish." "Lord, help me." "Lord, I believe; help, Thou, mine unbelief." "God be merciful to me." Both prayers were offered: only one answered. **This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**

Vers. 15–17. JESUS AND THE CHILDREN. (See on Matt. 19. 13–15; Mark 10. 13–16.)—16. **Calling them**—"those that brought the children. **Of such is the kingdom of God**—such are subjects of the Messiah's kingdom

and such as these it properly belongs to"—WESLEY.

Vers. 18–30. THE YOUNG RULER. (See on Matt. 19. 16–30; Mark 10. 17–31.)—22. **Yet lackest thou one thing**—"namely, to love God more than Mammon. Our Saviour knew his heart, and presently put him upon a trial which laid it open to the ruler himself. And to cure his love of the world, which could not in him be cured otherwise, Christ commanded him to sell all he had. But he does not command us to do this; but to use all to the glory of God"—WESLEY.

Vers. 31–34. JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. (See on Matt. 20. 17–19; Mark 10. 32–34.) — 34. **They understood none of these things.** "The literal meaning they could not but understand. But as they could not reconcile this to their preconceived opinion of the Messiah, they were utterly at a loss in what parabolical or figurative sense to take what He said concerning His suffering; having their thoughts still taken up with the temporal kingdom"—WESLEY.

Vers. 36–43. BARTIMÆUS. (See on Matt. 20. 29–34; Mark 10. 46–52.)

CHAPTER XIX.

Vers. 1–10. ZACCHÆUS. — This is a Bible picture. How much the Bible would lose if we took out its portraits. It is not simply a book of precepts, but also a collection of biographies. The names of men and women mentioned would make a long list. Hence it is a book for men, because it is about men. Bartimæus and Zacchæus are both associated with Jericho. Places and people are intimately connected. Mary and Martha with Bethany; the disciples with the Sea of Galilee; the woman of Samaria with the wells; the home-life of Jesus with Capernaum; the Transfiguration with Mount Hermon; and the triumphal entry with the Temple. And by the law of association the mention of the place suggests the person; the name of the person recalls the place. God is good, not only in giving us a revelation, but in the form in which it is given. The form is human, the contents Divine.

Obstacles overcome. — He entered and was passing through Jericho. Jericho, the city of palm-trees, is about six miles from the Jordan, and fifteen from Jerusalem. From a point opposite to it Moses viewed Canaan. When taken by Joshua the site was cursed. In the reign of Ahab, Hiel of Bethel defied and underwent the curse. In later times it became a wealthy town, being fertilised by its abundant spring, and enriched by its palms and balsams. Jericho was the home of Zacchæus. **Behold, a man called by name Zacchæus; and he was a chief publican; and he was rich.** Name, profession, position — the man's life is here. His name shows him a Jew; his profession a tax-collector under the Roman conquerors; his position proves him successful, whether honestly gained or not. It was not easy for such a man to be noble. Public opinion was against him. And few people can live above their surroundings. Men are apt to become what they are supposed to be; and boys and girls too. Dr. Arnold, of Rugby School, always said to his boys, "Gentlemen, you are trusted," and then they sought to be trustworthy. They used to say to one another, "We can't tell the doctor a lie, he always believes us." A chief publican men generally regarded as a chief sinner. His wealth, too, was in evidence against him. These were moral hindrances. He had physical difficulties. Success must come to him through struggle. **He sought to see Jesus, who He was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.** He sought to see Jesus. He was accustomed to contempt and hatred, but he had heard of One who was called a Friend of publicans. His motive was not simply curiosity, but genuine interest. The opportunity has now come. But Christ is in a crowd, and Zacchæus is little of stature. The multitude hid Christ from him. But he kept seeking. Need is fertile in expedients. **He ran on before**—and thus got over one obstacle to his seeing Jesus—the press. **He climbed up into a sycamore tree**—thus he overcame the other obstacle—his being little of stature. Ceremony does not usually allow a man of wealth or rank to climb a tree, but need and faith overcome everything. Contempt of difficulties is one of the marks of a strong nature. And we usually find what we seek. "God always anticipates us if He sees us eager for good." **And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said, Zacchæus.** With Christ the look and the word, the pity and the help were never far apart. He looked on Peter. He looked round about the Temple. He looked at the soldiers when they came to arrest Him, and they fell backward. God is said to have looked down upon the Egyptians, and then their chariots dragged heavily. The look of God is the look of Omniscience. He looketh not at the outward appearance, but at the heart. He looks *through*. Disguises are swept away. Christ of the loving look will one day come to be our Judge. Then "every eye shall see Him." **He looked up, and said.** He that calleth the stars by name knows every one whom He has made, maintained, and redeemed. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them." Wonder and joy filled the heart of Zacchæus as he heard the Great Prophet and Healer say, **Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.** Zacchæus had made haste to go up, now he must make haste to come down. Our Lord was accustomed to refer to the meaning of names. Zacchæus means "pure." And now he is to have as his guest the Holy One of God. **And he made haste**—(contrast Felix, Acts 24. 25) and the

Athenians (Acts 17. 32). Procrastination is the thief of time and the murderer of opportunity. Now, is one of the shortest, but one of the most important words in language. Notice the echoes here. "Make haste"—"and he made haste." "Come down"—"and he came down." "To-day I must abide at thy house"—**and he received Him joyfully.** Climbing up and coming down, everything has its time. Zacchæus had gone before in haste, but the Lord is more in haste than he. This was the last passing through Jericho. One meeting between Jesus and Zacchæus; between the Saviour and the sinner; between the Lord of the Jew and Gentile and a son of Abraham was possible. The offer was given; the response was made. Each found what he sought. A miracle of grace was wrought. But **they who saw murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.** A *sinner*—the proof of that? Was he not a *publican*? They judged the man from the class. It was probably a misjudgment. But if it were true, what then? The Son of God became Son of Man that He might save sinners.

Faith evinced.—**Zacchæus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.** Whatever the past had been he now bids it a long and last farewell. He had found THE LORD. Henceforth he would be in subjection, and show his faith by his works. The Lord loved the nobler self which he saw in him, and helped him to obey its impulses.

Blessing vouchsafed.—**Jesus said, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.** This was for the help and direction of the man. **For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.** This was the Divine answer to the murmurers.

1. **He passed through Jericho**—"so that Zacchæus must have lived near the end of the town; the tree was in the town itself. **And he was rich.** These words seem to refer to the discourse in the last chapter (vers. 24-27), particularly to ver. 27. Zacchæus is a proof that it is possible, by the power of God, for even a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven"—WESLEY.

2. **The chief of the publicans**—"what we would term the commissioner of the customs. A very honourable as well as a very profitable place"—WESLEY.

4. **And running before**—"with great earnestness. **He climbed up**—notwithstanding his quality; desire conquering honour and shame"—WESLEY.

5. **Jesus said, Zacchæus, make haste and come down.** "What a strange mixture of passions must Zacchæus have now felt; hearing one speak, as knowing both his name and his heart"—WESLEY.

7. **They all murmured**—"all who were near; though most of them, rather out of surprise than indignation"—WESLEY.

8. **And Zacchæus stood**—"showing by his posture his deliberate purpose and ready mind—**and said, Behold, Lord, I give**—I determine to do it immediately"—WESLEY.

9. **He also is a son of Abraham**—"a Jew born, and as such has a right to the first offer of salvation"—WESLEY.

Vers. 11-27. THE PARABLE OF THE TEN POUNDS.—11. **They thought the kingdom of God**—"a glorious temporal kingdom, **would immediately appear**"—WESLEY.

12. **He went into a far country to receive a kingdom.** "Christ went to heaven, to receive His sovereign power as man, even all authority in heaven and earth"—WESLEY.

13. **Trade till I come**—"to visit the nation, to destroy Jerusalem, to judge the world; or, in a more particular sense, to require thy soul of thee"—WESLEY.

14. **But his citizens**—"such were those of Jerusalem—**hated him, and sent an embassy after him.** The word seems to imply their sending ambassadors to a superior court, to enter their protest against his being admitted to the regal power. In such a solemn manner did the Jews protest, as it were, before God, that Christ should not reign over them. **This man**—so they called him in contempt"—WESLEY.

15. **When he was returned**—"in his glory"—WESLEY.

23. **With interest**—"which does not appear to be contrary to any law of God or man. But this is no plea for usury; that is, the taking such interest as implies any degree of oppression or extortion"—WESLEY.

25. **They said**—"with admiration, not envy"—WESLEY.

An Eastern allegory runs thus: A merchant, going abroad for a time, gave to two of his friends two sacks of wheat each to take care of against his return. Years passed; he came back, and applied for them again. The first took him into his storehouse and showed them him; but they were mildewed and worthless. The other led him out into the open country, and pointed out field after field of waving corn, the produce of the two sacks given to him. Said the merchant, "You have been a faithful friend. Give me two sacks of that wheat, the rest shall be thine." "The value of use and the penalty of disuse" are seen in the parable of the pounds; the pounds in trust; or, the servants and the pounds, as the parable may be variously called. A close relation subsists between this parable and that of the talents. (See on Matt. 25. 14-30.) The parable of the pounds was spoken when Jesus was drawing near to Jerusalem, but had not yet made His triumphal entry; the parable of the talents while He was seated on the Mount of Olives, the third day after His entrance into the city.

Both show that the Lord bestows privileges on His servants, and demands faithfulness in return, and both show that the diligent are rewarded, and the unprofitable condemned. In the parable of the talents unequal privileges are bestowed, but being employed with equal diligence, the approval is equal. In the parable of the pounds equal privileges are bestowed, which, with equally faithful use, win unequal success.

The Lord of the servants.—**A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.** This parable is a picture framed into the history of the period. Native princes were obliged to repair to Rome, in order to be elevated to their legitimate rank. This had been the case with Herod, and with Archelaus. Apart from the Gospels we can trace the exact circumstances which suggested this narrative. Here is an indirect proof—if one were needed—of the truth of the gospel history. Indeed, a palace of Archelaus stood in Jericho, and was probably gazed upon at that moment by those who listened to the parable. Archelaus actually left money in the charge of his servants; and an embassy followed him to Rome to recount his cruelties. The nobleman represents Christ; the far country is heaven, into which he was about to enter; the return is the second coming of the Lord, when He shall at the final judgment take account of all. The fact is stated; the time is left in obscurity. The parable is a picture of human life. Every one of us is intrusted by God with gifts and opportunities. The blessings and surprises of life; the faculties, natural and acquired; the spheres in which we move; the things we may do, and yet leave undone—these be pounds for which we must render an account.

Successful servants.—He commanded the servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading. **And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more. And the second came, saying, Thy pound, lord, hath made five pounds.** To each the same amount was intrusted, but one returned double the amount of the other. In the race of life we do not long keep close together. There may be equal fidelity with different degrees of advantage. All have not the same strength, nor have all the same speed. Our natural ability is as a vessel, which may be large or may be small, and which receives according to its capacity, but which in each case is *filled*. "Thy pound." He does not say I have gained, but thy pound has gained. It is the lord's gift, not the servant's industry, that holds first place. When the great apostle speaks of his life-work he says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Humility attends and adorns true success. **Well done, thou good servant.** The first reward of doing is *doing*—the knowledge that one has done what God would have him do. The joy of imparting good, the joy of helping, is the joy of living. But God knows that the deed is accomplished. He says, Well done. The praise of God is the highest praise, the only praise worth the name. **Well done, good servant, thou wast found faithful.** Heaven watches the doer and notes the deed. We may be faithful in God's sight and yet not successful in the eyes of men. Faithful and successful are not always equivalent terms. Another reward of faithfulness is fitness for higher work: **Have thou authority over ten cities. Be thou also over five cities.** Archelaus had actually assigned the government of cities to his adherents who had proved faithful, and this was not an uncommon plan among the Herodian princes. "We shall also reign with Him," says S. Paul in writing to Timothy. The reward corresponds, not to the one pound given, but to the ten or five gained. There will be degrees of rewards in the heavenly kingdom. "One star differeth from another star, in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."—WESLEY.

The slothful servant.—**Another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up.** There are only two methods, the diligent and the indolent; only two classes, the faithful and the unfaithful. It costs as much trouble to bury as to employ a talent. This man laid it up in a napkin, and then had to watch lest it should be stolen. Some think they have done no harm, if they have done no good. The unfaithful misjudge God. The man feared and then tried to defend his neglect. **I feared thee, because thou art an austere man. Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee. Thou oughtest.** Duty remains to me, whoever else may be unjust, or neglectful. But God never commands us to do without giving us the strength.

The law of increase.—**Take away from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath the ten pounds, for unto every one that hath shall be given: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.** A limb never called into exercise loses its strength by degrees—its muscle and sinews disappear, so the gifts of God, unexercised, fade and fall from us. The fish in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, are entirely blind, from their long existence as a race in perfect darkness; although the fish of the same species in the streams outside in the light have good eyes. The tools are for him who can use them.

Open foes.—**These mine enemies.** Thus majestically, in his own person, the lord pronounces sentence. Enemies who should have been subjects. **Bring hither, and slay them before me.** Archelaus had put some to death. Our Lord foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem and the consequences of wrong-doing through-

out the ages. After uttering this judgment He proceeds to Jerusalem to be crucified.

"Perhaps during the delivery of the parable He had paused to let the crowd gather round Him. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem is a continual ascent"—C. B.

Vers. 29–40. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY. (See on Matt. 21. 1–9; Mark 11. 1–10.)—28. **He went before**—"the foremost of the company, showing His readiness to suffer"—WESLEY.

29. **He drew nigh to** "the place where the borders of Bethphage and Bethany met, which was **at the** foot of the **Mount of Olives**"—WESLEY.

37. **The whole multitude began to praise God**—"speaking at once, as it seems, from a Divine impulse, words which most of them did not understand"—WESLEY.

38. **Peace in heaven**—"God being reconciled to man"—WESLEY.

39. **Rebuke Thy disciples**—"paying Thee this immoderate honour"—WESLEY.

40. **If these should hold their peace, the stones** which lie before you **would cry out**—"that is, God would raise up some still more unlikely instruments to declare His praise. For the power of God will not return empty"—WESLEY.

Vers. 41–44. JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM. —41. **He saw the city.** "The Temple was at that time magnificent with gilding and white marble, which flashed resplendently in the spring sunlight, and the city was very unlike the crumbling and squalid city of to-day. But that mass of gold and snow woke no pride in the Saviour's heart. Few scenes are more striking than this burst of anguish in the very midst of the exulting procession. **And wept over it.** Not merely shed silent tears as at the grave of Lazarus, but wept aloud; and that, although not all the agonies and insults of four days later could wring from Him one tear or sigh"—C. B.

42. **O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day.** "After thou hast neglected so many. **Thy day**—the day wherein God still offers thee His blessings"—WESLEY.

43. **Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round.** "All this was exactly performed by Titus, the Roman general"—WESLEY.

44. **And thy children within thee.** "All the Jews were at that time gathered together, it being the time of the Passover. **They shall not leave one stone upon another.** Only three towers were left standing for a time to show the former strength and magnificence of the place. But these, likewise, were afterwards levelled with the ground"—WESLEY.

Vers. 45–48. FINAL CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE. (See on Matt. 21. 12, 13; Mark 11. 15, 18.)—48. **The people were very attentive to hear Him** (R.V. "The people all hung upon Him, listening"). "Hanged on Him, as the bee doth on the flower, the babe on the breast, the little bird on the bill of her dam. Christ drew the people after Him by the golden chain of His heavenly eloquence"—TRAPP.

CHAPTER XX.

Vers. 1–8. SUDDEN QUESTION OF THE PRIESTS AND SCRIBES. (See on Matt. 21. 23–27; Mark 11. 27–33.) 9–19. LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD. (See on Matt. 21. 33–46; Mark 12. 1–12.)—9. **A long time.** "It was a long time from the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan to the birth of Christ"—WESLEY.

16. **He will destroy these husbandmen.** "Probably He pointed to the scribes, chief priests, and elders, who allowed, 'He will miserably destroy those wicked men' (Matt. 21. 41), but could not bear that this should be applied to themselves. They might also mean, **God forbid** that we should be guilty of such a crime as your parable seems to charge us with; namely, rejecting and killing the heir. Our Saviour answers, But yet ye will do it, as is prophesied of you"—WESLEY.

17. **He looked on them**—"to sharpen their attention"—WESLEY.

Vers. 20–26. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TRIBUTE MONEY. (See on Matt. 22. 15–22; Mark 12. 13–17.)—20. **Just men** — "men of a tender conscience. **To take hold of His discourse**—if He answered as they hoped He would"—WESLEY.

21. **Thou speakest** — "in private. **And teachest**—in public"—WESLEY.

24. **Show Me a penny**—"a Roman penny, which was the money that was usually paid on that occasion"—WESLEY.

26. **They could not take hold of His words before the people**—"as they did afterwards before the Sanhedrim, in the absence of the people (ch. 22. 67), etc."—WESLEY.

Vers. 27–40. CONFLICT WITH SADDUCEES. (See on Matt. 22. 23–33; Mark 12. 18–27.)—34. **The children of this world**—"the inhabitants of earth—**marry and are given in marriage**—as being all subject to the law of mortality; so that the species is in need of being continually repaired"—WESLEY.

35. **But they who obtain that world**—"which they enter into before **the resurrection of the dead**"—WESLEY.

36. **They are the children of God**—"in a more eminent sense when they rise again"—WESLEY.

37. **That the dead are raised, even Moses,** "as well as the other prophets, **showed when he calleth**—that is, when he recites the words which God spoke of Himself, **I am the God of Abraham**, etc. It cannot properly be said that God is the God of any who are totally perished"—WESLEY.

38. **He is not a God of the dead**, or, "There is no God of the dead"—"that is, the term 'God' implies such a relation as cannot possibly subsist between Him and the dead; who, in the Sadducees' sense, are extinguished spirits; who could neither worship Him nor

receive good from Him. **So that all live to Him**—all who have Him for their God, live to and enjoy Him. This sentence is not an argument for what went before, but the very proposition which was to be proved. And the consequence is apparently just. For as all the faithful are the children of Abraham, and the Divine promise of being 'a God to him and to his seed' is entailed upon them, it implies their continued existence and happiness in a future state as much as Abraham's. And as the body is an essential part of man, it implies both his resurrection and theirs; and so overthrows the entire scheme of the Sadducean doctrine"—WESLEY.

40. **They durst not ask Him any question**—"the Sadducees durst not. One of the scribes did, presently after"—WESLEY.

Vers. 41–47. THE CHRIST IS DAVID'S SON AND DAVID'S LORD. (See on Matt. 22. 41–46; 23. 1–14; Mark 12. 35–40.)

CHAPTER XXI.

Vers. 1–4. THE WIDOW'S MITE. (See on Mark 12. 41–44.)—1. **He looked up**—"from those on whom His eyes were fixed before"—WESLEY.

Vers. 5–7. THE DOOMED TEMPLE. (See on Matt. 24. 1, 2; Mark 13. 1, 2.)—5. **Goodly stones**—"such as no engines now in use could have brought, or even set upon each other. Some of them (as an eyewitness who lately measured them writes) were forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad; yet brought thither from another country. **And gifts**—which persons delivered from imminent dangers had, in accomplishment of their vows, hung on the walls and pillars. The marble of the Temple was so white, that it appeared like a mountain of snow at a distance. And the gilding many parts made it, especially when the sun shone, a most splendid and beautiful spectacle"—WESLEY.

Vers. 8–27. SIGNS OF THE END. (See on Matt. 24. 3–27; Mark 13. 3–31.)—8. **And the time is near**—"when I will deliver you from all your enemies. They are the words of the seducers"—WESLEY.

9. **Commotions** — "intestine broils, civil wars"—WESLEY.

11. **Fearful sights, and signs from heaven**—"of which Josephus gives a circumstantial account"—WESLEY.

13. **It shall turn to you for a testimony**—"of your having delivered your own souls, and of their being without excuse"—WESLEY.

18. **Not an hair of your head**—"a proverbial expression — **shall perish** — without the special providence of God. And then not before the time, nor without a full reward"—WESLEY.

19. **In your patience possess ye your souls.** "Be calm and serene, masters of yourselves, and superior to all irrational and disquieting passions. By keeping the government of your spirits, you will both avoid much misery, and guard the better against all dangers"—WESLEY.

21. **Let them that are in the midst of it**—"where Jerusalem stands, that is, they that are in Jerusalem—**depart out of it**—before their retreat is cut off, by the uniting of the forces near the city. **And let not them that are in the** adjacent **countries** by any means **enter into it**"—WESLEY.

22. **All things which are written**—"particularly in Daniel"—WESLEY.

24. **They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive.** "Eleven hundred thousand perished in the siege of Jerusalem, and above ninety thousand were sold for slaves. So terribly was this prophecy fulfilled. **And Jerusalem shall be trodden by the Gentiles**—that is, inhabited. So it was indeed. The land was sold, and no Jew suffered even to come within sight of Jerusalem. The very foundations of the city were ploughed up, and an heathen temple built where the Temple of God had stood. **The times of the Gentiles**—that is, the times limited for their treading the city, which shall terminate in the full conversion of the Gentiles"—WESLEY.

25. **And there shall be**—"before the great day; which was typified by the destruction of Jerusalem. **Signs**—different from those mentioned (ver. 11, etc.)"—WESLEY.

Vers. 28–36. THE SAVED REMNANT. (See on Matt. 24. 32–42; Mark 13. 28–37.)—28. **Now when these things**—"mentioned in vers. 8 and 10, etc.—**begin to come to pass, look up**—with firm faith. **And lift up your heads**—with joy. **For your redemption**—out of many troubles—**draweth nigh**—by God's destroying your implacable enemies"—WESLEY.

29. **Behold the fig tree and all the trees.** "Christ spake this in the spring, just before the Passover, when all the trees were budding on the Mount of Olives, where they then were"—WESLEY.

30. **Ye know of yourselves**—"though none teach you"—WESLEY.

31. **The kingdom of God is nigh**—"the destruction of the Jewish city, Temple, and religion, to make way for the advancement of My kingdom"—WESLEY.

32. **Till all things be fulfilled**—"all that has been spoken of the destruction of Jerusalem, to which the question (ver. 7) relates; and which is treated of from vers. 8–24"—WESLEY.

34. **Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overloaded with gluttony and drunkenness.** "And was there need to warn the apostles themselves against such sins as these? Then surely there is need to warn even strong Christians against the very grossest sins. Neither are we wise, if we think ourselves out of the reach of any sin. **And so that day**—of judgment or of death—**come upon you**—

even you that are not of this world—**unawares**"—WESLEY.

35. **That sit**—"careless and at ease"—WESLEY.

36. **Watch ye therefore.** "This is the general conclusion of all that precedes. **That ye may be counted worthy.** This word sometimes signifies an honour conferred on a person, as when the apostles are said to be 'counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ' (Acts 5. 41). Sometimes, meet or becoming; as when John the Baptist exhorts to 'bring fruits worthy of repentance' (Luke 3. 8). And so to 'be counted worthy to escape,' is to have the honour of it, and to be fitted or prepared for it. **To stand**—with joy and triumph. Not to fall before Him, as His enemies"—WESLEY.

Vers. 37, 38. OUR LORD'S BUSY LIFE.—**Every day He was teaching in the Temple.** "During the days. The notice is retrospective, applying to Palm Sunday, and the Monday and Tuesday in Passion week. After Tuesday evening He never entered the Temple again. Wednesday and Thursday were spent in absolute and unrecorded retirement, perhaps with His disciples in the house at Bethany, until Thursday evening, when He went into Jerusalem again for the Last Supper"—C. B. **At night He went out and abode in the Mount**—*lit.* "'used to bivouac'; it is very probable that He slept in the open air with His disciples, as is very common with Orientals. He would be safe on the slopes of Olivet, among the booths of the Galilean pilgrims"—C. B. (See ch. 22. 39; John 18. 1, 2.)

37. **And every day**—"in the day-time. **He was teaching in the Temple.** This shows how our Lord employed His time after coming to Jerusalem. But it is not said, He was this day in the Temple, and next morning the people came. It does not therefore by any means imply that He came any more after this into the Temple"—WESLEY.

38. **And all the people came early in the morning to hear Him.** "How much happier were His disciples in these early lectures, than the slumbers of the morning could have made them on their beds! Let us not scruple to deny ourselves the indulgence of unnecessary sleep, that we may morning after morning place ourselves at His feet, receiving the instructions of His word, and seeking those of His Spirit"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XXII.

Vers. 1-6. THE CHIEF PRIESTS CONSPIRE WITH JUDAS ISCARIOT. (See on Matt. 26. 1-5, 14-16; Mark 14. 1, 2, 10, 11.)

3. **Then entered Satan**—"who is never wanting to assist those whose heart is bent upon mischief"—WESLEY.

4. **Captains**—"called 'captains of the Temple' (ver. 52). They were Jewish officers, who presided over the guards which kept watch every night in the Temple"—WESLEY.

Vers. 7-13. THE DISCIPLES PREPARE THE PASSOVER. (See on Matt. 26. 17-19; Mark 14. 12-16.)

Vers. 14-16. JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES BEGIN THE LAST SUPPER. (See on Matt. 26. 20; Mark 14. 17.)—15. **With desire I have desired.** It is a Hebraism, signifying earnest desire. (See Matt. 13. 14; John 3. 29; Acts 4. 17; 5. 28.)

15. **With desire have I desired**—"that is, I have earnestly desired it. He desired it, both for the sake of His disciples, to whom He desired to manifest Himself further at this solemn parting; and for the sake of His whole Church, that He might institute the grand memorial of His death"—WESLEY.

16. **For I will not eat thereof any more**—"that is, it will be the last I shall eat with you before I die. **The kingdom of God** did not properly commence till His resurrection. Then was **fulfilled** what was typified by the Passover"—WESLEY.

Vers. 17-38. THE LAST SUPPER. (See on Matt. 26. 21-29; Mark 14. 18-25.)—17. **And He took the cup.** "That cup which used to be brought at the beginning of the paschal solemnity. **And said, Take this and divide it among yourselves: for I will not drink.** As if He had said, Do not expect Me to drink of it: I will drink no more before I die"—WESLEY.

19. **And He took bread**—"namely, some time after, when supper was ended, wherein they had eaten the paschal lamb. **This is My body.** As He had just now celebrated the Paschal Supper, which was called the Passover, so, in the like figurative language, He calls this bread His body. And this circumstance in itself was sufficient to prevent any mistake, as if this bread was His real body, any more than the paschal lamb was really the Passover"—WESLEY.

20. **This cup is the New Testament.** "Here is an undeniable figure, whereby the cup is put for the wine in the cup. And this is called, **the New Testament in** Christ's **blood**, which could not possibly mean, that it was the New Testament itself, but only the seal of it, and the sign of that blood which was shed to confirm it"—WESLEY.

21. **The hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table.** "It is evident, Christ spake these words before He instituted the Lord's Supper; for all the other Evangelists mention the sop, 'immediately after receiving which he went out' (John 13. 30). (Nor did he return any more till he came into the garden to betray his Master.) Now this could not be dipped or given but while the meat was on the table. But this was all removed before that bread and cup were brought"—WESLEY.

24. **There was also a contention among them.** "It is highly probable this was the same dispute which is mentioned by S. Matthew

and S. Mark; and, consequently, though it is related here, it happened some time before"—WESLEY.

25. **They that exercise** "the most arbitrary **authority over them have** from their flatterers **the** vain **title of benefactors**"—WESLEY.

26. **But ye** are to be benefactors to mankind, not by governing, but by serving"—WESLEY.

27. **For**—"this He proves by His own example—**I am in the midst of you**—just now: see with your eyes, I take no state upon Me, 'but sit in the midst,' on a level with the lowest of you"—WESLEY.

28. **Ye have continued with Me in My temptations.** "And all His life was nothing else; particularly from His entering on His public ministry"—WESLEY.

29. **And I**—"will preserve you in all your temptations, till ye enter into the kingdom of glory. **Appoint to you**—by these very words. Not a primacy to one, but a kingdom to every one, on the same terms. **As My Father hath appointed to Me**—who have fought and conquered"—WESLEY.

30. **That ye may eat and drink at My table**—"that is, that ye may enjoy the highest happiness, as guests, not as servants. These expressions seem to be primarily applicable to the twelve apostles, and secondarily to all Christ's servants and disciples; whose spiritual powers, honours, and delights are here represented in figurative terms, with respect to their advancement both in the kingdom of grace and of glory"—WESLEY.

31. **Satan hath desired to have you**—"My apostles—**that he might sift you as wheat**—try you to the uttermost"—WESLEY.

32. **But I have prayed for thee**—"who wilt be in the greatest danger of all—**that thy faith fail not**—altogether. **And when thou art returned**—from thy flight—**strengthen thy brethren**—all that are weak in faith; perhaps scandalised at thy fall"—WESLEY.

34. **It shall not be the time of cock-crowing this day.** "The common time of cock-crowing (which is usually about three in the morning) probably did not come till after the cock which Peter heard had crowed twice, if not oftener"—WESLEY.

35. **When I sent you—lacked ye anything?** "Were ye not borne above all want and danger?"—WESLEY.

36. **But now**—"you will be in quite another situation. You will want everything. **He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.** It is plain, this is not to be taken literally. It only means, This will be a time of extreme danger"—WESLEY.

37. **The things** which are written **concerning Me have an end**—"are now drawing to a period; are upon the point of being accomplished"—WESLEY.

38. **Here are two swords.** "Many of Galilee carried them when they travelled, to defend themselves against robbers and assassins, who much infested their roads. But did the apostles need to seek such defence? **And He said, It is enough**—I did not mean literally that every one of you must have a sword"—WESLEY.

The Farewell Feast.—**The hour was come.** The day's work was done. "It was probably while the sun was beginning to decline in the horizon, that Jesus and the disciples descended once more over the Mount of Olives into the holy city. Before them lay Jerusalem in her festive attire. Whilst tents dotted the sward gay with the bright flowers of early spring, or peered out from the gardens, or the darker foliage of the olive plantations, from the gorgeous Temple buildings, dazzling in their snow-white marble and gold, on which the slanting rays of the sun were reflected, rose the smoke of the altar of burnt-offering. The streets must have been thronged with strangers, and the flat roofs covered with eager gazers, who either feasted their eyes with a first sight of the sacred city, for which they had so often longed, or else once more rejoiced in view of the well-remembered localities. It was the last day view which the Lord had of the holy city till His resurrection"—EDERSHEIM. This scene is connected with the closing hours of our Lord's life. He was saying the sad word—farewell. In the Memorial Supper He connected Himself with the past and the future. The Passover was glorified in the Holy Supper. The humanity of Jesus is breathed in His table-talk. **With desire I have desired.** His humanness was real. During the last days of His life He went and slept at Bethany. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were chosen companions. He sought the solace of their society in the last hours of His ministry. "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end." He who slept from fatigue and took favourite disciples with Him to the bedside of death, the hill of glory, and the garden of sorrow, felt the pangs of separation. How much more would He feel ingratitude. **Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table.** Judas went silently from the sacred circle to consort with the priests and arrange the details of the conspiracy. But he must have stolen back to Bethany before daylight, and spent all day under the penetrating glance of Him who could read the hearts of men. Now he was present at the table. S. John sat, as we know from the narrative, on the right hand of Jesus. It has been conjectured that Judas sat on the left. If so, it explains how, when Christ whispered to S. John by what sign to recognise the traitor, none of the others heard it. It also explains how Christ would first hand to Judas the sop, without thereby exciting special notice. It also accounts for the circumstance, that, when Judas, desirous of ascertaining whether his treachery was known, dared to ask whether it was he, and received the affirmative

answer, no one at the table knew what had passed. Try to picture S. John on the one side, Judas on the other, and Jesus in the midst—the betrayer close to his Master. In the long line of portraits of the Doges in the palace of Venice, one space is empty, and the semblance of a black curtain remains as a melancholy record of glory forfeited. Found guilty of treason against the State, Marino Falieri was beheaded, and his image as far as possible blotted from remembrance. And as, to-day, we think of the circle of the apostles, one portrait is absent — that of Judas who betrayed his Lord. Christ's love bore with Judas, His pity hid his fault from his brother disciples, and at the Supper He made one last appeal of love ; gave him a chance to draw back from his fell purpose. For fuller details of the last awful warning to Judas, see Matt. 26. 21–25 ; Mark 14. 18–21 ; John 13. 21–26. Whether Judas actually partook of the Holy Communion has always been uncertain. The disciples do not appear to have suspected their brother Judas: **They began to question among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing.** An ambitious contention arose, probably while they were taking their places on the couches, and may possibly have been occasioned by some claim made by Judas for official precedence. It was not the first time the spirit of strife had appeared amongst them. It will be noticed that we are not taking the words exactly in the order of S. Luke's narrative. There are four accounts which, combined, show some such order as this: Christ gives directions to prepare the Passover Supper ; when the even is come He goes to the place ; an unseemly strife occurs which He rebukes by the feet washing ; all of them take their places at the table ; Christ prophesies His betrayal ; Judas, learning that his treachery is known, goes out to complete it. The Supper, which has been interrupted, now goes on, and ends with the institution of the Lord's Supper at the close of the Passover Feast.

The Communion of the Ages. — **He took bread, gave thanks, brake, and gave to them, saying: This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. And the cup in like manner.** The account in S. Luke closely agrees with that given by S. Paul (1 Cor. 11. 23–26), which he received from the Lord. Comp. "I am the door" (John 10. 7) ; "That rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10. 4) ; "The bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10. 16). "In remembrance of Me." The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the death of Christ, a perpetual witness of Himself. It is, therefore, not only the duty, but the privilege, of every Christian to commemorate the death of Christ. He took the simplest things to remind us of Himself—bread, water, the vine, the door. In baptism we have only water: in the communion bread and wine.

The Eternal Festival. — **I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come** — "until the true Passover had been offered by His death, and the new kingdom established." **Till He come.** These simple words point us forward to the future, and pledge a reunion that will have no farewell. A new memorial in a new world.

Vers. 39–46. THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN. (See on Matt. 26. 30, 36–46 ; Mark 14. 26, 32–42.)

40. **The place** — "the garden of Gethsemane"—WESLEY.

43. **Strengthening Him** — "lest His body should sink and die before the time"—WESLEY.

44. **And being in an agony**—"probably just now grappling with the powers of darkness ; feeling the weight of the wrath of God, and at the same time surrounded with a mighty host of devils, who exercised all their force and malice to persecute and distract His wounded spirit. **He prayed more earnestly** —even with stronger cries and tears. **And His sweat**—as cold as the weather was—**was as it were great drops of blood**—which, by the vehement distress of His soul, were forced out of the pores in so great a quantity as afterwards united in large, thick, grumous drops, and even fell to the ground"—WESLEY.

Vers. 47–53. THE ARREST. (See on Matt. 26. 48–56 ; Mark 14. 44–52.)

48. **Betrayest thou the Son of Man**—"Him whom thou knowest to be the Son of Man, the Christ?"—WESLEY.

49. **Seeing what would follow** — "that they were just going to seize Him"—WESLEY.

51. "**Suffer** Me at least to have My hands at liberty **thus far**, while I do one more act of mercy"—WESLEY.

52. **Jesus said to the chief priests, and captains, and the elders, who were come.** "And all these came of their own accord: the soldiers and servants were sent"—WESLEY.

53. **This is your hour**—"before which ye could not take Me—**and the power of darkness** — the time when Satan has power"—WESLEY.

Vers. 54–62. PETER'S DENIAL. (See on Matt. 26. 57–75 ; Mark 14. 53–72.) — 58. **Another man saw him, and said.** "Observe here, in order to reconcile the four Evangelists, that divers persons concurred in charging Peter with belonging to Christ—(1) The maid that let him in, afterwards seeing him at the fire, first put the question to him, and then positively affirmed that he was with Christ ; (2) Another maid accused him to the standers-by, and gave occasion to the man here mentioned to renew the charge against him, which caused the second denial ; (3) Others of the company took notice of his being a Galilean,

and were seconded by the kinsman of Malchus, who affirmed he had seen him in the garden. And this drew on the third denial"—WESLEY.

59. **And about one hour after**—"so he did not recollect himself in all that time"—WESLEY.

Vers. 63-65. THE FIRST DERISION. (See Matt. 26. 67, 68; Mark 14. 65.)—64. **And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face.** "This is placed by S. Matthew and S. Mark after the Council's condemning Him. Probably He was abused in the same manner both before and after His condemnation"—WESLEY.

65. **Many other things blasphemously spake they against Him.** The expression is remarkable. They charge Him with blasphemy, because He said He was the Son of God; but the Evangelist fixes that charge on them, because He really was so"—WESLEY.

Vers. 66-71. THE THIRD JEWISH TRIAL. (See on Matt. 27. 1, 2; Mark 15. 1.)—70. **They all said, Art Thou then the Son of God?** "Both these, the Son of God, and the Son of Man, were known titles of the Messiah; the one taken from His Divine, and the other from His human, nature"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Vers. 1-7. BEFORE PILATE. (See on Matt. 27. 11-14; Mark 15. 2-5; John 18. 28-38.)—4. **Then said Pilate**—"after having heard His defence—**I find no fault in this man**—I do not find that He either asserts or attempts anything seditious, or injurious to Cæsar"—WESLEY.

5. **He stirreth up the people, beginning from Galilee** — "probably they mentioned Galilee to alarm Pilate, because the Galileans were notorious for sedition and rebellion"—WESLEY.

7. **He sent Him to Herod**—"as His proper judge"—WESLEY.

Vers. 8-12. BEFORE HEROD.—8. **He had been long desirous to see Him**—"out of mere curiosity"—WESLEY.

9. **He questioned Him** — "probably concerning the miracles which were reported to have been wrought by Him"—WESLEY.

11. **Herod set Him at nought**—"probably judging Him to be a fool, because He answered nothing. **In a splendid robe** — in royal apparel; intimating that he feared nothing from this King"—WESLEY.

Vers. 13-25. CONDEMNED. (See Matt. 27. 15-26; Mark 15. 6-15; John 18. 39-19. 16.)—15. **He hath done nothing worthy of death.** —"according to the judgment of Herod also"—WESLEY.

16. **I will therefore chastise Him.** "Here Pilate began to give ground, which only encouraged them to press on"—WESLEY.

22. **He said to them the third time, Why, what evil hath He done?**—"as Peter, a disciple of Christ, dishonoured Him by denying Him thrice, so Pilate, a heathen, honoured Christ by thrice owning Him to be innocent"—WESLEY.

Vers. 26-32. THE WAY OF SORROW. (See on Matt. 27. 32-34; Mark 15. 21-23; John 19. 17.)—31. **If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?** "Our Lord makes use of a proverbial expression, frequent among the Jews, who compare a good man to a green tree, and a bad man to a dead one: as if He had said, If an innocent person suffer thus, what will become of the wicked? of those who are as ready for destruction, as dry wood for the fire?"—WESLEY.

Vers. 33-38. THE CRUCIFIXION. (See on Matt. 27. 35-44; Mark 15. 24-32; John 19. 18-27.)—34. **Then said Jesus.** "Our Lord passed most of the time on the cross in silence; yet seven sentences which He spoke thereon are recorded by the four Evangelists, though no one Evangelist has recorded them all. Hence it appears, that the four Gospels are as it were four parts, which, joined together, make one symphony; sometimes one of these only, sometimes two or three, sometimes all, sound together. **Father**—so He speaks both in the beginning and at the end of His sufferings on the cross. **Forgive them.** How striking is this passage! While they are actually nailing Him to the cross, He seems to feel the injury they did to their own souls, more than the wounds they gave Him; and, as it were, to forget His own anguish out of a concern for their salvation. And how eminently was His prayer heard! It procured forgiveness for all that were penitent, and a suspension of vengeance even for the impenitent"—WESLEY.

35-37. **If Thou be the Christ. If Thou be the King.** "The priests deride the name of Messiah; the soldiers, the name of King"—WESLEY.

Vers. 39-43. THE PENITENT ROBBER.—"In S. Matthew and S. Mark we are told that both the robbers reviled Him. Both the robbers, during an early part of the hours of crucifixion, *reproached* Jesus, but we learn from S. Luke's Gospel that only one of them used injurious and insulting language to Jesus"—C. B.

39. **And one of the malefactors reviled Him.** "S. Matthew says, 'The robbers,' S. Mark, 'They that were crucified with Him reviled Him.' Either, therefore, S. Matthew and S. Mark put the plural for the singular, as the best authors sometimes do, or both reviled Him at the first, till one of them felt 'the overwhelming power of saving grace'"—WESLEY.

40. **The other rebuked him.** "What a surprising degree was here of repentance, faith, and other graces! and what abundance of good works, in his public confession of his sin, reproof of his fellow-criminal, his honourable testimony to Christ, and profession of faith in Him, while he was in so disgraceful circum-

stances, as were stumbling even to His disciples! This shows the power of Divine grace. But it encourages none to put off their repentance to the last hour; since, as far as appears, this was the first time this criminal had an opportunity of knowing anything of Christ. And his conversion was designed to put a peculiar glory on our Saviour in His lowest state, while His enemies derided Him, and His own disciples either denied or forsook Him"—WESLEY.

42. **Remember me when Thou comest**—"from heaven—**in Thy kingdom.** He acknowledges Him a King, and such a King as, after He is dead, can profit the dead. The apostles themselves had not then so clear conceptions of the kingdom of Christ"—WESLEY.

43. **In paradise**—"the place where the souls of the righteous remain from death till the resurrection. As if He had said, I will not only remember thee then, but this very day"—WESLEY.

THE PENITENT THIEF.—The history of the penitent thief has been called a gospel within the gospel. "The inner truth and beauty of the narrative," remarks a New Testament commentator, "strikes the eye with special clearness when we compare it with that which the Apocryphal Gospels have to relate about this man." According to one of these, the man had already protected the Child Jesus on the flight to Egypt against the wickedness of the second robber, and our Lord then, for a reward, therefore foretells to His mother, with childish lips, what thirty years afterwards should take place on Calvary with these two. Trench's conjecture appears to be a reasonable one, that this robber may have been a companion of Barabbas. The fact that Barabbas had, just about this time, made a sedition, which implies accomplices, who were not like himself released, but doubtless punished, lends weight both to the conjecture that some vague messianic longings may have been mixed up with his crime, and that this man may have been a participant of it. A nature, led through the very strength of noble impulses into crime, might well be more receptive of Divine grace in the hour of utter disenchantment and of mortal agony, than that of a common ruffian. Let us turn from legend and fancy to the Gospel story. Our Lord was crucified between two thieves. It will conduce to clearness of conception if we place the narratives side by side. The language is that of the R.V.

S. MATTHEW.	S. MARK.	S. LUKE.
Then are there crucified with Him two robbers, one on the right hand, and one on the left. The robbers also that were crucified with Him cast upon Him the same reproach.	And with Him they crucify two robbers; one on His right hand, and one on His left. They that were crucified with Him reproached Him.	And there were also two others, malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, Art not Thou the Christ? But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

S. John writes, "They crucified Him, and with Him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." This Evangelist makes no mention of the mockery. According to S. Matthew and S. Mark, our Lord is mocked by both robbers; according to S. Luke, only by one. Some conjecture that at first both mocked, afterwards only one. Others assume that S. Matthew and S. Mark use a general expression, fixing attention more upon the mockery than the mockers, while S. Luke is more definite. The special mercy would find special record in the Gospel of humanity. A prayer for forgiveness was the first word from the cross; a promise of paradise the second. "Brief," says OOSTERZEE, "as the utterance of the penitent thief was, yet there is nothing lacking to it that belongs to the unalterable requirements of a genuine conversion. The address of our Lord, on the other hand, comprehends, as it were, in a short summary, the whole riches and the glory of redemption. The first word on the cross gives us a view into His high-priestly heart; His kingly character reveals itself in the second. Grace and majesty suddenly diffuse their bright beams through the night of the deepest humiliation. We wonder not that history gives us no account of an answer of the forgiven robber to the promise of the Saviour. On a cross there is not long or much speaking, and how, moreover, could he have found words for his thanks! But, without doubt, the consolation of this promise illumined his last hours; and he stands forth before our eyes as the first-fruits of the millions of subjects whom the King of the kingdom of God has won even on His cross, and through the same." The two robbers on the cross represent the whole human race in its diverse behaviour towards Jesus. Christ is set for the fall and rising of many. The cross has ever been to some foolishness, to others the power of God. No one dare limit the mercy of the Holy One of Israel, but it is perilous to

presume upon it. An eleventh hour repentance is contingent upon many things. Speaking of death-bed repentance, an English poet writes—

"There was one, that none might *despair*,
And but one, that none might *presume*."

BENGEL says, "Rare is conversion on a soft bed." "Ours," writes THEREMIN, "is only the present moment; and while I maintain that no time is too late for repentance, I can only assert that at the moment when grace calls us it is never too late or too soon. If the penitent thief is an encouragement, his impenitent comrade is a warning." "Unbelief mocks; faith prays." And the answer is larger and deeper than the prayer.

LIFE'S FAREWELL.—**When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said this, He gave up the ghost.** This was the seventh and last word from the cross. The first was a word of intercession for others; the last a word of submission for Himself. His love stooped to the most wretched, even to His murderers. His life was tranquil, because it was in the Father's hands. It is a solemn thing to die — to quit earth's well-known scenes; the love of friends, the tasks that duty sets; and to go forth to solve the problem none can solve for his brother. But he who is assured that he came from God and is going back to God may die tranquilly. "We know but little of our state after death, but what Jesus said when dying is enough for us."

A GREAT MOURNING.—**The heavens were darkened**; the watchers were sorrowful. "A darkness came over the whole land, the sun's light failing." **All the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done, returned, smiting their breasts.** The sun was darkened; the earth shook; the graves were opened. Nature was in movement and convulsion. Reason ascended her throne, and conscience awoke when the onlookers looked back. After Nature's voices the voice of raillery was silent. Onlookers returned, but all His acquaintance, and the women that followed with Him from Galilee, stood afar off, seeing these things. The women were last at the cross. "Love kept her place, when faith suffered shipwreck."

Vers. 44–49. THE END. (See Matt. 27. 45–56; Mark 15. 33–41; John 19. 28–30.)—44. **There was darkness over all the earth.** "The noontide darkness, covering the sun, obscured all the upper hemisphere. And the lower was equally darkened; the moon being in opposition to the sun, and so receiving no light from it"—WESLEY.

46. **Father, into Thy hands.** "The Father receives the spirit of Jesus; Jesus Himself, the spirits of the faithful"—WESLEY.

47. **Certainly this was a righteous man**—"which implies an approbation of all He had done and taught"—WESLEY.

48. **All the people** — "who had not been actors therein — **returned, smiting their breasts**—in testimony of sorrow"—WESLEY.

Vers. 50–56. THE ENTOMBMENT. (See on Matt. 27. 57–66; Mark 15. 42–47; John 19. 38–42.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

Vers. 1–12. THE RESURRECTION ANNOUNCED BY ANGELS. (See on Matt. 28. 1–8; Mark 16. 1–8; John 20. 1–10.)—1. **Certain others with them** — "who had not come from Galilee"—WESLEY.

4. **Behold, two**—"angels in the form of **men.** Mary had seen them a little before. They had disappeared on these women's coming to the sepulchre, but now appeared again. S. Matthew and S. Mark mention only one of them, appearing like a young man"—WESLEY.

6. **Remember how He spake to you, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered.** "This is only a repetition of the words which our Lord had spoken to them before His passion. But, it is observable, He never styled Himself 'the Son of Man' after His resurrection"—WESLEY.

Vers. 13–35. THE DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS. (Comp. Mark 16. 12, 13; 1 Cor. 15. 4, 5.) The conversation on the way turned upon the Divine necessity for the sufferings of Christ. (See Matt. 26. 54; John 12. 24, 32; 11. 49–52; Acts 17. 3; 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.) "But the resurrection and ascension were equally foreknown (see ver. 26). S. Luke mainly dwells on the resurrection as a spiritual necessity, S. Mark as a great fact, S. Matthew as a glorious and majestic manifestation, and S. John in its effects on the minds of the members of the Church"—WESTCOTT.

27. **From Moses He interpreted in the Scriptures the things concerning Himself** — the promise to Eve (Gen. 3. 15), the promise to Abraham (Gen. 22. 18), the Paschal Lamb (Ex. 12. 27), the Scapegoat (Lev. 16. 1–34), the Brazen Serpent (Num. 21. 9), the Greater Prophet (Deut. 18. 15), the Star and Sceptre (Num. 24. 17), and the Smitten Rock (Num. 20. 11; 1 Cor. 10. 4). **And from the Prophets**—Immanuel (Isa. 7. 14), Unto us a Child is born (Isa. 9. 6, 7), The Good Shepherd (Isa. 40. 10, 11), The Meek Sufferer (Isa. 50. 6), He who bore our griefs (Isa. 53. 4, 5), The Branch (Jer. 23. 5; 33. 14, 15), The Heir of David (Ezek. 34. 23), The Ruler from Bethlehem (Micah 5. 2), The Branch (Zech. 6. 12), The Lowly King (Zech. 9. 9), The Pierced Victim (Zech. 12. 10), The Smitten Shepherd (Zech. 13. 7), The Messenger of the Covenant (Mal. 3. 1), The Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4. 2), and many other passages. There is not one of the Prophets without some distinct reference to Christ, except Nahum, Jonah (who was himself a type and prophetic sign), and

Habakkuk, who, however, uses the memorable words quoted in Rom. 1. 17. We cannot suppose that our Lord went through each Prophet separately, but only that He pointed out the tenor of the Old Testament in its ethical and symbolical character"—C. B.

29. It is this beautiful verse which has furnished the idea of Lyte's dying hymn, "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide."

32. "Never man spake like this MAN."

34. **Hath appeared to Simon.** The same appearance to Simon alone is mentioned in 1 Cor. 15. 5; the passage in 1 Cor. 15. 4–8 is the earliest written allusion to the facts of the resurrection.

21. **To-day is the third day**—"the day He should have risen again, if at all"—WESLEY.

25. **O foolish**—"not understanding the designs and works of God—**and slow of heart**—unready to believe what the Prophets have so largely spoken"—WESLEY.

26. **Ought not Christ**—"if He would redeem man, and fulfil the prophecies concerning Him—**to have suffered these things.** These very sufferings, which occasion your doubts, are the proofs of His being the Messiah. **And to enter into His glory**—which could be done no other way"—WESLEY.

28. **He made as though He would go farther**—"walking forward, as if He was going on; and He would have done it, had they not pressed Him to stay"—WESLEY.

29. **They constrained Him**—"by their importunate entreaties"—WESLEY.

30. **He took the bread, and blessed, and brake**—"just in the same manner as when He instituted His Last Supper"—WESLEY.

31. **Their eyes were opened**—"that is, the supernatural cloud was removed. **And He vanished**—went away insensibly"—WESLEY.

32. **Did not our hearts burn within us**—"did not we feel an unusual warmth of love?"—WESLEY.

33. **The same hour**—"late as it was"—WESLEY.

34. **The Lord hath appeared to Simon**—"before He was seen of the twelve apostles (1 Cor. 15. 5). He had, in His wonderful condescension and grace, taken an opportunity on the former part of that day, though where and in what manner is not recorded, to show Himself to Peter, that He might early relieve his distresses and fears on account of having so shamefully denied his Master"—WESLEY.

35. **In the breaking of bread**—"the Lord's Supper"—WESLEY.

Vers. 36–49. APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO THE APOSTLES. (See on Mark 16. 14; John 20. 21.)—36. **He Himself stood in the midst of them.** "The words imply a sudden appearance. The eleven, with the exception of Thomas the Twin, were sitting at supper with the doors closed, through their fear of the Jews. (John 20. 19.) This is one of the most remarkable appearances of the Risen Christ. His intercourse with them on this occasion consisted of a greeting (ver. 36), a reproach and consolation (ver. 38; Mark 16. 14), a demonstration of the reality of His person (vers. 39–43; John 20. 20), an opening of their understandings (vers. 44–46), an appointment of the apostles to the ministries of remission and witness (vers. 47, 48; John 21. 19–23), a promise of the Spirit, for the fulfilment of which they were to wait in Jerusalem (ver. 49). At the close of this great scene He once more pronounced the benediction of peace, and breathed on them with the words, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20. 22). The fulness with which S. Luke has narrated this appearance led him to omit some of the other appearances"—C. B.

43. **He did eat.** This is one of the infallible proofs appealed to in Acts 1. 3. (Comp. John 21. 12, 13; Acts 10. 40, 41.)

36. **Jesus stood in the midst of them.** "It was just as easy to His Divine power to open a door undiscernibly, as it was to come in at a door opened by some other hand"—WESLEY.

40. **He showed them His hands and His feet**—"that they might either see or feel the prints of the nails"—WESLEY.

41. **While they believed not for joy.** "They did in some sense believe, otherwise they would not have rejoiced. But their excess of joy prevented a clear, rational belief"—WESLEY.

43. **He took it, and ate before them**—"not that He had any need of food; but to give them still further evidence"—WESLEY.

44. **And He said**—"on the day of His ascension. **In the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms.** The prophecies, as well as types, relating to the Messiah, are contained either in the books of Moses (usually called the Law), in the Psalms, or in the writings of the Prophets, little being said directly concerning Him in the historical books"—WESLEY.

45. **Then opened He their understandings, to understand their Scriptures.** "He had explained them before to the two as they went to Emmaus. But still they understood them not, till He took off the veil from their hearts by the illumination of His Spirit"—WESLEY.

47. **Beginning at Jerusalem.** "This was appointed both graciously and wisely: graciously, as it encouraged the greatest sinners to repent, when they saw that even the murderers of Christ were not excepted from mercy; and wisely, as hereby Christianity was more abundantly attested: the facts being published first on the very spot where they happened"—WESLEY.

49. **Behold, I send the promise**—emphatically so called; the Holy Ghost"—WESLEY.

Vers. 50–53. THE ASCENSION. (Comp. Mark 16. 19; Acts 1. 6, 12.) The traditional scene of the ascension is the central summit of the Mount of Olives, but it is far more probable that it took place in one of the secluded uplands which lie about the village.

50. **He led them out as far as Bethany**—"not the town, but the district; to the Mount of Olives (Acts 1. 12), which stood within the boundaries of Bethany"—WESLEY.

51. **He was parted from them** (R.V. "He parted"). We read in the Book of the Acts that a cloud received Him out of their sight. The withdrawal of His bodily presence preceded His spiritual omnipresence. **And while He was blessing them, He was parted from them.** "It was much more proper that our Lord should ascend into heaven than that He should rise from the dead, in the sight of the apostles. For His resurrection was proved, when they 'saw Him alive after His passion'; but they could not see Him in heaven while they continued on earth"—WESLEY.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

S. JOHN.

THE EVANGELIST AND HIS GOSPEL.

THE AUTHOR.

THE Apostle John. His sign is the Eagle. As the Eagle soars against the sun, so does this apostle face the bright light of the sun of revelation. He was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman of Galilee. His mother's name was Salome. The family must have possessed some wealth, for Zebedee had hired servants, and Salome was one of the women who supported the Lord from their means (Luke 8. 3), and embalmed His body. As John is always named after James, he was probably the younger. Both were named "Sons of Thunder," whether to indicate temperament or method of speech it is difficult to say. Their anger against a Samaritan city, and certain traditional statements concerning John, lead us to suppose that they were not wanting in strength of character. James was more outward and practical, John more inward and ideal. James was the first martyr among the apostles; John almost the last of the apostles. John is honoured above all the men of the New Testament as the friend of Jesus. He is at first one of the disciples in the general sense (John 1; Matt. 4. 21); then one of the Twelve (Matt. 10. 2); then one of the Three (Matt. 17. 1); then one of the Two (Luke 22. 8); at last, the *one* who lies on the bosom of Jesus (John 13. 23), to whom Jesus commits His mother at the cross (ch. 19), to whom alone He promises a tarrying till He comes again (ch. 21), and to whom, on the island of his exile, the Lord once more appears in personal majesty, long after His personal appearances among His people have ceased (Rev. 1). Tradition has preserved some significant incidents of his later life—(1) of his heroism in rescuing from robbers a youth who had been converted by him, and had afterwards apostatised; (2) of his flight from a bath in which the heretic Cerinthus was; (3) of the raising of a dead man by his hand at Ephesus; (4) of his play with a partridge, which he made the emblem of the blessing of recreation; (5) of his last sermon, "Little children, love one another." In the Middle Ages, and even in modern times, the saying has been widely spread that he still lives. Certainly he does—in his writings and in his spiritual kin, those who catch his spirit and imitate his actions.

THE BOOK.

The Gospel of John was written at Ephesus, towards the close of the first century. It differs very much from the three other Gospels, though it takes these for granted. Much that appears in them is omitted by S. John, whilst he relates incidents and addresses which they omit. The three former Gospels deal more with our Lord's Galilean ministry, S. John omit, this, and confines himself almost exclusively to that which happened in Judea. The three Evangelists (the Synoptics, as their Gospels are often called) deal more with incidents than

with addresses; S. John deals more with the addresses of Jesus than with His works, though he relates several of the more important miracles. He relates none of the parables, though he does give us allegories, *e.g.* "I am the True Vine," "I am the Door," "I am the Light of the World." His main object was to show forth the glory of Jesus as the Only Begotten Son of the Father. The object of the Gospel, John himself being witness, was, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name." Hence he does not give us a connected life of Jesus, but selects such facts and sayings as will best illustrate and prove the great mystery and glorious revelation of the Incarnation of the Son of God. It has been pointed out by students of this apostle, that he repeats certain words over and over again: they are the great words of revelation and life. For example, "light," twenty-three times; "glory," "to be glorified," forty-two times; "life," "to live," fifty-two times; "to testify," "testimony," forty-seven times; "to know," fifty-five times; "world," seventy-eight times; "to believe," ninety-eight times; "work," twenty-three times; "name" and "truth," each twenty-five times; "sign," seventeen times. S. John alone gives us that great assertive word of Jesus, "Verily, verily." S. Matthew and S. Luke give us a genealogy of His human descent, S. John starts in eternity, and draws a golden chain from heaven to earth.

"IN THIS BOOK IS SET DOWN THE HISTORY OF THE SON OF GOD DWELLING AMONG MEN; THAT:

I. Of the first days, where the Apostle, premising the sum of the whole, ... Chap. i. 1–14.
Mentions the testimony given by John, after the Baptism of Christ, and the first calling of some of the Apostles. Here is noted what fell out:
The first day, ... ,, ,, 15–28.
The day after, ... ,, ,, 29–34.
The day after, ... ,, ,, 35–42.
The day after, ... ,, ,, 43–52.
The third day, ... ,, ii. 1–11.
After this, ... ,, ,, 12.

II. Of the two years between, spent chiefly in journeys to and from Jerusalem—
A. The First Journey, to the Passover, . . . ,, ,, 13.
a. Transactions in the city:
1. Zeal for His Father's House, . . . ,, ,, 14–22.
2. The power and wisdom of Jesus, . . ,, ,, 23–25.
3. The instructions of Nicodemus, . . ,, iii. 1–21.
b. His abode in Judea; the rest of John's testimony, ,, ,, 22–36.
c. His Journey through Samaria (where He confers with the Samaritan woman) into Galilee, where He heals the Nobleman's Son, . . . ,, iv. 1–54.
B. The Second Journey, to the Feast of Pentecost. Here may be observed transactions:
a. In the City, relating to the Impotent Man, healed at the Pool of Bethesda, ... ,, v. 1–47.
b. In Galilee, before the Second Passover, and after: Here we may note:
1. His feeding the Five Thousand, . . ,, vi. 1–14.
2. Walking upon the Sea, . . . ,, ,, 15–21.
3. Discourse of Himself, as the Bread of Life, . ,, ,, 22–59.
4. Reproof of those who objected to it, . . ,, ,, 60–65.
5. Apostasy of many, and steadiness of the Apostles, ... ,, ,, 66–71.
6. His continuance in Galilee, . . . ,, vii. 1,

C. The Third Journey, to the Feast of Tabernacles, . Chap. vii. 2–13.
Here may be observed Transactions—
a. In the city:
1. In the middle and end of the Feast, Chaps. vii. 14–53—viii. 1.
Where note:
(1) The Woman taken in Adultery, . Chap. viii. 2–12.
(2) Christ's preaching and vindicating His Doctrine, ... ,, ,, 13–30.
(3) His confuting the Jews, and escape from them, ... ,, ,, 31–59.
(4) His healing the Man born blind, . ,, ix. 1–7.
(5) Several Discourses on that occasion, . ,, ,, 8–41.
(6) Christ the Door, and the Shepherd of the Sheep, ... ,, x. 1–18.
(7) Different opinions concerning Him, . ,, ,, 19–21.
2. At the Feast of the Dedication. Here occur:
(1) His Disputes with the Jews, . . ,, ,, 22–38.
(2) His escaping their fury, . . ,, ,, 39.
b. Beyond Jordan, ... ,, ,, 40–42.

III. Of the last days, which were—
A. Before the great week, where we may note:
a. The two days spent out of Judea, while Lazarus was sick and died, ... ,, xi. 1–6.
b. The Journey into Judea; the raising of Lazarus; the advice of Caiaphas; Jesus' abode in Ephraim; the order given by His adversaries, . ,, ,, 7–57.
c. The sixth day before the Passover; the Supper at Bethany; the ointment poured on Jesus, . ,, xii. 1–11.
B. In the great week, wherein was the Third Passover, occur:
a. On the three former days, His Royal Entry into the City; the desire of the Greeks; the obstinacy of the Jews; the testimony given to Jesus from Heaven, ... ,, ,, 12–50.
b. On the fourth day, the washing the feet of the Disciples; the discovery of the Traitor, and His going out by night, ... ,, xiii. 1–30.
c. On the fifth day:
1. His Discourse—
(1) Before the Paschal Supper, . Chaps. xiii. 31—xiv. 1–31.
(2) After it, ... Chaps. xv. and xvi.
2. His Prayer, ... ,, xvii. 1–26.
3. The beginning of His Passion:
(1) In the Garden, ... ,, xviii. 1–11.
(2) In Caiaphas' House, . . . ,, ,, 12–27.
d. On the sixth day:
1. His Passion under Pilate—
(1) In the Palace of Pilate, . Chaps. xviii. 28—xix. 1–16.
(2) On the Cross, ... Chap. xix. 17–30.
(3) His Death, ... ,, ,, 30–37.
(4) His Burial, ... ,, ,, 38–42.

C. After the great week:
a. On the day of the Resurrection, . . . ,, xx. 1–25.
b. Eight days after, ... ,, ,, 26–31.

c. After that:

1. He appears to His Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, ... Chap. xxi. 1–14.
2. Orders S. Peter to feed His Sheep and Lambs, ,, ,, 15–17.
3. Foretells the manner of S. Peter's death, and checks his curiosity about S. John, . ,, ,, 18–23.
4. The Conclusion, ... ,, ,, 24–25."

—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

THE Evangelists, S. Matthew and S. Luke, give us the history of the childhood of Jesus: merely indicating that He was something more than the Child Jesus. S. John, like the eagle with which the painters symbolise him, sweeps into the heavens and declares Jesus to be the WORD of God. "The other Evangelists," says CHRYSOSTOM, "begin with Christ's incarnation in time; S. John with His eternal generation." He calls Him the Word; and he uses a word that has played so important a part in the history of human thought, that it is sometimes transferred to Jesus without being translated—THE LOGOS. In the language in which S. John wrote, Logos has the double signification — word and reason. Both are closely related: word is thought expressed; thought is inward speech. The Hebrews called thinking, speaking in the heart. The poetic beauty and far-reaching significance of the opening verses of this Gospel have been shown by casting the sentences into the following form:—

THE LOGOS AND GOD.	THE LOGOS AND THE WORLD.
1. In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God.	3. All things were made by Him. And without Him was not anything made that hath been made.
2. The same was in the beginning with God.	
THE LOGOS AND MANKIND.	THE LOGOS AND SIN.
4. In Him was life. And the life was the light of men.	5. And the light shineth in the darkness. And the darkness apprehended it not.

To those who ask where God was before the creation of the world, we open the Gospel according to S. John, and read its first sentences. The first verse one has called the peal of thunder from the Son of Thunder—a voice from heaven. The Gospel of S. John has been styled the Genesis of the New Testament. Indeed, the Bible speaks of three creations. The Old Testament opens with the natural creation; the New Testament with the moral creation and incarnation; and the Revelation closes with a description of the new heavens and the new earth, where nature and grace, the first and second creation, shall be completely harmonised, and the perfect beauty of the Spirit shall be reflected in a glorious and immortal body. All things were made by the Word, and without Him was not anything made that has been made. This conception of creation is associated with revealed religion. The whole thinking world outside of Judaism and Christianity tried to conceive the eternity of matter. All things are the thoughts of God become existent. The testimony that everything existed through the medium of the Word is designed to assure us, not of the dependence of everything on God, but of its existence by means of the Word. Then the Word is exalted above all orders of spirits. Col. 1. 16 teaches this distinctly. Christ was made manifest in the creation.

Vers. 1–5. THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE WORD.

Vers. 6–18. THE HISTORICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE WORD.—1. **In the beginning**—"referring to Gen. 1. 1, and Prov. 8. 23, when all things began to be made by the Word. In the beginning of heaven and earth, and this whole frame of created beings, *the Word existed* without any beginning. He **was** when all things began to be, whatsoever had a beginning. **The Word** — so termed, Ps. 33. 6; and frequently by the Seventy, and in the Chaldee Paraphrase. So that S. John did not borrow this expression from Philo, or any heathen writer. He was not yet named Jesus, or Christ. He is 'the Word,' whom the Father begot or spoke from eternity; by whom the Father speaking maketh all things; who speaketh the Father to us. We have, in the 18th verse, both a real description of the Word, and the reason why He is so called. 'He is the only begotten Son of the Father, who is in the bosom of the Father, and hath declared Him.' **And the Word was with God**—therefore distinct from God the Father. The word rendered 'with' denotes a perpetual tendency, as it were, of the Son to the Father, in unity of essence. He was with God alone; because nothing beside God had then any being. **And the Word was God**—supreme, eternal, independent. There was no creature, in respect of which He could be styled God in a relative sense. Therefore He is styled so in the absolute sense. The Godhead of the Messiah being clearly revealed in the Old Testament (Jer. 23. 6; Hos. 1. 7; Ps. 23. 1), the other Evangelists aim at this,—to prove that Jesus, a true Man, was the Messiah. But when at

length some from hence began to doubt of His Godhead, then S. John expressly asserted it, and wrote in this book as it were a supplement to the Gospels, as in the Revelation to the Prophets"—WESLEY.

The beginning, prior to all history (Gen. 1. 1), is recalled. **The Word**—as the human mind manifests itself in the spoken word, so the manifestation of the Eternal Mind is described by John as the Eternal Word. In vers. 14 and 18 this Word is identified by John as the Messiah. The term Word is used in a somewhat similar sense in the Old Testament, and in the philosophies with which S. John's first readers were acquainted. **The Word was God.** Not merely God-like or Divine.

"Fix any assignable point as the **beginning**, and the Word **was**, and still **was**. The Word is absolutely eternal. S. Paul calls Christ (Col. 1. 15) the Firstborn of every creature, or (more accurately translated) begotten before all creation. (Comp. Heb. 1. 8; 7. 3; Rev. 1. 8)"—PLUMMER.

2. **The same was in the beginning with God.** "This verse repeats and contracts into one the three points mentioned before. As if he had said, This Word, who was God, was in the beginning, and was with God"—WESLEY.

"The Father could not be present if the Son were not"—ORIGEN. Christ was adored as God in the Early Church. PLINY, in his letter to Trajan, says, "On a stated day the Christians meet before daybreak, and sing hymns to Christ as God." **In the beginning with God.** An unfathomable mystery. We cannot explain how this can be, but we can prove that it is possible and reasonable by a similar mystery in ourselves, for each of us is a union of body and soul in one person. The immaterial spirit unites with matter; the two are distinct and yet one.

3. **All things**—"beside God, were made; and all things which were made, were made by the Word. In the first and second verses is described the state of things before the creation; in the creation (ver. 3); in the time of man's innocency (ver. 4); in the time of man's corruption (ver. 5)"—WESLEY.

How vast is the multiplicity of things material and spiritual! But no one came into being without the Word. The Bible opens with the Psalm of Creation. (See Gen. 1.) All things are created **in** Christ, **by** Christ, and **for** Christ. And what He made, He maintains. These all wait upon Thee: Thou givest them their meat in due season. The Divine care, like the Divine creation, is special not less than general. The New Testament represents Christ as the executor of His Father's will.

4. **In Him was life.** "He was the foundation of life to every living thing, as well as of being to all that is. **And the life was the light of men**—He who is essential life, and the Giver of life to all that liveth, was also the light of men, the fountain of wisdom, holiness, and happiness to man, in his original state"—WESLEY.

Justin Martyr derived all the elements of truth, which are scattered like seeds among the ancient heathen, from the influence of Christ before His incarnation. He recognised in the rational soul itself something closely related to the Divine Logos, a germ or spark of the Reason of reasons. He regarded the heathen sages as unconscious disciples of the Logos, as Christians before Christ; and compared Socrates to Abraham. And how much of Christ is discoverable in the Old Testament we need not now stay to inquire. It is one of the commonplaces of religious teaching. John the Baptist is mentioned below to confirm the reality of the historical appearance of Jesus. He was a brilliant star shining in the dark age—but he was not the True Light. The all-enlightening Light was Christ. Light is one of the world's metaphors for pure truth, intellectual and moral. All nations and languages use light as a fit image of the Deity. All the rays, whether of natural or revealed teaching with which the world has been favoured, come from the Sun of Righteousness. Teachers and all Christians are indeed lights also, in virtue of their Divine calling and fellowship; but they shine by borrowed light—it is their duty and privilege to reflect Christ. If the light of God's truth is everywhere, and has been through all the ages, it should teach us to seek for truth in quarters we have often neglected. God has never left Himself without witness. (Read Pss. 8 and 19; Rom. 2. 6–16; Acts 17. 22–31.) "God is best known in Christ; the sun is not seen but by the light of the sun"—BRIDGE. "In nature we see God, as it were, like the sun in a picture; in the Law, as the sun in a cloud; in Christ, we see Him in His beams; He being the brightness of His glory, and the exact image of His person"—CHARNOCK. Men were not left alone to interpret the manifestation of the Light in the life around them and in them. The Light from whom that life flows made Himself known more directly. From the first He was, so to speak, on His way to the world, advancing towards the Incarnation by preparatory revelations. He came in type and prophecy and judgment. No man is wholly destitute of the illumination of "the Light."

5. **And the light shineth in darkness**—"shines even on fallen man. **But the darkness**—dark, sinful man—**perceiveth it not**"—WESLEY.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He is Life and the Life-giver. Christ is Life and Light. "Since Christ is Life and Light, any religion which dwarfs men, represses their life, belittles them, and any which shuts them up in darkness, and denies them intellectual freedom and progress in any direction, is so far Antichrist. The cause of Christ has nothing

to fear from intellectual life or any light of scientific discovery"—ABBOTT. Light is not always welcomed. His own age rejected Jesus. Darkness is the Bible symbol of misery, adversity, alienation from God, and death. There shall be no night in heaven. "By the darkness is meant all that the Divine revelation does not reach, whether by God's decree or their own stubbornness, ignorant Gentile or unbelieving Jew. Darkness in a metaphorical sense for spiritual and moral darkness is peculiar to S. John." (Ch. 8. 12; 12. 35, 46; 1 John 1. 5; 2. 8, 9, 11)"—PLUMMER.

6. **There was a man.** "The Evangelist now proceeds to him who testified of the Light, which he had spoken of in the five preceding verses"—WESLEY.

7. **The same came for**—"that is, in order to give—**a testimony.** The Evangelist, with the most strong and tender affection, interweaves his own testimony with that of John, by noble digressions, wherein he explains the office of the Baptist, partly premises and partly subjoins a further explication to his short sentences. What S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke term 'the Gospel,' in respect of the promise going before, S. John usually terms 'the Testimony,' intimating the certain knowledge of the relater. **To testify of the Light**—of Christ"—WESLEY.

8. **He was not the light.** John the Baptist was a man sent from God, one of God's prophets. He was a light, but not the Light. Christ was the True Light.

9. **Who lighteth every man**—"by what is vulgarly termed natural conscience, pointing out at least the general lines of good and evil. And this light, if man did not hinder, would shine more and more to the perfect day"—WESLEY. (Comp. note on ver. 4.)

"**The world** is one of the expressions characteristic of S. John; it occurs nearly eighty times in the Gospel and twenty-two in the First Epistle. It has not the same meaning in vers. 9 and 10 of the present chapter. Throughout the New Testament it is most important to distinguish the various meanings of 'the world.' It means—(1) the universe (Rom. 1. 20); (2) the earth (ver. 9; Matt. 4. 8); (3) the inhabitants of the earth (ver. 29; ch. 4. 42); (4) those outside the Church, alienated from God (ch. 12. 31; 14. 17), and frequently. In this verse the meaning slips from (2) to (4)"—C. B.

10. **He was in the world**—"even from the creation"—WESLEY.

11. **He came**—"in the fulness of time—**to His own**—country, city, Temple—**and His own**—people—**received Him not**"—WESLEY.

12. **But as many as received Him**—"Jews or Gentiles. **That believe on His name**—that is, on Him. The moment they believe they are sons, and because they are sons God sendeth forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, saying, Abba, Father"—WESLEY.

He was (ver. 9). **He was in the world** (ver. 10). **He came unto His own inheritance** (ver. 11). Such are the steps in the revelation of the Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man.

13. **Who were born**—"who became the sons of God. **Not of blood**—not by descent from Abraham. **Nor by the will of the flesh**—by natural generation. **Nor by the will of man**—adopting them. **But of God**—by His Spirit'—WESLEY.

14. "**Flesh** sometimes signifies corrupt nature; sometimes the body; sometimes, as here, the whole man. **We beheld His glory**—we His apostles, particularly Peter, James, and John (Luke 9. 32). **Grace and truth.** We are all by nature liars and children of wrath, to whom born grace and truth are unknown. But we are made partakers of them when we are 'accepted through the Beloved.' The whole verse might be paraphrased thus: **And** in order to raise us to this dignity and happiness **the** Eternal **Word**, by a most amazing condescension, **was made flesh**—united Himself to our miserable nature, with all its innocent infirmities. **And** He did not make us a transient visit, but **tabernacled among us** on earth, displaying His glory in a more eminent manner than ever of old in the tabernacle of Moses. **And we**, who are now recording these things, **beheld His glory**, with so strict an attention that we can testify it was in every respect such a glory as became the **only begotten of the Father.** For it shone forth not only in His Transfiguration, and in His continual miracles, but in all His tempers, ministrations, and conduct through the whole series of His life. In all He appeared **full of grace and truth.** He was in Himself most benevolent and upright; made those ample discoveries of pardon to sinners, which the Mosaic dispensation could not do; and really exhibited the most substantial blessings; whereas that was but 'a shadow of good things to come'"—WESLEY.

The new birth is not a new honour, but a change of nature. Human generation has nothing to do with Divine regeneration. A new heart precedes a new life, and opens up a new world. The aristocracy of Judaism could hardly receive this teaching. The pride of the human heart rejects it still.

15. **John cried**—"with joy and confidence—**This is He of whom I said.** John had said this before our Lord's baptism, although he then knew Him not in person. He knew Him first at His baptism, and afterwards cried, **This is He of whom I said**, etc. **He is preferred before me**—in His office. **For He was before me**—in His nature"—WESLEY.

16. **And.** "Here the apostle confirms the Baptist's words; as if he had said, He is indeed preferred before thee; so we have experienced—**we all**—that believe—**have received**—all that we enjoy—**out of His**

fulness; and in particular **grace upon grace**—one blessing upon another, immeasurable grace and love"—WESLEY.

17. **The Law**—"working wrath and containing shadows—**was given.** No philosopher, poet, or orator ever chose his words so accurately as S. John. **The Law**, saith he, **was given by Moses: grace was by Jesus Christ.** Observe the reason for placing each word thus: 'the Law' of Moses was not his own; 'the grace' of Christ was. His 'grace' was opposite to the wrath, His **truth** to the shadowy ceremonies of the Law. **Jesus**—S. John having once mentioned the Incarnation (ver. 14), no more uses that name, 'the Word,' in all his book"—WESLEY.

18. **No man hath seen God**—"with bodily eyes; yet believers see Him with the eye of faith. **Who is in the bosom of the Father.** The expression denotes the highest unity, and the most intimate knowledge"—WESLEY.

Vers. 14–18. ARE THE RECORD OF A GLORIOUS REVELATION.—**The Word was made flesh**—or, became flesh. This brief sentence, which affirms the union of the Infinite and the finite, is absolutely unique. **Dwelt among us**—tabernacled among; "dwelt" as in a tent. God with us. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Not merely no man; no *one*—man, angel, archangel. To see God is to know Him perfectly. On earth we have glimpses; in heaven we shall have full vision. Christ is the only Revealer of God. Hear Him. **The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.** He was not a visitor like the angel Gabriel; He came to stay. Though He is not now present to the senses, He has carried our nature into heaven, whither He has gone. Bengel discovers a threefold antithetic correspondence between vers. 1 and 4.

THE WORD	
Was in the beginning God With GOD.	*Became* FLESH And dwelt *among us.*

S. Paul makes the Incarnation the central part of our religion. (1 Tim. 3. 16.) The Life and Light of men became Man. This grand sentence, **The Word became flesh**, stands alone in the Bible, but the same idea, in somewhat different forms of expression, occurs repeatedly (Rom. 1. 3; 8. 3; Phil. 2. 7; Heb. 2. 14; 1 Tim. 3. 16; 1 John 4. 2). By His Incarnation our Lord became an inhabitant of this world. He dwelt among us; by taking upon Him our nature, He made Himself the Brother of Humanity. In ver. 11 the Advent was considered in reference to particular promises and to a chosen people; in ver. 14 it is revealed in its connection with humanity. He was God, He became flesh. He entered into the entire life of man, sin excepted, to raise it to the second higher life of glorified humanity. The Word became a Child; the Life, a mortal Man; the Eternal Light appeared in the darkness. The Incarnation is the central truth of Christianity and of all religion.

19. **The Jews**—"probably the great Council—**sent**"—WESLEY.

20. **I am not the Christ**—"for many supposed he was"—WESLEY.

21. **Art thou Elijah?** "He was not that Elijah, the Tishbite, of whom they spoke. **Art thou the prophet**?—of whom Moses speaks." (Deut. 18. 15)"—WESLEY.

23. **He said**—"I am that forerunner of Christ of whom Isaiah speaks. **I am the voice.** As if he had said, Far from being Christ, or even Elijah, I am nothing but a voice,—a sound that, so soon as it has expressed the thought of which it is the sign, dies into air, and is known no more"—WESLEY.

24. **They who were sent were of the Pharisees**—"who were peculiarly tenacious of old customs, and jealous of any innovation, except those brought in by their own scribes, unless the innovator had unquestionable proofs of Divine authority"—WESLEY.

25. **They asked him, Why baptizest thou then**—"without any commission from the Sanhedrim? and not only heathens (who were always baptized before they were admitted to circumcision) but Jews also?"—WESLEY.

26. **John answered, I baptize**—"to prepare for the Messiah; and, indeed, to show that Jews as well as Gentiles must be proselytes to Christ; and that these, as well as those, stand in need of being washed from their sins"—WESLEY.

28. **Where John was baptizing**—"that is, used to baptize"—WESLEY.

This section describes a crisis in the Baptist's ministry. He was himself of priestly family, hence priests were suitable emissaries. The combination **priests and Levites** occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It was a time of religious excitement. The world seemed on the eve of great changes. The Jewish scribes had taught that Elijah would come again before the coming of the Messiah and **the Prophet**, the well-known Prophet of Deut. 18. 15. Some thought he would be a second Moses, others a second Elijah, others the Messiah. The world has always had its periods of expectancy, *e.g.* the Reformation and the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century. Between the 28th and 29th verses falls the close of the history of the Temptation. It was fitting that our Lord's active ministry should begin with the solemn recognition of His herald.

29. **He seeth Jesus coming, and saith, Behold the Lamb**—"innocent; to be offered

up; prophesied of by Isaiah (53. 7); typified by the paschal lamb, and by the daily sacrifice. **The Lamb of God**—whom God gave, approves, accepts of. **Who taketh away**—atoneth for—**the sin**—that is, all the sins—**of the world**—of all mankind. Sin and the world are of equal extent"—WESLEY.

31. **I knew Him not**—"till He came to be baptized. How surprising is this, considering how nearly they were related, and how remarkable the conception and birth of both had been! But there was a peculiar providence visible in our Saviour's living from His infancy to His baptism at Nazareth; John all the time living the life of a hermit in the deserts of Judea (Luke 1. 80), ninety or more miles from Nazareth. Hereby that acquaintance was prevented which might have made John's testimony of Christ suspected"—WESLEY.

I knew Him not. "There is no contradiction between this and Matt. 3. 14. (1) 'I knew Him not' need not mean 'I had no knowledge of Him whatever.' (2) John's professing that he needed to be baptized by Jesus does not prove that he had already recognised Jesus as the Messiah, but only as superior to himself"—PLUMMER.

34. **I saw it**—"that is, the Spirit, so descending and abiding on Him. **And testified**—from that time"—WESLEY.

35. **John was standing.** "Many hearts were full with thoughts of some great change. Great even to cast their shadows before. **Two of His disciples**—one was Andrew, we know from ver. 40, the other was no doubt John the Evangelist. We judge thus from (1) John's manner of mentioning himself, either not at all or indirectly (ch. 13. 23; 18. 15; 19. 26; 20. 3; 21. 20); (2) the giving of one name suggesting a personal reserve in regard to the other; (3) the very life-like character of the subsequent account; (4) the more distinct calling of the sons of Zebedee immediately after with the sons of Jonas on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 4). As the calling of the sons of Zebedee is introduced here, so is doubtless the calling of the former"—LANGE. **Looking upon**—denoting a penetrating glance, as again in ver. 42, the only other place where it is found in John.

37. **They followed Jesus**—"they walked after Him, but had not the courage to speak to Him"—WESLEY.

38. **What seek ye?**—"not whom. **Master.** The English 'Master' is to be taken in the sense of teacher"—WESLEY.

41. **He first findeth his own brother Simon**—"probably both of them sought Him. **Which is, being interpreted, the Christ.** This the Evangelist adds, as likewise those words in ver. 38,—'that is, being interpreted, Master'"—WESLEY.

We have found the Messias—"a great and joyful discovery, and expected by the world for about forty centuries"—BENGEL. The Hebrew name is found only here and in ch. 4. 25.

42. **Jesus said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonah.** "As none had told our Lord these names, this could not but strike Peter. **Cephas, which is, Peter**—meaning the same in Syriac which Peter does in Greek, namely, a rock"—WESLEY.

43. **Findeth Philip.** How and where Jesus found Philip must remain unknown, but the word implies that the meeting was not accidental. What men call accident is God's own part in human life. **Follow Me.** This is the first occurrence of these notable words, words destined to express to generations following the inmost meaning of Christ's gospel.

45. **Jesus of Nazareth.** "So Philip thought, not knowing He was born in Bethlehem. Nathanael was probably the same with Bartholomew, that is, the son of Tholomew. Matt. 10. 3 joins Bartholomew with Philip, and John 21. 2 places Nathanael in the midst of the apostles, immediately after Thomas, just as Bartholomew is placed (Acts 1. 13)"—WESLEY.

46. **Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?** "How cautiously should we guard against popular prejudices! When these had once possessed so honest a heart as even that of Nathanael, they led him to suspect the blessed Jesus Himself for an impostor, because He had been brought up at Nazareth. But his integrity prevailed over that foolish bias, and laid him open to the force of evidence, which a candid inquirer will always be glad to admit, even when it brings the most unexpected discoveries. **Can any good thing**—that is, Have we ground from Scripture to expect the Messiah, or any eminent prophet, from Nazareth? **Philip saith, Come and see**—the same answer which he had received himself from our Lord the day before"—WESLEY.

Philip and Nathanael were earnest readers of Old Testament Scripture. It was proverbial that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet, hence the prejudice against the prophet of Nazareth.

47. **An Israelite indeed**—"one whose character answers to the true ideal of the elect Israel"—WESLEY.

48. **Under the fig tree I saw thee**—"perhaps at prayer"—WESLEY.

49. **Nathanael answered.** "Happy are they that are ready to believe, swift to receive the truth and grace of God. **Thou art the Son of God**—so he acknowledges now more than he had heard from Philip. **The Son of God, the King of Israel**—a confession both of the person and office of Christ"—WESLEY.

King of Israel. As here at the beginning so again this title is given to Christ at the close of His ministry. (Ch. 12. 13.)

51. **Hereafter ye shall see**—"all of these, as well as thou, who believe on Me now in My

state of humiliation, shall hereafter see Me come in My glory, and all the angels of God with Me. This seems the most natural sense of the words, though they may also refer to His ascension"—WESLEY.

In reading the latter half of this chapter—the record of the calling of Christ's first disciples—we are standing by the cradle of the Christian Church. In the gathering of the first disciples of Jesus we see the humble beginning of mighty results. On the last page of a book the word "finis" is sometimes printed. But the end is the beginning. The printed words enter into human minds and become reproductive for generations. When a labourer comes from the field at nightfall, and says that he has done sowing, his finished toil is the beginning of the harvest. The seed shows what life-generating power it has when the sower ends his toil. Similarly Christ's call to these disciples was the beginning of a moral influence felt to-day throughout Christendom. "With the festive freshness of these days," says BENGEL, "beautifully corresponds the word **findeth**, which is used here more frequently than elsewhere." This has been appropriately called the Chapter of the Findings. Christ did not compel; He attracted. The force of spiritual attraction draws "the brave to the braver, the noble to the noblest of all." The Church of Christ went forth out of the Old Testament. The disciples had been trained in the old dispensation. John the Baptist prepared disciples for Jesus. He stood on the border line of two ages. The Son of God is King of Israel, as well as Brother and Saviour of men. Let us not despise beginnings. It is necessary to remind ourselves that S. John is giving us selections from the life of Christ. He presupposes the events narrated by the other Evangelists.

Vers. 29–34. FIRST DECISIVE DAY.—**On the morrow**—some Friday in February A.D. 27. Edersheim computes the days of the week thus: the marriage at Cana, in the next chapter, took place on a Wednesday, because it was the uniform custom for Jews to be married on a Wednesday. Three days before this, or on a Sunday, the day after their Sabbath, Jesus began His journey from Bethany (Bethabarah, see R.V.) (ver. 28; ch. 2); and on the day before (Saturday), the two disciples of John were pointed out to Jesus and followed Him (ver. 43); and the day before this, Friday (ver. 35), was the first testimony of John. **Behold the Lamb of God**—not behold the world's Great Teacher, not behold the Supreme Example, not behold your King—each of these is important; but sin is the greatest fact, a Saviour the great necessity—"Behold the Lamb of God." They would recall the lamb led to the slaughter in the wonderful picture painted by Isaiah (ch. 53). They would recall the passover lamb, the scapegoat, and the daily sacrifice. Their old religion was a pictured alphabet, out of which they slowly spelled the name and work of Jesus Christ, their Messiah and the World's Hope. **To take away sin** is to remove the guilt and punishment. How God can be just and yet forgive, the New Testament Epistles explain. This is the centre of the gospel. The late C. H. SPURGEON thus described the circumstances of a great spiritual change: "It snowed so much I could not go to the place I determined. I went to a Methodist chapel in an obscure street. During the sermon the preacher, a thin-looking layman, fixed his eyes on me, and said, 'Young man, you are in trouble; you will never get out of it till you obey this message.' Then, raising his hands, he shouted, as only a Methodist could, 'Look, look! it's only look!' I did look, and in that instant lost my crushing load." MACLAREN finely says: "The man that travels with his face northward has it grey and cold; let him turn to the south, where the sun dwells, and his face will glow. Looking unto Jesus is the sovereign cure for sinners." John knew something of Jesus, but he speaks of not knowing, meaning not completely. On the day of the baptism the herald had the evidence of the Divine voice and the descending Spirit.

Vers. 35–42. SECOND DECISIVE DAY.—**On the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples.** One was Andrew: the other the writer, S. John. Andrew brought his brother Simon Peter to Jesus. Andrew had a magnetic fascination. He brought the Greeks to Christ, the lad with the barley loaves, and his own brother. Scarcely anything else is recorded of him. These three incidents give us the key to his character. "In Church history Peter is everything and Andrew nothing; but there would have been no apostle Peter but for Andrew"—PLUMMER. When our Lord gripped Peter to His heart as with hooks of steel He changed his name (ver. 42). "Cephas occurs only in this place in the Gospels, elsewhere in the New Testament only in S. Paul, 1 Cor., and Gal. Remembering the general significance of Hebrew names, the changes in the Old Testament, as of Abram, Sarai, and Jacob, and among these first disciples as of James and John (Mark 3. 16 and 17), all these names of Peter seem meant to characterise the man. Thou art not Hearer, the son of Jehovah's grace; thou shalt be called and be a Rock-man (comp. Matt. 16. 17)"—ELLICOTT. "There is no discrepancy between this and Matt. 16. 18. Here Christ gives the name Peter; there He reminds Peter of it"—PLUMMER. S. John, S. Andrew, S. Peter. What a trio! How related they are, how dependent. What a changed world it would have been if they had never been born, or being born had not been called to the apostolic work.

Vers. 43–50. THIRD DECISIVE DAY.—**On the morrow** (ver. 43, *seq.*). This paragraph reveals the law of mutual dependence.

John points to the Lamb of God.
Andrew and John follow Jesus.
Andrew finds Peter.
Jesus findeth Philip.
Philip findeth Nathanael.

The S. Andrew's Guild is an organisation in S. George's Episcopal Church, New York City. It is of the Brotherhood of S. Andrew, an organisation of wide extent in the Episcopal Church for the reaching and influencing of young men. This brotherhood is named from the Apostle Andrew, who, when he had become acquainted with Jesus, immediately went and found his greater brother Simon, and brought him to the Saviour. The Guild in S. George's Parish now numbers sixty-four young men, each one of whom is pledged to do his best every week to bring some young man to church and Sunday school. The Guild is one of the means to a very rare fact, that there are more men than women in the congregation, and more boys than girls in the Sunday school. Said General Havelock, in reply to the remark of a friend as to his influence over the men of his regiment, "*I keep close to them*—have personal contact with each man, and know each man's name." Time was when the Church consisted of these four or five disciples. The oak slept in the acorn. Harlan Page, John Pounds, Thomas Chalmers, Earl Shaftesbury, represent beginnings. The seed in spring is the prophecy of the harvest in autumn. Christ *finds* disciples, they *find* their friends and *report* how they *have been found* by Christ and *have found* Him; thus the work grew. So classes are formed and enlarged. Jesus met all willingly. All are invited, none rejected. *Whosoever will* may come. *Will not* is fatal. And honour as well as salvation follows. As one has said, "Who would ever have heard of these men—John, Andrew, James, Peter—if they had not met Christ?" They drew near to Him, were transformed by Him, breathed His spirit, and became great. So is every character transformed which comes under the influence of Jesus. The last section of the chapter also reveals the Lord of the Kingdom. We are arrested at once by the instances of *the marvellous insight of Christ:* if, indeed, they be not miracles of pure knowledge. He shows His knowledge of men's thoughts (vers. 42–48). Innocence has its own power of divination. Impurity detects its own likeness elsewhere; purity reveals its opposite by antagonism. We are not forgetting that Jesus was more than man; but we must not forget that He was Man. *He not only revealed the disciples, He tested them.* **What seek ye?** "Christ is not said to have called anyone to Himself." And when they came He weighed them in the balances of sincerity. He will have no unwilling service. The first disciples stand the decisive test-question, as have countless numbers through all the succeeding generations. The Lord of Truth must have truth in those who are identified with Him. Many fingers point to Christ—prophecy, office, word, as in John the Baptist, and these readers of the sacred scrolls. Manifold instrumentalities lead to Christ. Brother brings brother, friend brings friend, townsman brings townsman. They come together; they follow each other. Two pairs of brothers form the first group of disciples. Full of unlikenesses they are one in adherence to Him; and this is a picture of the wider Church of our times, of all times. The Church is sundered; its members are diverse; but all gather around Christ. The truth converges; the truth-seekers meet in Him. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But with growing need there shall be enlarging light. Christianity is a revelation of ever new and ever greater glories of the Lord in His life, and then in His Church. A child can say "Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done," but the involved truth deepens and broadens with the circle of the suns. "Thou shalt see greater things than these." Heaven gets nearer to earth. "The heavenly ladder was broken in Adam, and repaired in Christ." The kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers, and who shall dare to close it again? May we not rather declare that it is our privilege to live days of heaven upon earth? Living an angel's life of obedience and devotion then shall

"Earth be changed to heaven, and heaven to earth;
One kingdom, joy and union without end."

CHAPTER II.

NOTE the progress of the revelation—First, the Incarnate Word; the thought of God expressed in the presence, teaching, and mission of Jesus Christ. Next, the selection of disciples; the beginning of the Christian Church; and the Divine method of transmitting truth from generation to generation by human agency. Then, the deeds of Jesus; the evidence of a new power in the world—

"The mighty works, or mightier Name
Of our Eternal King."

The first chapter of the Gospel closes with the declaration, "Ye shall see the heavens opened." The second chapter fulfils the promise—God is here amongst men. Nature is obedient to His authority. The miracles of S. John's Gospel may be thus divided:—

1. Miracles of healing—Action on the body.—(1) A man sick of a fever; (2) A cripple; (3) A blind man.

2. Miracles of the mastery and glorification of nature.—(1) The supply of wine; (2) The feeding; (3) Walking on the sea; (4) Miraculous draught of fishes.

3. Miracles of the judicial majesty of Christ—Action on the mind.—(1) The purification of the Temple; (2) Enchaining the officers who

came to arrest Him; (3) Striking down the soldiers in Gethsemane with a word.

4. Victory over death: the greatest miracle —Lazarus.

What we commonly call miracles are in the sacred Scriptures named—(1) Wonders; (2) Signs; (3) Powers, or mighty works.

"In the name 'wonder,' the astonishment which the work produces upon the beholders, an astonishment often graphically portrayed by the Evangelist when relating our Lord's miracles (Mark 2. 12; 4. 41; 6. 51; 7. 37; comp. Acts 3. 10, 11), is transferred to the work itself"—TRENCH. This word does not so much reveal the work or the worker as the effect. Hence this word, as an early student of the Bible pointed out, never stands alone. We read of "signs and wonders," or "signs" alone, or "powers" alone, but never "wonders" alone. In the word "sign" we have a token and indication of the near presence of God. The miracle of turning water into wine was "the beginning of His signs" (see R.V.). The miracles are signs and pledges of something more. Turning water into wine was wonderful; but was not Christ's presence at the simple wedding wonderful? God had dwelt *apart* in the religions of Jews, Greeks, and Romans; in the miracles of Jesus God came *near*. The miracle as a sign is "a kind of finger-post of God." All miracles are signs and wonders but not all signs and wonders are miracles.

Frequently miracles are styled "powers or mighty works." "The power dwells in the Divine messenger (Acts 6. 8; 10. 38; Rom. 15. 19); is one with which He is Himself equipped of God. Then, by an easy transition, the word comes to signify the exertions and separate putting forth of this power. These three terms — wonders, signs, and powers—occur three times in connection with one another (Acts 2. 22; 2 Cor. 12. 12; 2 Thess. 2. 9), although on each occasion in a different order"—TRENCH. The miracles of earth, as Jean Paul has said, are the laws of heaven. All is wonder; to make a man is as great a marvel as to raise him from the dead. The harvest is as wonderful as the feeding of the five thousand. The same almighty power that turned water into wine does each year prepare the wine in the grape. The difference is that the unresting activity of God, which at other times hides and conceals itself behind the veil of what we term natural laws, does in the miracle unveil itself. Christ did wonders because He is wonderful. He is the miracle of miracles. A German poet says: "One might have thought that the miracle of miracles was to have created the world such as it is; yet it is a far greater miracle to have lived a perfectly pure life therein." A miracle transcends, though it by no means necessarily supersedes, the ordinary laws by which nature works. Law implies a lawgiver; nature has an Author. God is the Living God, and therefore He acts. The ultimate cause of a miracle lies in God.

THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES.—Not only in S. John, but in the gospel history in general, the changing of the water into wine is the first miracle of Jesus. This miracle is the typical, symbolical token of the glorification of the world. Christ significantly began His public ministry with a miracle of *transformation:* His whole mission was to convert sinners into saints, to turn darkness into light, to turn grief into joy, to make death the gate of life, to elevate earth to heaven. The first miracle of Moses was a turning of water into blood (Ex. 7. 20); and this had its fitness; for the Law, which came by Moses, was a ministration of death. But the first miracle of Christ was a turning of water into wine—this, too, a meet inauguration of all which should follow, for His was a ministration of life; He came as the dispenser of that true life of the soul. It was, moreover, a miracle of festive *joy and gladness, and of more than royal munificence*, showing how the gospel is a religion of true happiness. Christ relieves not only the present need, but provides for the future. "None need wonder," as TRENCH very beautifully says, "to find the Lord of Life at this festival; for He came to sanctify all life—to consecrate its times of joy, as its times of sorrow; the former, as all experience teaches, needing above all such a consecration, as only His presence, bodily or spiritual, can give. He was there, and by His presence there struck the keynote to the whole tenor of His future ministry. He should not be as another Baptist, a wilderness preacher, withdrawing Himself from the common paths of men. His should be at once a harder and a higher task, to mingle with and purify the daily life of men, to bring out the glory which was everywhere hidden there. Nor was it without its significance that this should have been a *marriage* which He adorned and beautified with His presence and the first miracle that He wrought." It is equally significant that this first miracle was performed in the bosom of a *family:* for the family is the first institution of God on earth, and the nursery of Church and State, where all moral improvements must begin. Christianity restored marriage and the family to their original purity. When heaven descends to earth it is to make earth more like heaven. And as the scaffolding is necessary to the building, and yet inferior to it, so the sign of the miracle is at least as important as its strangeness. Christ in the circle of the wedding guests is more wonderful than the miracle of supply. He laid His hands upon the common haunts of human life, and made them sacred. He abolished our poor distinctions, and redeemed "the little" and "the common" from degradation and neglect. We are perhaps most apt to secularise occasions of joy. Sorrow utters a voice that all must hear. Duty is imperious. But relaxation and en-

joyment may easily shut out God, and lose the sense of the earnestness of life. Christ stood at the wedding as if to say

> "All things are sacred,
> The eye of God is on them all."

Analogies do not help us to understand what the Lord at this time did, but they bring before us the truth that in it He was working in the line of (*above*, indeed, but not *across*, or counter to) His more ordinary operations, the unnoticed miracles of everyday nature. That which this had peculiarly its own, which took it out from the order of nature, was the power and will by which all the intervening steps of the tardier processes were overleaped, their methods superseded, and the result attained in an instant. Faith should be deepened by experience. The miracle is only special: Christ abideth ever. The details of time, place, and persons are given in this beginning of miracles. It was shown in close connection with the faith of the first disciples **(the third day)** at a village, where one at least of them dwelt (ch. 21. 2), at a festival of the highest natural joy.

1. **And the third day**—"after He had said this. **In Cana of Galilee.** There were two other towns of the same name ; one in the tribe of Ephraim, the other in Cœlosyria"—WESLEY.

The third day, *i.e.* from the last day mentioned (ch. 1. 43). **Cana.** The site is disputed.

2. **Jesus and His disciples were invited to the marriage.** "Christ does not take away human society, but sanctify it. Water might have quenched thirst; yet our Lord allows wine ; especially at a festival solemnity. Such was His facility in drawing His disciples at first, who were afterwards to go through rougher ways"—WESLEY.

A marriage feast lasted several days. The name of the mother of Jesus is not mentioned in S. John, even when Joseph is named. This is the first distinct mention of the relation in which the little group, gathered from the disciples of John, now stood to the greater Teacher.

3. **And wine falling short.** "How many days the solemnity had lasted, and on which day our Lord came, or how many disciples might follow Him, does not appear. **His mother saith to Him, They have not wine.** Either she might mean, Supply them by miracle, or, Go away, that others may go also, before the want appears"—WESLEY.

They have no wine. A want stated is a prayer expressed. The mother of the Lord had discovered that He was the Lord of Life.

4. **Jesus saith to her, Woman.** "So our Lord speaks also (ch. 19. 26). It is probable this was the constant appellation which He used to her. He regarded His Father above all, not knowing even His mother 'after the flesh.' **What is it to Me and thee?**—a mild reproof of her inordinate concern and untimely interposal. **Mine hour is not yet come—the time of My** working this miracle, or of My going away. May we not learn hence, if His mother was rebuked for attempting to direct Him in the days of His flesh, how absurd it is to address her as if she had a right to command Him on the throne of His glory? Likewise how indecent it is for us to direct His supreme wisdom, as to the time or manner in which He shall appear for us, in any of the exigencies of life?"—WESLEY.

Woman. Not necessarily implying any want of respect. In the interests of controversy volumes have been written on this reply of Jesus. Outwardly it was a repulse ; but His mother seems to have looked beneath appearances.

5. **His mother saith to the servants**—"gathering from His answer, that He was about to do something extraordinary"—WESLEY.

6. **The purifying of the Jews**—"who purified themselves by frequent washings ; particularly before eating"—WESLEY.

8. **Draw out now.** The miracle comes between vers. 7 and 8. The method of the miracle transcends our powers of conception, but the Divine calm of the miracle worker and His simple unobtrusiveness are naked and open to every reader. It has been well said that to the belief of Christendom the Son of God would still be the Son of God, even if, like S. John, He had done no miracle. WESTCOTT says: "At the beginning of Christ's signs this miracle cannot but have a representative value."

1. *Its essential character.*—A sign of sovereign power wrought on inorganic matter, not on a living body.

2. *Its circumstantial character.*—The change of the simpler to the richer element. In this respect it may be contrasted with the first public miracle of Moses, with whose history the record of miracles in the Old Testament commences.

3. *Its moral character.*—The answer of love to faith, ministering to the fulness of human joy in one of its simplest and most natural forms. Some, as we have noted, have tried to bring it nearer to knowledge and observation by comparing it to the annual miracle of the vineyard. They speak of it as an accelerated process of nature. It is enough to say a miracle is a miracle, and can be wrought by none but God, who doeth whatsoever He will, amid the armies of heaven, and the saints on earth.

9. **The governor of the feast.** "The bridegroom generally procured some friend to order all things at the entertainment"—WESLEY.

10. **And saith.** "S. John barely relates the words He spoke, which does not imply His approving them. **When they have well drank**—does not mean any more than, toward the close of the entertainment"—WESLEY.

11. **And His disciples believed**—"more steadfastly"—WESLEY.

This beginning of miracles manifested forth

His glory. John the Baptist withdrew himself from the common paths of men. A greater than he planted His feet on the beaten road. It was His glory to reveal the glory everywhere hidden. He made every bush burn with the presence of God. Ordinarily He veiled the Godhead that was in Himself; in this wonderful work it made itself visible. The veil of flesh concealed it; the work of power revealed it. His power of repression is remarkable. Only now and then did He show what He could do. An Indian story tells us that a Brahmin, one of whose disciples had been perplexed respecting miracles, ordered a flower-pot filled with earth to be brought him, and having put a seed into it before the doubter, caused it to spring up, blossom, and bear fruit while he still stood by. "A miracle," cried the young man. "Son," replied the Brahmin, "what else do you see done here in an hour than nature does more slowly round the year?" And our Lord pointed from the isolated works of wonder to the ever-present miracle of life. "Infinitely varied forces," as one has said, "are at work around us every moment. From the sun to the atom, from the stone to the thinking brain and beating heart, they circulate sleeplessly through all things for ever. As they act and react on each other, the amazing result is produced which we know as nature." Jesus Christ stood in the midst of her, and said, "Nature is My handiwork. All things are Mine. All souls are Mine. Common life is stamped with My signet." As Martin Luther long since said, "Our Lord granted a double honour to the family at Cana. The first was His presence, the second His miracle. Which was greater? The miracles of Moses and the prophets revealed not their glory, but the glory of Jehovah; the miracles of Christ are manifestations of Himself. This beginning of miracles was the first sign, but not the last. He who made wine out of water at His own bidding refused to make bread out of stones at the suggestion of Satan. And He who sat at the marriage feast on earth spoke of a reunion at a marriage feast in heaven. He connected, as is ever His wont, the NOW and the THEN."

12. **Capernaum.** The modern Tell-Hûm, on the shores of the Lake. **His mother and His brethren.** "It is impossible to determine with certainty whether they are (1) the children of Joseph and Mary, born after the birth of Jesus; (2) the children of Joseph by a former marriage, whether levirate or not; or (3) adopted children"—C. B.

13. **The Passover was nigh.** While the Jews were purifying themselves for the Passover, the Lord was purifying the Temple.

14. **Oxen and sheep and doves**—"used for sacrifice. **And the changers of money**—those who changed foreign money for that which was current at Jerusalem, for the convenience of them that came from distant countries"—WESLEY.

15. **Having made a scourge of rushes,** "which were strewed on the ground, **He drove all out of the Temple** (that is, the court of it), **both the sheep and the oxen**—though it does not appear that He struck even them, and much less any of the men. But a terror from God, it is evident, fell upon them"—WESLEY.

"The order is natural—first the driving out of the cattle, then the pouring out of the money, and overturning the tables. The word for 'money' literally means 'something cut up small,' hence 'change.' The common exchange would be foreign money for Jewish, payments to the Temple being necessarily made in Jewish coin"—PLUMMER.

16. **My Father's house**—"a distinct claim to Messiahship"—WESLEY.

18. **Then answered the Jews.** "Either some of those whom He had just driven out, or their friends. **What sign showest Thou?**—so they require a miracle, to confirm a miracle!"—WESLEY.

19. **This Temple**—"doubtless, pointing while He spoke, to His body, the temple and habitation of the Godhead"—WESLEY.

20. **Forty and six years**—"just so many years before the time of this conversation, Herod the Great had begun his most magnificent reparation of the Temple (one part after another), which he continued all his life, and which was now going on, and was continued thirty-six years longer, till within six or seven years of the destruction of the state, city, and Temple, by the Romans"—WESLEY.

22. **They believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said**—"concerning His resurrection"—WESLEY.

23. **Many believed**—"that He was a Teacher sent from God"—WESLEY.

24. **He did not trust Himself to them.** "Let us learn hence, not rashly to put ourselves into the power of others. Let us study a wise and happy medium between universal suspiciousness, and that which would make us the property of every pretender to kindness and respect"—WESLEY.

25. **He,** to whom all things are naked, **knew what was in man**—"namely, a desperately deceitful heart"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER III.

"THIS," says Dr. SCHAFF, "is one of the richest and most important sections of the Bible. Ver. 21 alone contains the gospel in a nutshell, or the Bible in miniature, and is worth more than all the wisdom of the world. The infinite love of the Father, the mission of His Son, the work of the Holy Ghost, the lost condition of man, the necessity of a new birth from above, faith in Christ as a condition of salvation, the kingdom of God, eternal life,—all these fundamental doctrines are set forth by the unerring mouth of our Lord in this interview with a timid, yet earnest and anxious inquirer.

The central idea of the passage is the New Birth, which implies the total depravity of man, and the work of Divine grace. This great doctrine stands in the proper place at the beginning of Christ's ministry. The first miracle of Christ was a miracle of *transfiguration;* His first public act in Jerusalem, an act of *reformation;* His first discourse, a discourse on *regeneration.* He is not satisfied with mere improvements of the old, but demands a new life, lays a new foundation. True religion in the soul begins with a personal conviction of sin and guilt, and of a radical change. Without such a conviction all efforts to convert a man are in vain. The night discourse with Nicodemus is the classical passage on the New Birth, as the indispensable condition of admission into the kingdom of God. It occupies a position in the Gospel of John similar to that which the Sermon on the Mount does in the Gospel of Matthew." All this is familiar to us, because we have the advantage of nineteen centuries of Christian tradition. But to the old, respectable, trusted rabbi it would convey no such symmetrical lessons. We cannot help reading a great deal into the simple narratives of the Gospels. It is difficult to realise, perhaps impossible to realise fully, the startling strangeness and the bewildering brilliance of the teachings of Jesus upon the minds of the first listeners. Let us strive to divest our minds of these afterthoughts, and place ourselves in the condition of Nicodemus. Who was Jesus? A young Teacher who had suddenly appeared, been followed, and worshipped whithersoever He went. What had He to teach? What new accent and emphasis made His words more penetrating, more influential than those of well-known teachers? How came it that all the world was going after Him? Who is this Jesus? Some such train of thought was awakened in the mind of the well-known Pharisee named Nicodemus. "This is the first of the eleven discourses of our Lord which form the main portion, and are among the great characteristics of this Gospel"—C. B.

1. **There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus**—"a current name, first with the Greeks, then with the Jews. If the name be Hebrew, it is equivalent to 'innocent blood,' but if Greek, 'conqueror of the people.' Both meanings end in this Nicodemus, for he was not a foe of Jesus. He was one of the Sanhedrim, which consisted of priests, Levites, elderly men, and rabbis. Tradition reports him to be a man of great wealth, and a rigid observer of Pharisaic forms. Twice later on we obtain a glimpse of Nicodemus. After this interview he seems to have been a secret disciple, or at least strongly inclined to accept of Jesus as the Messiah, for he in a manner defended Jesus before the Sanhedrim, a year or so after this interview. (Ch. 7. 50.) But it was not till the crucifixion that he came out boldly and decidedly. **A ruler**—one of the great Council"—WESLEY.

2. **The same came**—"through desire; but **by night**—through shame. **We know**—even we rulers and Pharisees"—WESLEY.

Came to Jesus by night. This detail is noticed again in ch. 19. 39. It is usually ascribed to fear. There are traces of natural timidity in Nicodemus. He defended Jesus without expressing any personal interest in Him; he brought his offering only after Joseph of Arimathæa had obtained the body from Pilate. But this seems hardly a sufficient explanation. The impression which Nicodemus had received must have been a strong one, for there was not little for him to overcome before he could go, even by night, to Jesus. He was a distinguished member of the Sanhedrim, a man of property, and advanced in life, a Pharisee too, who was specially exposed to temptation, to self-righteousness. Another reason has been suggested by Dr. ABBOTT, "Why *by night?* The reason generally assumed is fear of the Jews; but at this time there had not been developed any pronounced hostility on the part of the Judeans to Jesus. Nicodemus may have had a natural reluctance to commit himself to an unknown rabbi till he had learned more of his doctrine; he may have simply sought a quiet, personal conversation, such as he could not obtain in the daytime." **Rabbi**—a term of respectful courtesy. "If from ch. 19. 27 we might infer that S. John had a home in Jerusalem, the scene here described would have taken place under his roof. There was no need for Nicodemus to pass through the house, for an outside stair led to the upper room—the guest-chamber on the roof, where the lamp was still burning, and the heavenly Guest was busy with His thoughts and words"—EDERSHEIM. **We.** Others are disposed to believe as well as Nicodemus. **A teacher come from God.** The words "from God" stand first emphatically: "it is from God, not from man, Thy title to teach is derived." They knew He was from God, but whether He was the Messiah or some inferior prophet they did not know. **Miracles**—signs.

3. **Jesus answered**—"that knowledge will not avail thee, unless thou **be born again**—otherwise thou canst not **see**, that is, experience and enjoy, either **the** inward or the glorious **kingdom of God.** In this solemn discourse our Lord shows that no external profession, no ceremonial ordinances or privileges of birth, could entitle any to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; that an entire change of heart as well as of life was necessary for that purpose; that this could only be wrought in man by the almighty power of God; for every man born into the world was by nature in a state of sin, condemnation, and misery; that the free mercy of God had given His Son to deliver them from it, and to raise them to a blessed immortality; that all man-

kind, Gentiles as well as Jews, might share in these benefits, procured by His being lifted up on the cross, and to be received by faith in Him; but that, if they rejected Him, their eternal, aggravated condemnation would be the certain consequence. **Except a man be born again.** If our Lord, by being born again, means only reformation of life, instead of making any new discovery, He has only thrown a great deal of obscurity on what was before plain and obvious"—WESLEY.

Answered. "Not the words, but the thoughts. The Lord's answers to questions will be found to reveal the truth which the questioner is seeking. Nicodemus implied that he and those like him were prepared to understand and welcome the Lord's teaching. This appeared to him to be of the same order as that with which he was already familiar. He does not address the Lord as if he were ready to welcome Him as 'the Christ' or 'the Prophet.' On the other hand, the Lord's reply sets forth distinctly that His work was not simply to carry on what was already begun, but to re-create. The new kingdom of which He was the Founder, could not be comprehended till after a new birth"—WESTCOTT. "He answers his thoughts before they are expressed. We have instances of this supernatural knowledge in the cases of S. Peter (ch. 1. 42), Nathanael (ch. 1. 47, 48), Nicodemus (ch. 3. 3), the woman at the well (ch. 4. 29), the disciples (ch. 6. 61–64), Lazarus (ch. 11. 4–15), Judas (ch. 13. 11), S. Peter (ch. 21. 17)"—PLUMMER. **Except a man be born again.** Our translators have followed the ancient expositors in giving the alternative renderings, "born again" and "born from above" (*margin*). "Chrysostom notes the two currents of interpretation in his day; in our own day the opinions of scholars, whether we count them or weigh them, may be equally claimed for either view. In any case it meant 'born afresh' or 'anew'"—WATKINS. "According to the first definition, Christ simply implies that the life must begin anew, that the character must be rebuilt from the foundation, without, however, implying how; according to the other idea, He indicates in the use of this word not only a new but a spiritual and Divine birth. Nicodemus impliedly asks to know what *new doctrine* Christ has to teach; Christ replies in substance that the world needs not new doctrine, but *new life*"—ABBOTT. **He cannot see the kingdom of God.** "Without this new birth—this introduction into a vital connection with a new order of being, with a corresponding endowment of faculties—no man can see, can outwardly apprehend, the kingdom of God. Our natural powers cannot realise that which is essentially spiritual. A new vision is required for the objects of a new order. Elsewhere there are references to the change required (Matt. 18. 3; 1 Cor. 2. 14) in order that we may observe that which, though about us, is unregarded (Luke 17. 20, 21)"—WESTCOTT. Christ's answer is equivalent to, "It is not *learning*, but *life*, that is wanted for Messiah's kingdom, and *life* must begin by *birth*"—ALFORD. **The kingdom of God.** The phrase occurs only in this chapter in S. John's Gospel, while it is frequent in the other three. It is found in the Acts and the Epistles of S. Paul. "There is no such thing as seeing the kingdom of God at a distance"—BRAUNE. "The kingdom of God is nothing into which a man can think, or investigate, or study, or read, or hear, or talk, or discuss himself: man can only experience his way into the kingdom of God"—DRASEKE.

4. **When he is old**—"as Nicodemus himself was"—WESLEY.

Jesus answered. Christ met the difficulty of Nicodemus by a further explanation.

5. **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit**—"except he experience that great inward change by the Spirit, and be baptized (wherever baptism can be had), as the outward sign and means of it"—WESLEY.

Born of water and of the Spirit. The image is that of being baptized, plunged into, and then rising re-born, as one washed is, so to speak, made anew. Water symbolises purification and spirit-quickening: the one is outward, the other inward.

6. **That which is born of the flesh is flesh**—"mere flesh, void of the Spirit; yea, at enmity with it. **And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit**—is spiritual, heavenly, Divine, like its Author"—WESLEY.

Flesh: Spirit. By the Spirit we are united to heaven: by the flesh to earth. Though flesh is not in itself sinful, it lies on that side which tends to sin, and on which actually we have sinned.

7. **Ye must be born again.** "To be born again, is to be inwardly changed from all sinfulness to all holiness. It is fitly so called, because as great a change then passes on the soul as passes on the body when it is born into the world"—WESLEY.

8. **The wind bloweth**—"according to its own nature, not thy will. **And thou hearest the sound thereof.** Thou art sure it doth blow, **but canst not** explain the particular manner of its acting. **So is every one that is born of the Spirit.** The fact is plain; the manner of His operations, inexplicable"—WESLEY.

The wind: the Spirit. In many languages the words are identical. "It was late at night when our Lord had this interview with the Jewish teacher. At the pauses in the conversation, we may conjecture, they heard the wind without, as it moaned along the narrow streets of Jerusalem; and our Lord, as was His wont, took His creature into His service—the service of spiritual truth"—LIDDON. "No one can see the wind, but its effects are apparent, and when it comes we feel it. In the same way the

soul of man, if in some respects human, has something in it of the Divine. For it is clear that it reigns with kingly authority in us, yet we do not see it. We should reflect on this, and not set light by what may not be seen, but since our soul shows its majesty by its effects, we should honour the Divine that is thus within us"—XENOPHON. "God's influence on the heart is like the flowing wind—free, felt, and yet mysterious. It comes as it lists; its presence is felt by its results, but all besides is beyond our knowledge"—SCHLEIERMACHER.

9. **How can these things be?** The emphasis lies on *can*. The answer to the previous question has spoken of a spiritual birth, and a spiritual life, and a spiritual kingdom; but all this is in a region of which the rabbinic schools knew nothing. They knew the precise number of words in the Pentateuch, the shape of each of the letters, the form of a phylactery, the width of a fringe, the tithing of garden herbs, and the manner of washing the hands; but spirit, life, a man's soul born again!

11. **We speak what we know**—"I and all that believe in Me"—WESLEY.

We—we—we. Jesus in the next verse speaks of Himself in the singular. Who, then, is this We? Himself and the prophets. Himself and John the Baptist. All teachers like Himself. All born of the Spirit. A proverbial saying. The three Persons of the Trinity. The plural may be merely rhetorical. All these answers are given by distinguished Bible students. Where inspiration fails us, conjecture is busy.

12. **Earthly things**—"things done on earth: such as the new birth, and the present privileges of the children of God. **Heavenly things**—such as the eternity of the Son, and the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit"—WESLEY.

Earthly things—those facts of the higher life which have their manifestation on earth. The new birth, for example, is "from above," though it takes place in this world. **Heavenly things.** The counsels of redemption: the things to come.

13. **For no one**—"for here you must rely on My single testimony; whereas there you have a cloud of witnesses. **Hath gone up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, who is in heaven**—therefore He is omnipresent; else He could not be in heaven and on earth at once. This is a plain instance of what is usually termed the communication of properties between the Divine and human nature, whereby what is proper to the Divine nature is spoken concerning the human, and what is proper to the human is, as here, spoken of the Divine"—WESLEY.

14. **And as Moses**—"and even this single witness will soon be taken from you; yea, and in a most ignominious manner"—WESLEY.

As Moses. The mystery shadowed forth under the image of an Old Testament symbol (Num. 21. 7, *seq.*).

15. **That whosoever.** "He must be **lifted up**, that hereby He may purchase salvation for all believers: all those who look to Him by faith recovering spiritual health, even as all that looked at that serpent recovered bodily health"—WESLEY.

16. "Yea, and this was the very design of God's love in sending Him into the world. **Whosoever believeth on Him**—with that faith which 'worketh by love,' and 'holds fast the beginning of his confidence steadfast to the end.' **God so loved the world**—that is, all men under heaven; even those that despise His love, and will for that cause finally perish. Otherwise not to believe would be no sin to them. For what should they believe? Ought they to believe that Christ was given for them? Then He was given for them. **He gave His only Son**—truly and seriously. And the Son of God gave Himself (Gal. 1. 4) truly and seriously"—WESLEY.

Eternal life. A phrase characteristic of S. John. It occurs seventeen times in the Gospel, and six times in the First Epistle. In neither Gospel nor Epistle is "eternal" applied to anything but "life." **God so loved the world.** This great text has been called a Bible within the Bible.

17. **The world.** Note the emphatic repetition: the whole human race is meant, as in ver. 16, not the Gentiles in particular.

God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world—"although many accuse Him of it"—WESLEY.

18. **He that believeth on Him is not condemned**—"is acquitted, is justified before God. **The name of the only begotten Son of God**—the name of a person is often put for the person himself. But perhaps it is further intimated, in that expression, that the person spoken of is great and magnificent. And therefore it is generally used to express either God the Father, or the Son"—WESLEY.

19. **This is the condemnation**—"that is, the cause of it. So God is clear"—WESLEY.

21. **He that practiseth the truth**—"that is, true religion. **Cometh to the light**—so even Nicodemus afterwards did. **Are wrought in God**—that is, in the light, power, and love of God"—WESLEY.

"The astonishing originality of such language is altogether unique. In the presence of a famous rabbi He claims to be the Light to which all men, without exception, must come who love the truth. His first utterance anticipates the highest claims of His last. A humble Galilean, easy of access, sympathetic, obscure, He calmly announces Himself as the Son of Man, whose home is heaven; as knowing the counsels of God from eternity; as the only-begotten Son of the Eternal, and the arbiter of eternal life or death to the world. It is idle to speak of any merely human

utterances, even of the greatest and best of our race, in the presence of such thoughts and words as these. They are the voice of a higher sphere, though falling from the lips of One who walked as a man amongst men"—GEIKIE. "Although Nicodemus is alluded to in only a few touches, because of that high teaching which Jesus vouchsafed to him, yet the impression left upon us by his individuality is inimitably distinct, and wholly beyond the range of invention"—FARRAR. "In the history of Nicodemus we have a pretty spiritual play presented to us—how the best reason and most beautiful piety upon earth stumbles at genuine truth and spirituality. He is assisted, so should we paint it, by power, the highest piety and prudence, all combined, and yet more, even by love to Christ; yet see how he stumbles"—LUTHER. "He came in the dark from fear of public opinion. Yet he came, which is far better than not coming at all"—SCHAFF.

3. **Ye must be born again.** Professor Drummond has shown that no change of substance, no modification, no chemistry, can endow any single atom of the mineral world with life. As the door from the inorganic to the organic is shut, so the door from the natural to the spiritual is shut. The plant stretches down to the dead world beneath it, touches its minerals and gases with life, and brings them up into the living sphere. The breath of God touches the dead souls of men, bears them across the bridgeless gulf, and develops within them faculties by which they see the kingdom of God. Faith is the golden key that unlocks the door of salvation. The soul that accepts Christ has life, and that life is life eternal.

Nicodemus an inquirer after truth.—He was partially enlightened by the Light that lighteth every man. Such are not left in darkness; they have the Light of Life. Christ cared for single souls. He preached this great sermon to *one*. The Rev. John Holmes had an appointment to preach at Castlebar, Ireland. Arriving, he found a congregation of *three*. One of the three was converted. His name was William Arthur, who afterwards wrote *The Tongue of Fire*. Sincerity and timidity struggled together in Nicodemus. That he came by night is noticed again (ch. 19. 39). On each occasion where Nicodemus is mentioned we may see other traces of the timidity to which it was due. He defended Jesus without committing himself; he brought his offering after Joseph of Arimathæa had obtained the body from Pilate. But if timidity be the cause of his coming by night, it may not be the only cause. A worthy prudence would be put in the balances. It was hardly wise for a rabbi, and such a rabbi, to cast aside all reserve until he knew the new Teacher better than by report. Whether, however, we admit the prudential consideration or not, the sincerity is manifest. Nicodemus is the first of the long line of timid, half-doubting seekers; such are not excluded from the kingdom of God. Pages of church history are aflame with the stories of secret worship in the lives of the Huguenots, Covenanters, Puritans, Quakers, and Early Methodists. And few congregations are without the sincere but timid seekers after truth. Biography, on its religious side, is the incarnation of these seekers after God. In defending sincerity, we must not absolve cowardice. We must learn to rise above the judgment of the world, and not to be ashamed of principle and conscience. Uprightness, even if it take as its companion diffidence, shall go from light to fuller light. Moses, Jeremiah, and Calvin were constitutionally timid, but faithfully sincere. Examples of notable converts are worth recording for the glory of God, and the encouragement of others. Perhaps the records of weakness are more helpful than those of strength, seeing that weakness is more common. The Spirit of God works in all the same change, but He does not work in the same way. He reaches some in youth, and others in age. He arouses one through fear, and another by fascination. He reaches this man by a powerful appeal; that by an awakening providence. But in all the intention is the same—to make them partakers of the Divine nature. What a mighty change our Lord declares to be necessary to salvation! Christianity is not a mere doctrine, although doctrine is necessary to life. When our Lord says, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**, Luther understands Him to mean, "My teaching is not of doing and leaving undone, but of a radical change in the man, so that it is not new works done, but a new man to do them; not another life only, but another birth." Regeneration is a birth from above. The beginning of the new life is a mystery; but is not life itself a mystery? Our Lord uses earthly symbolism—wind and water. All things are double. The beginning of the Divine working cannot always be determined; the method of it cannot always be described; the manifestations of it are plain as the sun at noonday. We must be like God, or we can never live with Him.

22. **Jesus went**—"from the capital city, Jerusalem. **Into the land of Judea**—that is, into the country. **There He baptized**—not Himself, but His disciples, by His order. (Ch. 4. 2)"—WESLEY.

23. **John also was baptizing.** "He did not repel them that offered; but he more willingly referred them to Jesus"—WESLEY.

25. **The Jews**—"those men of Judea who now went to be baptized by Jesus, and John's disciples who were mostly of Galilee. **About purifying**—that is, baptism. They disputed which they should be baptized by"—WESLEY.

27. **A man can receive nothing**—"neither he nor I; neither could He do this, unless God had sent Him; nor can I receive the title of Christ, or any honour comparable to that which

He hath received from heaven. They seem to have spoken with jealousy and resentment. John answers with sweet composure of spirit" —WESLEY.

29. **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom**—"he whom the bride follows. But all men now come to Jesus. Hence it is plain, He is the Bridegroom. **The friend who heareth him**—talk with the bride—**rejoiceth greatly**—so far from envying or resenting it" —WESLEY.

30. **He must increase, but I must decrease.** "So they who are now, like John, 'burning and shining lights,' must, if not suddenly eclipsed, like him gradually decrease, while others are increasing about them; as they, in their turns, grew up amidst the decays of the former generation. Let us know how to set, as well as how to rise; and let it comfort our declining days to trace, in these who are likely to succeed us in our work, the openings of yet greater usefulness"—WESLEY.

31. "It is not improbable that what is added to the end of the chapter are the words of the Evangelist, not the Baptist. **He that is of the earth**—a mere man, of earthly original, has a spirit and speech answerable to it"—WESLEY.

32. **No man**—"none comparatively, exceeding few. **Receiveth his testimony**—with true faith"—WESLEY.

33. **Hath set to his seal.** "It was customary among the Jews for the witness to set his seal to the testimony he had given. **That God is true**—whose word the Messiah speaks"—WESLEY.

34. **God giveth not Him the Spirit by measure**—"as He did to the prophets, but immeasurably. He speaketh the words of God in the most perfect manner"—WESLEY.

36. **He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.** "He hath it already, for he loves God; and love is the essence of heaven. **He that obeyeth not**—a consequence of not believing"—WESLEY.

"Here only in this Gospel does the well-known symbol of the bride occur (ver 29). It is frequent both in Old Testament and New Testament. (Isa. 54. 5; Hos. 2. 19, 20; Eph. 5. 32; Rev. 19. 7-21; 21. 9; comp. Song of Solomon; Matt. 9. 15; 25. 1.) In the Old Testament it symbolises the relationship between Jehovah and His chosen people, in the New Testament that between Christ and His Church"—PLUMMER. "Christ, the Alpha and Omega, should be all; we instruments have nothing" — HEDINGER. "Eternal life is given to the believer from the hour he believes. He need not wait for it; he has it already here"—GOSSNER.

CHAPTER IV.

NICODEMUS came to Christ by night; the woman of Samaria found Him "at noonday." He receives at any time.

"The discourse here told has all the artless simplicity, freshness, vivacity, and truthfulness of historical reality. No one could have invented it. The portrait of the woman is remarkably lifelike — every word and act is characteristic. The whole scenery remains to this day almost unchanged: Jacob's well, though partly in ruins; round about the waving harvests of a fertile and beautiful valley, with abundance of water; the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim; a heap of stones on the spot where the Samaritan temple stood; the flat roofs of the neighbouring town visible through olive trees; veiled women in Oriental costume coming for water, bearing a stone pitcher on the head or the shoulder; the weary traveller thirsting for a refreshing drink; the old bigotry and hatred of race and religion still burning beneath the ashes"—SCHAFF. "The well, like all frequented wells in the East, was doubtless sheltered by a little alcove, in which were seats of stone. It was the hour of noon, and weary as He was with the long journey, possibly also with the extreme heat, our Lord sat 'thus' on the well. The expression in the original is most pathetically picturesque. It implies that the wayfarer was quite tired out, and in His exhaustion flung His limbs wearily on the seat, anxious, if possible, for complete repose. His disciples had left Him, to buy in the neighbouring city what was necessary for their wants; and, hungry and thirsty, He who bore all our infirmities sat wearily awaiting them, when His solitude was broken by the approach of a woman"—FARRAR. "The women," says GUIZOT, "seem irresistibly attracted toward Jesus, with hearts moved, imaginations struck by His manner of life, His precepts, His miracles, His language. The Canaanitish woman comes and addresses to Him a timid prayer for the healing of her daughter. The woman of Samaria listens to Him with eagerness, though she does not know Him. Mary seats herself at His feet, absorbed in reflections suggested by His words; and Martha proffers to Him the frank complaint that her sister assists her not. The sinner draws near to Him in tears, pouring upon His feet a rare perfume, and wiping them with her hair." He who made sacred everything He touched, raised to a loftier level all things He spoke of, and ennobled every soul that came within the reach of His influence, refused to acknowledge the current opinions of society concerning women. Even His disciples were not emancipated. They marvelled that He was speaking with a woman. The oriental contempt for women appears with special strength in the rabbins. One says, "No man salutes a woman," another, "He who instructs his daughter in the Law is as one who plays the fool." Christ honoured women and reverenced children. A casual meeting with this nameless woman led to a conversation on deeply spiritual questions. But here, as elsewhere, His presence

was a Gospel. He talked with a woman in spite of popular prejudice.

1. **The Lord knew**—"though none informed Him of it"—WESLEY.

3. **He left Judea**—"to shun the effects of their resentment"—WESLEY.

4. **And He must needs go through Samaria**—"the road lying directly through it"—WESLEY.

5. **Sychar** — "formerly called Sichem or Shechem. **Jacob gave** — on his death-bed. (Gen. 48. 22)"—WESLEY.

Sychar. This name has been commonly regarded as an intentional corruption of Sichem (Shechem, Neapolis, Nablous), as signifying "drunken town," or "lying town." Others have thought two small towns lying near together are intended. A little village now called Askar is probably the representative of Sychar. Those who like to trace the footsteps of Jesus Christ through the holy fields of Palestine will be interested in the spot where the feud of ages received the stroke of death. He who came to bring peace on earth spoke that day words that the conscience of the world echoes. In *The Holy Land and the Bible* —the record of Dr. Geikie's recent travels—its position in biblical history is thus defined: "What a long history crowded on my mind as I looked around! Before Shechem was built, Abraham and Lot had pitched their black tents on the plain through which I had walked, their long-eared, grey-tailed sheep and black goats, their tall, solemn camels and their small-sized oxen, had here nibbled the grass or twigs, the cactus or flowers; Sarah and her women slaves, of course duly veiled, had glided about over these very risings and sinkings of the valley, and the stalwart herdsmen had watered their charge out of the rippling brook, still flowing over its head of shining white stones, as it did on the bright mornings nearly four thousand years ago. Here lived Jacob and his wives—poor Leah and favoured Rachel—and the slave-mothers of so many of his sons; and all his children except Benjamin, who was not yet born, ran over the slopes and waded in this stream. Here the tribes had often gathered, from Dan on the north and Beersheba on the south, after that first great assembly in Joshua's day; their great attraction to this spot being, not only its beauty, but the altar of their forefathers under the sacred oak, the first simple approach to a national sanctuary. Here the great assembly of the nation, after the death of Solomon, had been held, with results disastrous to Israel, through the wrong-headedness and folly of the Wise Man's son. Jeroboam, the fugitive, returned from Egypt,—the man who had the fortunes of his country in his hand,—raised his tents somewhere near. Temperate and shrewd, but firm, he here made his proposal of reform on behalf of the ten tribes; and the insulting reception that was given to it was followed by the wild cry from ten thousand voices, 'What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse! To your tents, O Israel; now, see to thine own house, David!' 'Then Jeroboam built Shechem'; that is, I suppose, changed it from a poor hamlet or village to a fine town. Here, too, centuries later, came a descendant of Rehoboam, in simple dress; claimant of a throne, like His ancestor, but a throne in the souls of men; and here He sat, weary by Jacob's well, leaving us immortal words spoken to a humble woman, perhaps a distant offspring of some one of those who, in the long past, had turned their backs on the line of David."

6. **Jesus sat thus**—"weary as He was. **It was the sixth hour**—noon; the heat of the day"—WESLEY.

From time immemorial, attention has been called to this weariness as an evidence of the reality of His humanity. To this, Dr. ABBOTT, a recent writer, adds a new suggestion: "It seems to me, when coupled with the prophecy of Isa. 53. 2, His apparent sinking under the weight of the cross, and His early death while the two thieves survived (Matt. 27. 32, 33; Mark 15. 44; ch. 19. 32, 33), to be an indication that His physical frame was not robust, was not equal to the demands of the soul which it contained, and that, as a part of His human experience, He knew the peculiar sorrows which an intense and active mind feels when hindered by a weak bodily organisation."

7. **Give Me to drink.** "In this one conversation He brought her to that knowledge which the apostles were so long in attaining"—WESLEY.

8. **For His disciples were gone**—"else He needed not have asked her"—WESLEY.

9. **How dost Thou** — "her open simplicity appears from her very first words. **The Jews have no dealings**—none by way of friendship. They would receive no kind of favour from them"—WESLEY.

10. **If thou hadst known the gift**—"the living water. **And who it is**—He who alone is able to give it—**thou wouldest have asked of Him**—on those words the stress lies—**water.** In like manner He draws the allegory from bread (ch. 6. 27); and from light (ch. 8. 12); the first, the most simple, necessary, common, and salutary things in nature. **Living water** —the Spirit and its fruits. But she might the more easily mistake His meaning, because 'living water' was a common name among the Jews for spring water"—WESLEY.

9, 10. The woman recognised the man of the Jewish land probably by His accent. The question implies surprise and slight contempt. So violent was the hatred between the two nations that it was said, "He who receives a Samaritan into his house, and entertains him, deserves to have his children driven to exile." How startled those must have been who listened to the parable of the Good Samaritan!

"Had she known **the gift of God**, the gift of His Son (ch. 3. 16), in which was included all that man could want, she would have felt that the need of which she was partly conscious (ver. 25) could at length be satisfied. Had she known **who it was that said to her, Give Me to drink**, she would have laid open her prayer to Him without reserve or doubt, assured of His sympathy and help"—WESTCOTT. "Thou wouldest have asked of Him; instead of His asking of *thee*. Spiritually our positions are reversed. It is *thou* who art weary and footsore and parched; close to the well, yet unable to drink; it is *I* who can give thee water from the well, and quench thy thirst for ever"—C. B.

12. **Our father Jacob**—"so they fancied he was; whereas they were, in truth, a mixture of many nations, placed there by the king of Assyria, in the room of the Israelites whom he had carried away captive. (2 Kings 17. 24.) **Who gave us the well**—"in Joseph, their supposed forefather. **And drank thereof**—so even he had no better water than this"—WESLEY.

14. **Will never thirst**—"will never (provided he continue to drink thereof) be miserable, dissatisfied, without refreshment. If ever that thirst returns, it will be the fault of the man, not the water. **But the water that I shall give him**—the spirit of faith working by love—**shall become in him**—an inward, living principle. **A fountain**—not barely a well, which is soon exhausted. **Springing up into everlasting life**—which is a confluence, or rather an ocean, of streams arising from this fountain"—WESLEY.

15. **That I thirst not.** "She takes Him still in a gross sense"—WESLEY.

As in ver. 11 the woman misses the spiritual sense.

16. **Jesus saith to her.** "He now clears the way, that He might give her a better kind of water than she asked for. **Go call thy husband**—He strikes directly at her bosom sin"—WESLEY.

Conviction of sin must precede conversion from it. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

17. **Thou hast well said.** "We may observe in all our Lord's discourse, the utmost weightiness, and yet the utmost courtesy"—WESLEY.

18. **Thou hast had five husbands**—"whether they were all dead or not, her own conscience, now awakened, would tell her"—WESLEY.

19. **Sir, I perceive**—"so soon was her heart touched"—WESLEY.

20. "The instant she perceived this, she proposes what she thought the most important of all questions. **This mountain**—pointing to Mount Gerizim. Sanballat, by the permission of Alexander the Great, had built a temple upon Mount Gerizim, for Manasseh, who, for marrying Sanballat's daughter, had been expelled from the priesthood and from Jerusalem. (Neh. 13. 28.) This was the place where the Samaritans used to worship, in opposition to Jerusalem. And it was so near Sychar, that a man's voice might be heard from the one to the other. **Our fathers worshipped**—this plainly refers to Abraham and Jacob (from whom the Samaritans pretended to deduce their genealogy), who erected altars in this place (Gen. 12. 6, 7, and 33. 18, 20); and possibly to the whole congregation, who were directed, when they came into the land of Canaan, 'to put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim' (Deut. 11. 29). **Ye Jews say, In Jerusalem is the place**—namely, the Temple"—WESLEY.

19, 20. The woman becomes uneasy, and passes to a controversial question. He makes it an occasion for revealing the true object of worship, and the true method of approach to God.

21. **Believe Me.** "Our Lord uses this expression in this manner but once, and that to a Samaritan. To His own people, the Jews, His usual language is, 'I say unto you.' **The hour cometh when ye**—both Samaritans and Jews—**shall worship neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem**—as preferable to any other place. True worship shall be no longer confined to any one place or nation"—WESLEY.

22. **Ye worship ye know not what.** "Ye Samaritans are ignorant, not only of the place, but of the very object of worship. Indeed, 'they feared the Lord' after a fashion; but at the same time 'served their own gods' (2 Kings 17. 33.) **Salvation is from the Jews.** So spake all the prophets, that the Saviour should arise out of the Jewish nation; and that from thence the knowledge of Him should spread to all nations under heaven"—WESLEY.

23. **The true worshippers shall worship the Father**—"not here or there only; but at all times, and in all places"—WESLEY.

24. **God is a Spirit**—"not only remote from body, and all the properties of it, but likewise full of all spiritual perfections, power, wisdom, love, holiness. And our worship should be suitable to His nature. We should worship Him with the truly spiritual worship of faith, love, and holiness, animating all our tempers, thoughts, words, and actions"—WESLEY.

God is a Spirit, free from all limitations of space and time. **God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.** He who would come to the knowledge of this mystery must live in the Spirit, and the Spirit shall teach him all things.

25. **The woman saith**—"with joy for what she had already learned, and desire of fuller instruction"—WESLEY.

26. **Jesus saith**—"hasting to satisfy her desire before His disciples came—**I am He.** Our Lord did not speak this so plainly to the Jews, who were so full of the Messiah's tem-

poral kingdom. If He had, many would doubtless have taken up arms in His favour, and others have accused Him to the Roman governor. Yet He did in effect declare the thing, though He denied the particular title. For in a multitude of places He represented Himself both as the Son of Man and as the Son of God; both which expressions were generally understood by the Jews as peculiarly applicable to the Messiah"—WESLEY.

The woman was prepared to welcome Messiah in His prophetic dignity, and in this He makes Himself known to her.

Vers. 27, *seq.* SURPRISE OF THE DISCIPLES, AND FURTHER SPIRITUAL TEACHING, WITH A STATEMENT OF THE LAWS OF SPIRITUAL SERVICE.—Some sow but do not reap; others reap but do not sow. All shall rejoice together.

27. **His disciples marvelled that He talked with a woman**—"which the Jewish rabbis reckoned scandalous for a man of distinction to do. They marvelled likewise at His talking with a woman of that nation, which was so peculiarly hateful to the Jews. **Yet none said**—to the woman, **What seekest thou?** or to Christ, **Why talkest Thou with her?**"—WESLEY.

28. **The woman left her waterpot**—"forgetting smaller things"—WESLEY.

29. **A man who told me all things that ever I did.** "Our Lord had told her but a few things. But His words awakened her conscience, which soon told her all the rest. **Is not this the Christ?** She does not doubt of it herself, but incites them to make the inquiry"—WESLEY.

Let us learn the value of one soul. Christ preached to ones. The worst may be led to God. But tact and patience are indispensable. Jesus is His own gospel; He satisfies every thirst of the soul. Religion is life—abundant life, eternal life. What effect the Divine teaching had on this woman's life we may not say. The record is silent. Great things might have come out of this casual meeting. Eternity will disclose. At the least the woman became a missionary to her own people. For the sake of symmetry let us read the record as a whole:—

First word of Jesus.—**Give Me to drink.** He was the MAN Christ Jesus. The hot noontide sun affected Him. He was weary, who once slept in a storm from fatigue. He was thirsty, who afterwards cried out on His cross. Do not overlook His humanity. These slight touches bring Him near to us. In the byways of the Gospels we meet accidentally, and hold pleasant intercourse with the Saviour and Friend who knoweth our frame. But do not end with the humanity with which you may begin. As Christ makes light the symbol of His nature and life, so He employs water to shadow forth higher conceptions. The truth of His thirst is in the simple question; so are the freedom of His intercourse, the higher purpose of His words, and His wisdom in meeting individuals on their own ground. He did not so much condescend as intuitively perceive, and with infinite tact place Himself at their level. The Jew hated the Samaritan—Jesus asked of one a drink of water; the Rabbi scorned intercourse with a woman—Jesus talked with her; the Pharisee shrank from near contact with a sinner—Jesus instructed and redeemed her. (Comp. Luke 7. 37–50.) To examine any word of Jesus is like looking into the clear depths of some pure, strong-flowing river.

First reply of the woman.—**How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a Samaritan woman?** Race hatred and religious differences had dug an impassable chasm between the two nations. Blood had been shed in the unhallowed feud. The ancient hatred is still kept up, and the remnant of Samaritans neither eat nor drink, nor marry, nor associate with the Jews, but only trade with them. Would to God that this spirit was found no nearer home! The pages of modern history in Europe have been stained with the blood that flowed at the bidding of race and religious hatred.

Second word of Jesus.—**If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.** Jesus shows that He, the maker of a request, can bestow a larger gift than He asks. He calls Himself, and all He brings to man, **the gift of God**; He speaks of His gifts as **living water.** The life emanates from Him; makes like unto Him; and leads to eternal fellowship with Him.

Second reply of the woman.—**Art Thou greater than our father Jacob?** She could not forget the noble story of her nation—the past lives in the present. Our fathers wrought for us, bled for us, suffered for us, and in some cases died for us. Let us remember them; let us emulate them; let us most of all carry on their work.

Third word of Jesus.—**Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.** This water shall be immanent in man, and will attend him through every stage of his being, even to eternity. The need of an increase is not excluded. The Holy Spirit is a gushing spring, ever flowing. The Divine life consummates itself in eternal life, as the rivers lose themselves in the ocean.

Third reply of the woman.—**Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.** She was slow to discern His spiritual meanings.

Fourth word of Jesus.—**Go, call thy husband, and come hither.** She was self-degraded. He, the patient Jesus, awakens her conscience, that He may cleanse and train it.

Fourth reply of the woman.—**I have no husband.** *Answer of Jesus.*—**Thou saidst truly.**

Fifth reply of the woman.—**Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Where should we worship?** This sudden transition may have been made to avoid an unpleasant subject, but it was a transition to an important question—Where can God be found?

Sixth word of Jesus.—**God is a Spirit.** He is not here or there, but here and there. Wherever the spirit and truth of worship are, there is God.

Last reply of the woman.—**I know that Messiah cometh; when He is come He will declare unto us all things.** *Last word of Jesus.*—**I that speak unto thee am He.** The Prophet of God had been speaking, but she lacked the hearing ear, and the understanding heart.

31. **In the meantime**—"before the people came"—WESLEY.

34. **My meat**—"that which satisfies the strongest appetite of My soul"—WESLEY.

35. **The fields are white already**—"as if He had said, The spiritual harvest is ripe already. The Samaritans, ripe for the gospel, covered the ground round about them"—WESLEY.

36. **He that reapeth**—"whosoever saves souls—**receiveth wages**—a peculiar blessing to himself. **And gathereth fruit**—many souls. **That He that soweth**—Christ, the great Sower of the seed—**and he that reapeth may rejoice together**—in heaven"—WESLEY.

37. **That saying**—"a common proverb. **One soweth**—the prophets and Christ. **Another reapeth**—the apostles and succeeding ministers"—WESLEY.

38. **I**—"the Lord of the whole harvest—**have sent you.** He has employed them already in baptizing (ver. 2)"—WESLEY.

42. **We know that this is the Saviour of the world**—"and not of the Jews only"—WESLEY.

How important is NOW. If Christ had neglected the opportunity, the woman would have gone unblessed, and Samaria unsaved.

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.—The title "The Saviour of the World" is found once again in 1 John 4. 14. It is remarkable that this magnificent conception of the work of Christ was first expressed by a Samaritan—one of a despised and hated nation; one outside the chosen nation. The disciples marvelled that Jesus Christ talked with a woman. Still more would they marvel when they found that that woman was a Samaritan. Perhaps they marvelled when they knew that Samaritans had accepted Him whom Jews rejected.

My meat, He said, **is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work.** And then, pointing to the inhabitants of Shechem, as they streamed to Him over the plain, He continued, **You talk of there being yet four months to harvest. Look at these fields, white already for the spiritual harvest. Ye shall be the joyful reapers of the harvest which I thus have sown in toil and pain; but I, the Sower, rejoice in the thought of that joy to come.** The personal intercourse with Christ convinced many of these Samaritans far more deeply than the narrative of the woman to whom He had first revealed Himself; and graciously, according to their request, that He would stay with them, He and His disciples abode there two days. Doubtless it was the teaching of these two days that had a vast share in the rich conversions of a few subsequent years. When He beheld the Samaritans streaming forth from the city, the spiritual glance in the spirit of the Redeemer opened upon the future spiritual harvest—first among the people, and then in the great world beyond. With this thought He strengthened His soul. It now throws into the background His need of food, as it had previously His need of water. Fatigue and thirst and hunger—our Lord was subject to these common infirmities; but His spirituality of mind regulated the lower nature. He was always illustrating His own word—Man doth not live by bread alone.

"The words, **Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest?** have been understood in two ways, either as a proverbial saying, marking roughly the interval between some familiar date—seed-time and harvest, or as a description of the actual state of things at the time, so that when the words were spoken there were four months to the harvest. This, however, is but the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual truth. Our Lord sowed without reaping, but the ages would reap the harvest—the apostles would reap somewhat. But spiritual work is done for eternity. Impatience must not be manifested if results slowly appear. Seed-time and harvest are separated in time, but inseparable in fact. In current speech, Jesus said to the disciples, Ye say, yet four months, and then harvest; but lift up your eyes and look upon the fields in the light of *another* husbandry; for lo, in that sense, they are even now white to harvest—ready for the sickle. The simple beauty of this language is only surpassed by the glow of holy emotion in the Redeemer's own soul which it expresses. It refers to the ripeness of these Sycharites for accession to Him, and the joy of this great Lord of the reapers over the anticipated ingathering. Oh, could we but *so* lift up our eyes and look upon many fields abroad and at home, which to dull sense appear unpromising, as He beheld those of Samaria, what movements, as yet scarce in embryo, and accessions to Christ, as yet seemingly far distant, might we not discern as quite near at hand, and thus, amidst difficulties and discouragements too much for nature to sustain, be cheered as our Lord Himself was"—BROWN. The conversa-

tion with the woman—here was the sowing; the coming of the Samaritans—here was the reaping. But in life the connection is seldom so obvious, hardly ever so immediate. Men, generations, institutions appear, pass away, seemingly perish, without success, without a trace, with hardly a memory. But so does the seed seem to be buried in the dark, cold earth. But its grave shall open and the seed come forth. So it is with truth, with Christian work, with Christian character, with men's true fame. The grace of patient waiting is spoken of in the Book, is needed in the life. Prophet and apostle and martyr and modern Christian are separated by a wide interval. Some sow and reap not. Some reap who have not sowed. A few sow and reap. But the field is one, and there is a Lord of the harvest. We are responsible for faithful work. He will charge Himself with ultimate results. Life's day is too short for everyone to see the end of his work. **Hence one soweth and another reapeth.** Be it so. All is well. He that soweth and he that reapeth have yet to rejoice together at the great Harvest Home. Learn to be contented with thy work. Art thou a sower? God appointed thy place. Be strong in the assurance that the sower is needed; that without thee the harvest were impossible. Maybe thou wilt not reap, but another will, and the joy shall be mutual when the sower and reaper meet in the presence of the Lord of the harvest.

46. **He went into Galilee**—"that is, unto the country of Galilee; but not to Nazareth. It was at that town only that He *had no honour*. Therefore He went to other towns"—WESLEY.

47. **To come down**—"for Cana stood much higher than Capernaum"—WESLEY.

48. **Unless ye see signs and wonders**—"although the Samaritans believed without them"—WESLEY.

52. **He asked the hour when he amended**—"the more exactly the works of God are considered, the more faith is increased"—WESLEY.

The first miracle at Cana turned water into wine, the second miracle at Cana healed a sick child; for though the child was at Capernaum, Christ was at Cana. Joy and sorrow are the two sides of life, and the Son of Man sanctified both. Probably the bridal pair of the first miracle were poor, or the wedding supplies would not have failed. The nobleman or king's officer of the present miracle was doubtless rich, and the Brother of all men came to both. Herein lies the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. The Countess of Huntingdon often thanked God that in 1 Cor. 1. 26 it is not "any," but "many." He who first called fishermen next summoned Nicodemus a Pharisee; then the woman of a hated nation; and then a nobleman. He was the highest in station of all those *recorded* to have applied to the Lord for aid. He was driven by a blast of sorrow. He came to the miracle worker: let us hope he found the Saviour.

There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum — possibly, as by some has been supposed, Chuza, Herod's steward, whose wife appears among the holy women that ministered to the Lord of their substance (Luke 8. 3); others have suggested Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod. But whether one of these, or neither, he appears to have been driven to Christ "by the constraint of an outward need," rather than one "drawn by the inner necessities and desires of the soul." Signs and wonders might compel him to a belief, but nothing else. Signs and wonders are combined. (Matt. 24. 24; Mark 13. 22, and elsewhere.) They mark the two chief aspects of miracles: the spiritual aspect, whereby they suggest some deeper truth than meets the eye, of which they are in some sense symbols and pledges; and the external aspect, whereby their strangeness arrests attention. Many things produce wonder, and yet are not miracles. Miracles are wonders and something more. A miracle is also a sign, a token, an indication of the near presence of God. Miracles are signs of something beyond themselves. There was rebuke in our Lord's word of instruction, but not rebuke only. When He rebukes it is to prepare the way for encouragement and help. The man refuses to be repulsed. He discerns love beneath the outward severity of the words, and cries yet more earnestly, **Sir, come down ere my child die.** Still it is true he links help to the *bodily* presence of the Lord. He has faith, but it needs strengthening, and strengthened it shall be. Jesus Christ will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. It was the way of Jesus to lead through faith in miracles to faith in the word. (Ch. 10. 38; 14. 11; 15. 24.) He will reprove this petitioner, but His reproof is not for rejection, but for discipline. It is an example of growing faith that we have in this nobleman, and of Divine patience that we see in Jesus, the Friend of the sorrowful, and the Saviour of the body. "This miracle," says ALFORD, "is a notable instance of our Lord not quenching the smoking flax, just as His reproof of the Samaritan woman was of His not breaking the bruised reed. The little spark of faith in the breast of this nobleman is by Him lit up into a clear and enduring flame, for the light and comfort of himself and his house." "The miracle," TRENCH beautifully says, "was a double one—on the body of the absent child; on the heart of the present father; one cured of his sickness, the other of his unbelief."

Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word; and as he was going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, **Thy son liveth.** This was the answer to the utterance of his troubled love. **My child is dying.** Recall Jairus, the Canaanitish

mother, and the father of the demoniac under the Mount of Transfiguration. The son suddenly recovered, and at the hour when Jesus spoke the word. He did not go down. No explanation is sufficient except by reference to the mighty power of God. "As the first miracle of distant operation, this incident bears a close relation to the healing of the servant of the centurion at Capernaum, and of the daughter of the Canaanitish woman. In the mysterious manifestation of the Divine power of Christ, we must not forget the human media which here lay in the inward connection of an anxious father's heart with the dying child, as, in fact, the help of God owns the human intercession. The spiritual roads, streets, and paths which human love, distress, and prayer have to make for the Divine help in the invisible world can only glorify the freedom, truth, and miraculous power of this help, as a power which is, at the same time, the power of a personal spirit and love, *i.e.* not abstractly working in a void, but as Divine life applied to the human"—LANGE. The miraculous healing of the nobleman's son resembles the healing of the centurion's servant, but must not be confounded with it. It was the second miracle which Christ wrought in Galilee (ver. 54); the first being the change of water into wine. S. John relates a third miracle in Galilee—the feeding of the multitude, which is followed by a long discourse (ch. 6), and three miracles in Judea, viz., the healing of the cripple at the pool of Bethesda (ch. 5), the healing of the blind (ch. 9), and the raising of Lazarus (ch. 11). He also relates three appearances of the risen Saviour (ch. 21. 14). What Jesus does serves to declare who He is. Fact and idea are related to each other. He who healed the sick is the Saviour of the body; He who pardoned the penitent is the Saviour of the soul. Revelation is a miracle. Answers to prayer are miraculous. Conversion is a sacred mystery. A Christian is a moral miracle. Jesus Christ is the greatest miracle of all.

CHAPTER V.

"THE healing of a helpless and hopeless cripple at the House of Mercy," Dr. SCHAFF observes, "is the first miracle of Jesus in Judea related by S. John, although He had performed signs there before, which are only alluded to (ch. 2. 23; 3. 2). It forms the basis of a lengthy and most important Christological discourse, which opens the conflict of Jesus with the unbelieving Jewish hierarchy, and reveals the contrast between His positive fulfilment of the spirit of the Law and their negative observance of its letter, as also between His living Theism and their abstract Monotheism. His doing good on the Sabbath was made the ground of a charge of Sabbath-breaking, and His claim to be in a peculiar sense the Son of God was construed as blasphemy deserving of death. Christ here proclaims all these grand truths which John had announced in the prologue. He reveals Himself as one with the Father, who never ceases doing good, as the Lord of the Sabbath, as the Giver of life, as the Raiser of the dead, and the Judge of the world, and claims Divine honour. He supports these astounding claims, which no mere man could make without being guilty of blasphemy or madness, by the united testimony of John the Baptist, of God the Father through His works, and of the Old Testament Scriptures, and drives this threefold testimony with terrible earnestness into the conscience of the Jews. He then traces their unbelief to the secret chambers of their self-seeking hearts, and completely turns the tables by presenting their own Moses, in whom they boastfully put their hope, as their accuser, for not following his lead to Christ, to whom he pointed in all his writings. Thus the mouths of these hypocritical worshippers of the letter, and enemies of the spirit and aim of the Law, were stopped; but their hearts continued in opposition, and longed for an opportunity to carry out their bloodthirsty design." The significance of this discourse is great. Its place in the ministry of Jesus is well indicated by Dr. GEIKIE, who writes: "Jesus had now been some months in Galilee, and the season of the great feasts had returned. It was meet that Judea, which had rejected Him when He first preached in it, should be once more visited, and the news of the kingdom once more sent abroad among the throngs of pilgrims from every part of the world, attracted at such times to Jerusalem. Leaving the north, therefore, for a time, He again journeyed south; perhaps by short stages, preaching as He went; perhaps with one of the bands of pilgrims which gathered from each neighbourhood to go up to the house of the Lord. No voice would join with so rapt a devotion in the joyful solemnities of such a journey, in the psalms that enlivened the way, or the formal devotions of morning and evening. But what feast it was He thus honoured is not told, nor are there means for deciding. That of Purim, a month before the Passover, the Passover itself, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, have each found favour on plausible grounds; but where there is such contrariety of opinion, the safest course is to leave the matter unsettled. Of the visit we know only one incident (ch. 5. 1-47), but it was the turning-point in the life of our Lord."

1. **A feast**—"Pentecost"—WESLEY.

2. **There is in Jerusalem.** Hence it appears that S. John wrote his Gospel before Jerusalem was destroyed: it is supposed, about thirty years after the Ascension. **Having five porticoes**—built for the use of the sick. Probably the basin had five sides. **Bethesda** signifies, "the House of Mercy."

4. **An angel** — "yet many undoubtedly thought the whole thing to be purely natural.

At certain times—perhaps at a certain hour of the day, during this paschal week—**went down.** The Greek word implies that he had ceased going down before the time of S. John's writing this. God might design this, to raise expectation of the acceptable time approaching, to add a greater lustre to His Son's miracles, and to show that His ancient people were not entirely forgotten of Him. **The first**—whereas the Son of God healed every day, not one only, but whole multitudes that resorted to Him"—WESLEY.

6. **Wilt thou be made whole?** Free will may be a mystery, but it is a fact of observation. God does not compel obedience, albeit He commands it. "Come unto Me" is Christ's word of invitation. "Ye will not come" is His word of lament.

7. **The sick man answered**—"giving the reason why he was not made whole, notwithstanding his desire"—WESLEY.

14. **Sin no more.** "It seems his former illness was the effect or punishment of sin"—WESLEY.

15. **The man went and told the Jews that it was Jesus, who had made him whole.** "One might have expected that, when he had published the name of his benefactor, crowds would have thronged about Jesus, to have heard the blessed words of His mouth, and to have received the blessings of the gospel. Instead of this, they surrounded Him with an hostile intent; they even conspire against His life, and, for an imagined transgression, in point of ceremony, would have put out this light of Israel. Let us not wonder, then, if our 'good be evil spoken of'; if even candour, benevolence, and usefulness do not disarm the enmity of those who have been taught to prefer sacrifice to mercy; and who, disrelishing the genuine gospel, naturally seek to slander and persecute the professors, but especially the defenders of it"—WESLEY.

17. My Father worketh until now, and I work. "From the creation till now He hath been working without intermission. I do likewise. This is the proposition which is explained from ver. 19 to ver. 30; confirmed and vindicated in ver. 31 and following verses"—WESLEY.

Jesus answered. The answers of Jesus are very important. A most interesting sermon might be based upon the replies of Jesus to the cavils of foes and the misrepresentations of friends. In the present instance the members of the Sanhedrim had called Jesus to account for healing on the Sabbath. Read account of the miracle in previous verses. The miraculous character of the cure is made more apparent by the ability of the cripple at once to carry his couch with him. It was this carrying of the couch, too, which furnished the occasion for the charge of a breach of the Sabbath. The observance of the Sabbath was grounded upon God's resting on the seventh day, by which, however, was only meant that God had ceased to create anything new. With profound truth the Saviour now points to the fact that therein is involved no cessation of activity. **My Father worketh hitherto.** Life is movement. Growth is perpetual. The seasons do not stand still. Birth and death are reciprocal. As one phrases it: "The rest of God after the creation, which the Sabbath represents outwardly and which I am come to realise, is not a state of inaction, but of activity, and man's true rest is not a rest from human, earthly labour, but a rest for Divine, heavenly labour." The continuous working of the Almighty is marked in such passages as—

"Our God, who covereth the heaven with clouds,
Who prepareth rain for the earth,
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains."

My Father worketh even unto now, and I work. The "I" is emphatic.

18. **They sought to kill Him.** "This seeking to kill is the blood-red thread which runs through the whole of this section of the Gospel. (Comp. ch. 7. 1, 19, 25; 8. 37, 40, 59; 10. 31; 11. 53; 12. 10)"—PLUMMER.

Had broken the Sabbath. Was loosing the Sabbath. The Pharisaic Sabbath had to be relaxed. But we are most of us to-day in danger of tending towards the opposite extreme. Let us, in Norman M'Leod's language, "be as broad as the charity of Almighty God, and as narrow as God's righteousness."

God was His Father—His own Father; as in Rom. 8. 32, "His own Son." He made Himself equal with God. He placed Himself on the same level with God. He claimed the power of abrogating the law of the Sabbath in virtue of His special relation to God.

His own Father. "The Greek word means His own Father, in such a sense as no creature can speak. **Making Himself equal with God**—it is evident all the hearers so understood Him; and that our Lord never contradicted, but confirmed it"—WESLEY.

Bethesda, generally considered to mean House of Mercy, was a water reservoir, or swimming pool, with five porches or colonnades, close to the sheep gate (Neh. 3. 1) in Jerusalem. The porches accommodated those waiting for the troubling of the water. Ver. 4, as to the angel troubling the water, is omitted in some MSS. of the New Testament. Hence the Revised Version reads:—**Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered. And a certain man was there, which had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole? The sick man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.**

"The angels," says FAUSSET, "in a way unknown to us, doubtless act as God's ministers in the world of nature. Many curative agencies are directed by them. (Ps. 104. 4.) God maketh His angelic messengers the directing powers, acting by the winds and flaming lightning. The angelic actings, limited and fitful, attested at that time that God was visiting His people, throwing into the brighter prominence at the same time the actings of the Divine Son, who healed, not merely one exceptionally, but all who came to Him, whatever might be their disease, and instantaneously." On the other hand, so sober an expositor and reverent a believer as WESTCOTT writes: "The healing properties of the pool may have been due to its mineral elements." Eusebius describes the water of the pool identified with it in his time as marvellously red, *i.e.* probably from deposits of iron on the stones. A chalybeate spring would be efficacious generally in cases of weakness. A similar scene is still presented by the hot sulphureous springs near Tiberias. There may be still seen a multitude of impotent folk—as, indeed, may there not at English and Continental watering-places? Among the Jews, as among other races, everything was attributed to the direct action of supernatural beings. The healing powers of the Bethesda waters were ascribed to periodical visits of an angel. It was even said that a good angel dwelt beside healing springs, and each morning gave them their virtue afresh. That angels should be the ministers of God's will, is according to the analogy of Scripture and the religious conception of nature. But it is as sacred to find God in established facts as in occasional changes and appearances; and whether an angel came or not, the healing remains, and so does the power of the Son of God over the powers and energies of nature, themselves miraculous. Our Lord singles out one of the sufferers, and awakens his dormant energies by the question, **Wouldest thou be made whole?** He was a sluggish and dull-minded man, abject in his comparative helplessness; too fertile in excuses. Had he been more energetic, hope might have found some way of relief. Bestir thyself, said Jesus. Fixedly the man's attention rested on the Wondrous Person. With the faith came the power; and the man took up his bed and walked. The Lord commandeth, and it is done. In earlier times, many found in these healing influences the largeness and freedom of the Christian as compared with the former dispensation. If ch. 4 presents Christianity in contrast with sacred antiquities (Jacob's well), and with the places and services of the Temple in the ancient time, ch. 5 unfolds it in contrast with ancient miraculous localities and curative resorts. Perhaps we moderns would be none the worse if we saw angels oftener than we do; if we recognised God's hand in the medical skill or the healing waters that restored health. The fountain of Bethesda may well be an example of earthly sources of healing, a symbol of the Divine source; the pool and hall of Bethesda an example of hospitals and watering-places. The invisible spiritual forces of nature throw us back upon God. His enemies craftily combine two charges—the healing of the invalid on the Sabbath, and the commanding him to carry his bed. The Pharisees adhered to the letter of the fourth commandment as far as it forbade any common work, and hedged it around with all sorts of rabbinical and hair-splitting restrictions; but they violated its spirit, which demands the positive sanctification of the Sabbath by doing good. The controversy between Christ and His adversaries lay ultimately here—whether it is most lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to leave it undone. God never ceases to work. He is always doing good and removing evil. Is it not lawful to imitate God? The most important works of God are works of love for man's restoration. Herein is the true Sabbath spirit; here Jesus Christ found His sufficient defence. The Sabbath of the Christian should be the Sabbath of Christ.

WESTCOTT'S analysis of some of the remaining verses will be of value:—

> Our Lord's answer to the Jews deals with His nature and prerogatives—(1) in relation to the Father (vers. 19–23); and (2) in relation to men (vers. 24–29). The exposition of the thoughts is made in a series of statements bound together by 'for' four times repeated. The Son doeth nothing self-determined of Himself, which would be impossible (ver. 19);
>
> *for* His action is absolutely coincident in range with that of the Father (ver. 19); and this can be;
>
> *for* His Father shows Him His widening counsels, which extend to the exhibition of greater works than healing (ver. 20);
>
> *for* it is the prerogative of the Son to give life (ver. 21), as is shown to be the case;
>
> *for* all judgment is given to Him, and men can see that He exerts this power (ver. 22).
>
> Hence it follows that men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (ver 23).

24–29. "In these verses we pass from the consideration of the relation of the Son to the Father to that of the relation of Christ to men. The conception of the 'greater works' of the Son, the quickening and the judgment of men, is defined more exactly in connection with the Son as revealed by the Incarnation. At the same time, though the oblique form is generally preserved, the work and the universal Christ are referred to directly (**My** Lord, Him that sent **Me**, ver. 24). In ver. 24 the general ideas of all life and all judgment in connection with the Son (vers. 21, 22) are re-stated; in vers. 25, 26 they are applied to the present order; in vers. 28, 29 they are applied to the future order."

31–47. "This second main division of the discourse consists, like the first, of two parts. The witness to the Son is first laid open (vers. 31–40), and then the rejection of the witness in its cause and end (ver. 41–47)."

19. **Then answered Jesus.** He met their thoughts and their actions by a justification of His own works, and His Divine claims as Messiah. **Verily, verily**—the same word as our Amen. The phrase is found in the New Testament only in the Gospel of John (who never gives the simple "Amen"); and (like the simple "Amen" in the other Gospels) it is used only by Christ. The word "Amen" is represented by "in truth," or "truly," in Luke 4. 25; 9. 27. The teaching is "with authority" (Matt. 7. 28, *seq.*). **The Son**—the absolute relation of the Divine Persons is indicated—**can do nothing of Himself**—because the Persons are inseparable. **The Son can do nothing of Himself.** "This is not His imperfection, but His glory, resulting from His eternal, intimate, indissoluble unity with the Father. Hence it is absolutely impossible that the Son should judge, will, testify, or teach anything without the Father (ver. 30, etc.; John 6. 38; 7. 16); or that He should be known or believed on separately from the Father. And He here defends His doing good every day without intermission by the example of His Father, from which He cannot depart. **These doeth the Son likewise**—all these, and only these; seeing He and the Father are one"—WESLEY.

20. **The Father showeth Him all things that Himself doeth**—"a proof of the most intimate unity. **And He will show Him**—by doing them. At the same time (not at different times) the Father showeth and doeth, and the Son seeth and doeth. **Greater works.** Jesus oftener terms them works than signs or wonders, because they were not wonders in His eyes. **Ye will marvel**—so they did, when He raised Lazarus"—WESLEY.

21. **For**—"He declares which are those greater works—raising the dead, and judging the world. The power of **quickening whom He will** follows from the power of judging. These two, quickening and judging, are proposed (vers. 21, 22). The acquittal of believers, which presupposes judgment, is treated of in ver. 24; the quickening some of the dead (ver. 25); and the general resurrection (ver. 28)"—WESLEY.

As the Father raiseth and quickeneth, even so the Son also. There are two resurrections, of the soul and the body. We are raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. The restoration of an impotent man is but the beginning of that giving of life of which it is a sign. All communications of life—natural and spiritual—are miraculous also. They declare the presence of God. A Jewish thanksgiving, probably used in substance in apostolic times, runs thus: "Thou, O Lord, art mighty for ever: Thou quickenest the dead; Thou art strong to save. Thou sustainest the living by Thy mercy; Thou quickenest the dead by Thy great compassion. Thou makest good Thy faithfulness to them that sleep in the dust. Thou art faithful to quicken the dead. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who quickenest the dead."

22. **For neither doth the Father judge**—"not without the Son; but He doth 'judge, by that Man whom He hath ordained' (Acts 17. 31)"—WESLEY.

All judgment is committed unto the Son. As the Creed says, "I believe in Jesus Christ. . . . From the right hand of God He cometh to judge both the quick (the living) and the dead."

23. **That all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father**—"either willingly, and so escaping condemnation, by faith; or unwillingly, when feeling the wrath of the Judge. This demonstrates the equality of the Son with the Father. If our Lord were God only by office or investiture, and not in the unity of the Divine essence, and in all respects equal in Godhead with the Father, He could not be honoured 'even as,' that is, with the same honour, that they honoured the Father. **He that honoureth not the Son**—with the same equal honour, greatly dishonoureth **the Father that sent Him**"—WESLEY.

24. **Hath eternal life.** "It is already in him. Its fulness he will realise in another world. Eternal life is not future, but present, or rather it *is*, and so is above all time"—WESTCOTT.

And cometh not into condemnation—"unless he make shipwreck of the faith"—WESLEY.

25. **Verily, verily**—"again marking the importance of what is said. **The hour is coming.** It is drawing near; it is sure to come. **And now is.** It has already begun. These words exclude the meaning of a *bodily* resurrection; the hour for which had not yet arrived"—C. B. "The hour was 'coming,' as far as the Christian dispensation truly began with the gift of Pentecost; but it 'was' already, while Christ openly taught among men"—WESTCOTT.

The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God—"so did Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus"—WESLEY.

26. **He hath given to the Son**—"by eternal generation. **To have in Himself**—absolute, independent"—WESLEY.

27. **And hath given Him judgment because He is the Son of Man.** The Judge must share the nature of those who are brought before Him. The phrase "Son of Man" is found here only in the Gospel, but it occurs also in Rev. 1. 13; 14. 14; "the Son of Man" occurs in ch. 1. 51; ch. 3. 13, 14; ch. 6. 27, 53, 62, as often in the other Gospels.

Because He is the Son of Man—"He is appointed to judge mankind, because He was made Man"—WESLEY.

28. Marvel not at this, for the partial, spiritual quickening and judgment is consummated in a universal quickening and judgment. Wonder succeeds wonder.

The time is coming—"when not two or three, but all, shall arise"—WESLEY.

29. **Shall hear His voice**—"a voice like the sound of a trumpet (Rev. 1. 10) and like the sound of many waters (Rev. 1. 15); that is, like the roar of the ocean for fulness and power. (Comp. 1 Thess. 4. 16)"—ABBOTT.

The resurrection of life—"that resurrection which leads to life everlasting"—WESLEY.

Unto the resurrection of life—"a resurrection which brings perfect life, or eternal and blessed fellowship with God"—HOVEY. **The resurrection of damnation** (R.V. "The resurrection of judgment," *i.e.* a judgment that issues in condemnation.) (Comp. ch. 3. 17, *seq.*)

30. **I can do nothing of Myself.** "It is impossible I should do anything separately from My Father. **As I hear**—of the Father, and see, so **I judge** and do; because I am essentially united to Him. (See ver. 19)"—WESLEY.

This section of God's holy word teaches many of the deep things of God. It will need to be pondered with care and reverence. And there is a border-line of mystery, which we must not presume to cross. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the relations of the Persons in the Godhead, the awful issues of righteousness and unrighteousness, do not contradict reason, but they do transcend it. There is an equality with God; there is a subordination to God. Both are stated, and they are declared by Him who is the truth. But both God the Father and God the Son are interested in our salvation —in the widest possible meaning of that great word. Life is in Christ. Safety is through Christ. It is said that a poor woman made complaint to the sultan that, after sleeping, she awoke to find everything lost. "Wherefore did you sleep?" inquired the sultan. "Sir," was the response, "I slept because I thought you were awake." He restored what she had lost. God is our keeper. The Lord is our shade on our right hand. Jesus Christ said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no man shall snatch them out of My hand." They are safe in life, they shall be safe in death, and at the judgment. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

> "Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth,
> Through earth's sepulchre it ringeth,
> All before the throne it bringeth."

But Christ is on that throne. Therefore "the dead in Christ" are safe. The trumpet indicates a grand catastrophe; but the righteous shall not be moved. And the unrighteous are in this world devoid of true life. How and when the judgment will come to pass it concerns us not to inquire, because it concerns us not to know. Live always in view of the judgment to come, and then, let it come when God wills, you will have no fear. **All that are in their graves**, whether under costly marbles or green grass, in the lonely desert or in the depths of the cold, grey sea, must appear at the judgment day, to give an account of their deeds.

31. **If I testify of Myself**—"that is, if I alone (which indeed is impossible), **My testimony is not valid**"—WESLEY.

32. **There is another**—"the Father (ver. 37). **And I know that**, even in your judgment, His testimony is beyond exception"—WESLEY.

33. **He bare testimony**—"that I am the Christ"—WESLEY.

34. **But I** have no need to receive, etc. **But these things**—concerning John, whom ye yourselves reverence. **I say that ye may be saved**—so really and seriously did He will their salvation. Yet they were not saved. Most, if not all of them, died in their sins"—WESLEY.

35. **He was a burning and a shining light**—"inwardly burning with love and zeal; outwardly shining in all holiness. **And even ye were willing for a season**—a short time only"—WESLEY.

37. **He hath testified of Me**—"namely, at My baptism. I speak not of My supposed father, Joseph. Ye are utter strangers to Him of whom I speak"—WESLEY.

38. **Ye have not His word.** "All who believe have the word of the Father (the same with the word of the Son) **abiding in** them —that is, deeply engrafted in their hearts"—WESLEY.

39. **Search the Scriptures**—"a plain command to all men. **In them ye are assured ye have eternal life**—ye know they show you the way to eternal life. And these very Scriptures testify of Me"—WESLEY.

40. **Yet ye will not come unto Me**—"as they direct you"—WESLEY.

41. **I receive not honour from men**—"I need it not. I seek it not from you for My own sake"—WESLEY.

42. **But I know you.** "With this ray He pierces the hearts of the hearers. And this, doubtless, He spake with the tenderest compassion"—WESLEY.

43. **If another shall come**—"any false Christ"—WESLEY.

44. **While ye receive honour**—"that is, while ye seek the praise of men rather than the praise of God. At the feast of Pentecost, kept in commemoration of the giving the Law from Mount Sinai, their sermons used to be full of the praises of the Law, and of the people to whom it was given. How mortifying then must the following words of our Lord be to them, while they were thus exulting in Moses and his Law"!—WESLEY.

45. **There is one that accuseth you**—"by his writings"—WESLEY.

46. **He wrote of Me**—everywhere; in all his writings; particularly Deut. 18. 15, 18"—WESLEY.

John was the lamp which is kindled and

so shineth. "Christ is the Light; John is only the lamp kindled at the Light, and shining only after being so kindled, having no light but what is derived"—C. B. **Search the Scriptures** may be either indicative, "Ye search the Scriptures," or imperative "Search." The word suggests minute, searching investigation. **And they testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me.** "The words mark a double failure. The Scriptures witnessed of One whom the Jews rejected; they pointed to a life which the Jews would not seek. There is a deep pathos"—WESTCOTT. **Ye will not come to Me**—"not the future of 'to come,' but the present of 'to will': 'ye are not willing' to come to ME. This is at the root of their failure to read Scripture aright; their hearts are estranged. They have no *will* to find the truth, and without that no intellectual searching will avail. Note that here again man's will is shown to be free; the truth is not forced upon him; he can reject it if he likes (comp. 3. 19)"—PLUMMER. "We have no stronger argument for the Divine nature of the Saviour of the world than is contained in this chapter. The worship of Christ, if He were not Divine, would be idolatry. But instead of rebuking He encourages and sanctions this worship. The Eastern Magi worshipped Him in His cradle. Those on whom He had exerted miraculous power fell at His feet and worshipped Him. The mother of John, the woman of Canaan, the father of the lunatic who met Him at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, worshipped Him, and His disciples as He was carried up from them into heaven; and after His ascension the dying Stephen called 'upon God,' saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' S. Paul cannot write an Epistle without repeated acts of worship to Christ, as 'God blessed for ever.' In the writings of the Christian Fathers we find this worship not only inculcated but defended when it was charged upon them. The hymns of the Early Church are full of Christ. The younger Pliny, in his report to Trajan, concerning the Christians, gave special emphasis to the fact that they sang 'hymns to Christ as to God.' The universal faith of the Church has not been accorded to a falsehood"—MACDONALD.

CHAPTER VI.

WE see more and more as we go on, that this Gospel makes no attempt to be a complete or connected whole. There are large gaps in the chronology. The Evangelist gives us not a biography, but a series of typical scenes, very carefully selected, and painted with great accuracy and minuteness, but not closely connected. As to what guided him in his selection, we know no more than the general purpose stated (ch. 20. 31), and it is sufficient for us. Those words and works of Jesus, which seemed most calculated to convince men that He is "the Christ, the Son of God," were recorded by the beloved apostle. And the fact that they had already been recorded by one or more of the first Evangelists did not deter him from insisting on them again, although he naturally more often chose what they had omitted. In this chapter we have a notable instance of readiness to go over old ground in order to work out his own purpose. The miracle of feeding the five thousand is recorded by all four Evangelists: the only miracle that is so. Moreover, it is outside the Judean ministry; so that for this reason also we might have expected S. John to omit it. But he needs it as a text for the great discourse on the Bread of Life; and this though spoken in Galilee was in a great measure addressed to Jews from Jerusalem, so that both text and discourse fall naturally within the range of S. John's plan.

"As in ch. 5. Christ is set forth as *the Source of Life*, so in this chapter He is set forth as *the Support of Life*"—C. B.

"**After these things** clearly means a considerable interval, for nearly a year had expired since the healing of the impotent man and the discourse to which it gave rise in the preceding chapter. He was now at the Sea of Galilee, and had spent the greater part of this interval in Galilee. He had made His second and third circuits through that portion of Palestine; had made choice of the twelve apostles; had delivered His Sermon on the Mount; had begun to speak by parables; and had performed many miracles, all of which are passed in silence by the Evangelist John"—MACDONALD.

Let us weave the narratives into a connected whole:—

"And the apostles, when they were returned, gathered themselves unto Jesus, and they told Him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught; and He saith unto them, 'Come ye yourselves, apart into a desert place, and rest a while.' For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias, into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida, by ship privately; and the people saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran there together on foot from all the cities, and outwent them, because they beheld the signs which He did in them that were sick. And He came forth and saw a great multitude, and He had compassion on them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things, and spake to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing He healed. And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Jesus, therefore, lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto Him, saith unto Philip, 'Whence are we to buy bread that

these may eat?' and this He said to prove him; for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone may take a little.' And when even was come, the disciples came to Him, saying, 'The place is a desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away that they may go into the villages and country round about and lodge, and buy themselves somewhat to eat; for we are here in a desert place.' But Jesus said unto them, 'They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat.' And they say unto Him, 'Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?' And He saith unto them, 'How many loaves have ye? go and see.' And when they knew, one of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, 'There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are they among so many? We have no more than five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy food for all this people.' For they were about five thousand men. And He said, 'Bring them hither to Me.' And He said unto His disciples, 'Make them sit down in companies,' about fifty each. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties, in number about five thousand. And He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and having given thanks, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake the loaves, and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were filled; and when they were filled, He saith unto His disciples, 'Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost.' So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, and also of the fishes, which remained over unto them that had eaten. And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children. When, therefore, the people saw the sign which He did, they said, 'This is of a truth the Prophet that cometh into the world.'"

Thus read, all the links in the chain of events are welded together.

1. **After these things.** "The history of between ten and eleven months is to be supplied here from the other Evangelists"—WESLEY.

3. **Jesus went up**—"before the people overtook Him"—WESLEY.

5. **Jesus saith to Philip**—"perhaps he had the care of providing victuals for the family of the apostles"—WESLEY.

"Christ represents Himself here as the Bread of Life, as in the fourth chapter He exhibits Himself as the Water of Life. Thousands upon thousands in all ages and countries of the world have satisfied their spiritual hunger by feeding on Him, and yet He remains to this day, and will remain to the end of time, the same inexhaustible source of supply. The miraculous feeding bears also a striking resemblance to the miracle of the change of water into wine in ch. 2. The nearness of the typical Paschal Feast (ch. 6. 4) gives the discourse a bearing on the great Paschal Sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the life of the world"—SCHAFF. "In ch. 5. Christ is the Son of God, testified to by the Father; received by faith; rejected by unbelief; here He is the Son of Man, the Incarnate Life of the world; and the unbelief of the Jews and His own disciples is set in strong contrast with the feeding on Him as the Bread of Life"—ALFORD. "The record of a critical scene in Christ's work in Galilee follows the record of the critical scene at Jerusalem. At Jerusalem Christ revealed Himself as the Giver of life; here He reveals Himself as the Support and Guide of life. In the former case the central teaching was upon the relation of the Son to the Father; in this case it is the relation of Christ to the believer"—WESTCOTT. As to the miracle itself, what can reverence say except that it is a creative act of God? But little more can be said. English and American Bible students generally reject all attempts to make this and all similar miracles intelligible, and resort to an act of Divine omnipotence on the part of Him who was the Eternal Son of God, similar to the original act of creation. Here, however, there was a material substratum to work on in the five loaves and two fishes. It was not a creation out of *nothing*, but an act of creative *accretion;* the bread growing and multiplying in the hands of Christ; or of the distributing apostles; or of the eaters; or of all. "Here, too," says TRENCH, "even more remarkably than in the case of the water changed into wine, when we seek to realise to ourselves *the manner* of the miracle, it ever more eludes our grasp. We seek in vain to follow it with our imagination. But this is the wisdom of the sacred narrator, to leave the description of the indescribable unattempted. His appeal is to the same faith which believes that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. The miracle has its analogies: the manna in the wilderness; the multiplying of the widow's cruse of oil and the barrel of meal by Elijah; Elisha satisfying a hundred men with twenty loaves of barley. (Ex. 16. 15; 1 Kings 17. 16; 2 Kings 4. 42–44.) Said S. HILARY: "There is no catching by eye or touch the miraculous operation; it only remains for us to believe that God can do all things consistent with His nature and character." S. Augustine, with a far-seeing glance, told the people of his age that Christ multiplied in His hands the five loaves, just as He produces harvest out of a few grains; there was a power in His hands; and those five loaves were seeds, not, indeed, committed to earth, but multiplied by Him who made the earth. Christ is indeed the Bread of the World,

the unexhausted and inexhaustible source of all life for the spiritual needs of hungering souls in all ages. The miracles of Jesus drew attention to His wondrous personality and all-sufficing gospel. For, of all miracles, He is the greatest.

THE HUNGRY CROWD.—Great multitudes followed Him, because they saw His miracles. Whilst He crossed the Lake they ran round the head of it, taking one of the narrow fords of the river. His repeated miracles of healing attracted their attention. They obtruded on Him, as we should say; but they never came too often: they never came in too great numbers. He came into the world to seek and to save men and women and children. From S. Mark and S. Luke we learn that He taught them many things about the kingdom of God. Teaching and miracle, word and act, were always closely connected in the ministry of our Lord. The word for miracles here is "signs"—signs of God's presence and power; of the part He plays in the common life of men. The multitude and Jesus—ponder it, picture it, get the children to think of it, until by the eye of fancy they can see the hungry, shepherdless, curious, appealing crowds. All classes of people were there—priests, scribes, Pharisees, soldiers, peasants, princes; the young, the middle-aged, the old; the beautiful, the plain; the healthy, the sick—some because they felt their need of help, others because they wished to see and hear the new Teacher; but Jesus ministers to them all. Something in Him responds to something in them. He was not partial; He belonged to no class. Son of Man, all men were interested in Him; all men belonged to Him.

THE HELPLESS DISCIPLES.—Early in the morning Jesus said to Philip, **Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?** And this He said to prove him. All day long He left the thought in the minds of the disciples. Night fell. Then the disciples' concern deepens. They come with their perplexity to Jesus Christ. But it was a word of helpless despair. **Send them away. The place is desert. It is a long way to the towns and villages. Dismiss them. They need not depart**, said Jesus; **give them to eat. Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? How many loaves have ye? go and see.** And when they knew, they say, **Five and two fishes.** Their calculations ended in alarm. They saw the crowd, the darkness, the distance, the danger; but they forgot *Who* was in their midst. They had one lad with a basket of bread—him they saw; they had the Lord of all the harvests—Him they saw not. What an honour was placed upon that nameless lad!

> "What time the Saviour spread His feast
> For thousands on the mountain side;
> One of the *last*, the *least*.
> The abundant store supplied."

The youngest may serve high interests; the youngest can do the will of God.

THE LORD OF THE FEAST.—1. *Make the men sit down.*—Order is heaven's first law. "Viewed from front to back, there were fifty hundreds; viewed from side to side, there were a hundred fifties. Each hundred constituted a distinct party, and would be separated by a convenient interval from all the other hundreds"—MORISON. Graphic S. Mark compares them to flower-beds in a garden. The arrangement was for convenience of distribution.

2. *Jesus took the loaves.*—The supply came from a Divine hand. Whether the multiplication took place in the hands of Christ, or in the hands of the disciples, or in the hands of the receivers, it was equally of God. The wheat harvest is partially in the seed beneath the soil, partially in the stalk, partially in the ear; but the harvest is one. He first blessed, and then brake, and gave. It was a universal custom among the Jews to ask a blessing upon food. They declared that he who ate without blessing stole the bread.

3. *He distributed to the disciples.*—God once rained down manna, but that is not the customary method. Men are blessed through their fellows. Christ distributes through the disciples. It is our privilege, as well as our duty, to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. All were filled, not partially, but completely satisfied.

4. *Gather up the fragments.*—Marking the abundance. The supply was more than the demand. Whether they were fragments broken by the multitude, or pieces broken by our Lord, there was to be no waste. All God's gifts are valuable, and must be preserved. After the miracle came the wonder, and the confession, **This is of a truth the Prophet that cometh into the world.**

15. **He retired to the mountain alone**—"having ordered His disciples to cross over the Lake"—WESLEY.

A SUGGESTION.—The excitement consequent upon the death of the Baptist, which in part led to the Lord's retirement, may have moved many to believe that He would place Himself at the head of a popular rising to avenge the murder. The miracle of feeding increased the excitement and deepened the enthusiasm. With a half-belief that He must be the expected Prophet, and perhaps with a half-conscious thought that He would be a Bread-King, and supply their needs without labour, they proposed to take Him by force. He retired into a mountain Himself alone—to pray, as the parallel narratives distinctly tell us. A miracle—a sermon in act—and then a discourse on the True Bread of God, follow this hour with nature and God.

A MIRACLE.—The parables are miracles of speech: the miracles are parables of mercy. After feeding the multitudes Jesus walks on the sea. The devout of olden times had repre-

sented God as One "who treadeth on the waves of the sea as on dry land" (Job 9. 8). Now God had appeared. After a miracle of distribution He performs a miracle of control. But every act has a reason. The acts of God cannot be irrational. In the present instance the reason, according to Mark 6. 48, was that Christ from the mountain looked down upon the peril to which His disciples were exposed by the storm, and hastened consequently to help them. The danger was not ordinary. For six hours the helpless disciples had contended with the storm. And what nineteen hundred years has taught the Universal Church concerning this event is this, Christ is Master of the water, the Helper in all the perils of life. "He would appear to them at first like a dark, moving speck upon the waters; then as a human figure, but in the dark, tempestuous sky, and not dreaming that it could be their Lord, they take it for a spirit. How often thus we miscall our chiefest mercies, not only thinking them distant when they are near, but thinking the best the worst"—Dr. BROWN. While Jesus was praying among the hills the disciples were rowing in a north-east direction towards Bethsaida, where, apparently, they were to meet Jesus, take Him on board, and then proceed to Capernaum, their home. On the way they were overtaken by one of the sudden, violent storms from the north so common on the Sea of Galilee. The danger was great, and the tempest drove them away from their harbour. But there are always lessons in the school of suffering. "He will not have them to be clinging only to the sense of His bodily presence, as ivy needing always an outward support, but as hardy forest trees which can brave a blast; and this time He puts them forth into the danger alone, even as some loving mother-bird thrusts her fledglings from the nest that they may find their own wings, and learn to use them; and by the issue He will awaken in them a confidence in His ever-ready help"—TRENCH. There is an Eastern fable of a boy having challenged his teacher to prove to him the existence of God by working a miracle. The teacher got a large vessel filled with earth, wherein he deposited a kernel in the boy's presence, and bade him pay attention. In the place where the kernel was put a green shoot suddenly appeared, the shoot became a stem, the stem put forth leaves and branches, which soon spread over the whole apartment. It then budded with blossoms, which, dropping off, left golden fruit in their place; and in the short space of one hour there stood a noble tree in the place of the little seed. The youth, overcome with amazement, exclaimed, "Now I know that there is a God, for I have seen His power." The teacher smiled at him, and said, "Simple child, do you only now believe? Does not what you have just beheld take place year after year, only by a slower process? But is it the less marvellous on that account?" Sow seed broadcast, and harvest follows; is not that the act of God? Day by day the table is spread; is not that a miracle of feeding? During the last severe winter a London police magistrate quietly said, "The poor-box is nearly empty, the weather is exceptional, and the poor are numerous." Within a few hours the box received £230. There was no compulsion. God, who has the hearts of all men at His disposal, moved those who had, to help those who needed. He walked upon the waters of their poverty to their relief. WORDSWORTH thus expands the word of Jesus, **It is I, be not afraid**: "I am the ever-living One, Jehovah, the Author of life. I am always at hand, and never pass by you; therefore be not afraid, but trust in Me." Our Lord allows us to be in trial and danger, to struggle in the storm, to endure for a long time, in order that our patience and perseverance and faith may be proved, and that we may resort to Him alone who can save us. We are often in darkness and in storms, and the devil and evil men assail and affright us; but let us listen to Christ's voice, 'It is I; be not afraid,' and when human help fails, then Divine aid will come." TERRORS pass by, but Christ never passes by. He ever says, "It is I." "This miracle," as Mr. VALLINGS well says, "was not primarily a lesson, still less a dramatic display of power. It followed in the natural order of events; it was evoked by circumstances; it fell in with the ordinary currents of the Galileans' trials of life; and it was singularly adapted to impress the hardy fishermen of the Lake in the line of their own business and experience. It was one of the casts of the Fisher of Men. They had seen a hundred times the majesty, the violence, the sudden impetuosity of the Galilean storms; they had long known the fickle temper of the winds which swept down the gorges of the hills, and left the Lake half calm, half riot and confusion. They may have lost dear lives in such storms, on such days or nights when

> 'One could not hear
> A word the other said, for wind and sea
> That raged, and beat, and thundered.'"

God meets us when we are sailing where He bids us. The path of duty is often the path of surprise. The discourses at Capernaum fall into three groups:—

1. Vers. 26–40 introduced by a simple question. The search for life.
2. Vers. 41–51 prefaced by a murmuring. The relation of the Son to God and man.
3. Vers. 52–58 following a contention. The appropriation of Christ by the individual.

The first of these consists of answers to successive questions. **When camest Thou?** (ver. 25). **What must we do that we may work the works of God?** (ver. 28). **What doest Thou for a sign?** (ver. 30). **Lord, evermore give us this bread** (ver. 34).

1. **When camest Thou?** They missed Him

and wondered how He crossed the storm-swept Lake. Jesus knew their thoughts. Their interest, after all, was not unselfish. **Ye seek Me not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves: work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life.** The earthly and the heavenly are both of God. Men must work for the lower life, but too often they work for that exclusively. We should live for important things. Weigh the word "eternal," contrast "now" and "hereafter," then act.

2. **What must we do?** How to set about this? **Believe. This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.** Faith is not inactive. Let there be a true faith, and all works of righteousness will come into it and be one with it. The moment when Jesus uttered this word to the people has been called "the crisis of their destiny." For one moment they seem willing to seek the higher object. But curiosity overbore conscience. Their goodness passed like the dew.

3. **What sign showest Thou? Moses gave us manna from heaven;** Thou hast only multiplied the loaves, increased an existing supply. But they forgot, intentionally or otherwise, that God was the real Giver. Jesus said, **It was not Moses: My Father giveth you the true Bread, for the Bread of God cometh down out of heaven and giveth life unto the world.**

4. **Lord, evermore give us this bread.** Jesus said, **I am the Bread of Life.** He was His own Gospel; He is so still. The world's myriads, hungry in intellect, imagination, and heart, find no satisfaction out of Jesus Christ. No other spreads a table in the wilderness and invites all to satisfy their need. Alas! how many neglect this Bread of Life. They turn away from Christ who can help them; they turn to those who cannot bless and strengthen them. Be our motto: None but Christ.

22. **Who had stood on the other side.** "They were forced to stay a while, because there were then no other vessels; and they stayed the less unwillingly, because they saw Jesus was not embarked"—WESLEY.

26. "Our Lord does not satisfy their curiosity, but corrects the wrong motive they had in seeking Him. **Because ye did eat**—merely for temporal advantage. Hitherto Christ had been gathering hearers; He now begins to try their sincerity by a figurative discourse concerning His passion, and the fruit of it, to be received by faith"—WESLEY.

27. **Labour not for the meat which perisheth**—"for bodily food; not for that only, not chiefly; not at all, but in subordination to grace, faith, love, the **meat which endureth to everlasting life.** 'Labour'—work for this. 'For everlasting life'—so our Lord expressly commands, Work *for* life, as well as *from* life, from a principle of faith and love. **Him hath the Father sealed**—by this very miracle, as well as by His whole testimony concerning Him. (See ch. 3. 33.) 'Sealing' is a mark of the authenticity of a writing"—WESLEY.

The strife of life and the strife for eternal life are mutually interpreting. The rabbis were accustomed to teach by metaphors. The people were in danger of regarding Christ simply as a Bread-King. They saw the bread and nothing more. They were to regard Him as the feeder of their souls.

28. **The works of God**—"works pleasing to God"—WESLEY.

29. **This is the work of God**—"the work most pleasing to God, and the foundation of all others. **That ye believe.** He expresses it first properly, afterwards figuratively"—WESLEY.

30. **What sign doest Thou?**—"amazing, after what they had just seen"—WESLEY.

31. **Our fathers ate manna**—"this sign Moses gave them. **He gave them bread from heaven**—from the lower, sublunary heaven, to which Jesus opposes the highest heaven; in which sense He says seven times (vers. 32, 33, 38, 50, 58, 62) that He Himself came down from heaven"—WESLEY.

32. **Moses gave you not bread from heaven.** "It was not Moses who gave the manna to your fathers, but **My Father,** who now **giveth the true Bread from heaven"**—WESLEY.

Manna referred to in Ex. 16. 15, 33, 36; Num. 11. 6, 7, 9; Deut. 8. 3, 16; Josh. 5. 12; Neh. 9. 20; Ps. 78. 24; John 6. 31, 49, 58; Heb. 9. 4; Rev. 2. 17. How highly the Jews thought of the manna we see from a saying of Aben Ezra, who calls it the greatest of the miracles of Jesus.

33. **He that giveth life to the world**—"not, like the manna, to one people only, and that from generation to generation. Our Lord does not yet say, I am that Bread; else the Jews would not have given Him so respectful an answer (ver. 34)"—WESLEY.

34. **Give us this bread**—"meaning it still in a literal sense; yet they seem now to be not far from believing"—WESLEY.

The prayer, **Lord, evermore give us this bread,** may be only the echo of the woman of Samaria's petition, "Give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." It may be the language of indolence desiring to be fed. It may be—God grant it be!—the cry of a devout soul that desires to be satisfied with God; that cries, O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself.

35. **I am the Bread of Life**—"having and giving life. **He that cometh, he that believeth**—equivalent expressions—**shall never hunger, thirst**—shall be satisfied, happy, for ever"—WESLEY.

"The Bread of Life." The Jews spoke of the "bread" of doctrine. They saw that man doth not live by bread alone. If bread be the type of all earthly sustenance, then the bread of heaven may well express all spiritual sus-

tenance, all that involves and supports eternal life. "**I am the Bread of Life.** The pronoun is very emphatic. (Comp. 4. 26.) As in ver. 30, He passes from the third to the first person. Bread of life means bread that giveth life. (Comp. 'the tree of life,' Gen. 2. 9; 3. 22, 24; 'the water of life,' Rev. 21. 6; 22. 1.) In the remainder of the verse, **He that cometh to Me = he that believeth on Me, shall never hunger=shall never thirst**; *i.e.* the believer shall experience the continual satisfaction of his highest spiritual needs"—C. B. A great controversy has raged around this chapter betwixt those who hold and those who reject sacramentarian theories. It is sufficient for us to hold to the general thought—all-being and well-being reside in Christ the Lord of Life.

36. **I have told you**—"namely (ver. 26)"—WESLEY.

37. **All that the Father giveth Me**—"all that feel themselves lost, and follow the drawings of the Father, He in a peculiar manner giveth to the Son. **Will come to Me**—by faith. **And him that** thus **cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out**—I will give him pardon, holiness, and heaven, if he endure to the end, to rejoice in his light"—WESLEY.

39. **Of all which He hath** already **given Me.** (See ch. 17. 6, 12.) "If they endure to the end; but Judas did not"—WESLEY.

40. "Here is the sum of the three foregoing verses. **This is the will of Him that sent Me** —this is the whole of what I have said. This is the eternal, unchangeable will of God. Every one who truly believeth shall have everlasting life. **Every one that seeth and believeth.** The Jews saw, and yet believed not. **And I will raise him up**—as this is the will of Him that sent Me, I will perform it effectually"—WESLEY.

44. "Christ, having checked their murmuring, continues what He was saying (ver. 40). **No man comes to Me unless My Father draw him** — no man can believe in Christ unless God give him power. He draws us first by good desires; not by compulsion, not by laying the will under any necessity, but by the strong and sweet, yet still resistible, motions of His heavenly grace"—WESLEY.

"Our Lord's Divinity comes out here in its uncreated radiance." "The Gospels are as full of such sayings as the skies are full of stars." "A magnet finds nothing in wood or leaves, but only in metal"—THEOPHYLACT.

45. **Every man that hath heard** — "the secret voice of God, he, and he only, believeth" —WESLEY.

46. **Not that any one**—"must expect Him to appear in a visible shape. **He who is from** or with **God**—in a more eminent manner than any creature"—WESLEY.

To be taught one must listen and learn. The promise is universal; all are without excuse. Those who are not saved are those who will not.

50. **Not die**—"not spiritually; not eternally"—WESLEY.

51. **If any eat of this bread**—"that is, believe in Me—**he shall live for ever**—in other words, He that believeth to the end shall be saved. **My flesh which I will give you.** This whole discourse concerning His flesh and blood refers directly to His passion, and but remotely, if at all, to the Lord's Supper"—WESLEY.

52. "Observe the degrees — the Jews are tried here; the disciples (vers. 60, 66); the apostles (ver. 67)"—WESLEY.

53. **Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man**—"spiritually; unless ye draw continual virtue from Him by faith. **Eating His flesh** —is only another expression for believing"—WESLEY.

55. **Meat, drink indeed**—"with which the soul of a believer is as truly fed as his body with meat and drink"—WESLEY.

The life of a Christian has its source in God, and is immortal, like the God from whom it comes.

57. **I live by the Father**—"being one with Him. **He shall live by Me**—being one with Me. Amazing union!"—WESLEY.

58. **This is**—"that is, I am **the Bread**—which is not like the manna your fathers ate, who died notwithstanding"—WESLEY.

60. **This is an hard saying**—"hard to the children of the world, but sweet to the children of God. Scarce ever did our Lord speak more sublimely, even to the apostles in private. **Who can hear**—endure—**it?**"—WESLEY.

62. **What if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?** "How much more incredible will it then appear to you that He should give you His flesh to eat?"—WESLEY.

63. **It is the Spirit**—"the spiritual meaning of these words, by which God giveth life. **The flesh**—the bare, carnal, literal meaning— **profiteth nothing. The words which I have spoken, they are spirit** — are to be taken in a spiritual sense. **And**—when they are so understood—**they are life**—that is, a means of spiritual life to the hearers"—WESLEY.

64. **But there are some of you who believe not**—"and so receive no life by them, because you take them in a gross, literal sense. **For Jesus knew from the beginning** — of His ministry—**who would betray Him.** Therefore it is plain God does foresee future contingencies:

'But His foreknowledge causes not the fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.'"
WESLEY.

65. **Unless it be given**—"and it is given to those only who will receive it on God's own terms"—WESLEY.

The living Father—the Fountain of all life. The expression occurs nowhere else. The

revelation was too spiritual. Many murmured. Jesus read the unspoken speech, and hinted at the greater mystery of His ascension. He foresaw, too, the betrayal and agony. The murmuring became a forsaking, and with the sob of a breaking heart He said to the Twelve, **Will ye also go away?** Then Simon Peter spoke—the Simon of earlier times in readiness, the Peter of later times in sublimity and sincerity, **Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.**

66. **From this time many of His disciples went back.** "So our Lord now began to purge His floor. The proud and careless were driven away, and those remained who were meet for the Master's use"—WESLEY.

68. **Thou hast the words of eternal life**—"Thou, and Thou alone, speakest the words which show the way to life everlasting"—WESLEY.

69. **And we**—"who have been with Thee from the beginning, whatever others do, **have known**—are absolutely assured, **that Thou art the Christ**"—WESLEY.

70. **Jesus answered them.** "And yet even ye have not all acted suitably to this knowledge. **Have I not chosen** or elected **you twelve?**—but they might fall from even that election. **Yet one of you.** Oh this gracious warning, Judas ought to have repented. **Is a devil**—is now influenced by one"—WESLEY.

R.V. reads S. Peter's answer, **Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed, and know that Thou art the Holy One of God.** "The confessions of S. Peter are worth comparing: 1. Thou art the Son of God (Matt. 14. 33); in this the other apostles joined. 2. Thou art the Holy One of God (ch. 6. 69). 3. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16. 16). They increase in fulness, as we might expect"—PLUMMER. With regard to the difficulty of understanding Christ's words in this sixth chapter, MEYER'S concluding remark is to be borne in mind: "The difficulty is partly exaggerated, and partly the fact is overlooked, that in all references to His death and the purpose of it, Jesus could rely upon the light which the *future* would throw on these utterances; and sowing, as He generally did, for the future in the bosom of the present, He was compelled to utter much that was mysterious, but which would supply material and support for the further development and purification of faith and knowledge. The wisdom thus displayed in His teaching has been justified by *history*." **He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.** And in that eternal life we shall know what now is hidden from us.

CHAPTER VII.

"CHAPTER 7, like chapter 6, is very important for the estimate of the Fourth Gospel. In it the scene of the messianic crisis shifts from Galilee to Jerusalem; and, as we should naturally expect, the crisis itself becomes hotter. The divisions, the doubts, the hopes, the jealousies, and the casuistry of the Jews are vividly portrayed. We see the mass of the populace, especially those who had come up from Galilee, swaying to and fro, hardly knowing which way to turn, inclined to believe, but held back by the more sophisticated citizens of the metropolis. These meanwhile apply the fragments of rabbinical learning at their command in order to test the claims of the new Prophet. In the background looms the dark shadow of the hierarchy itself, entrenched behind its prejudices, and refusing to hear the cause that it has already prejudged. A single timid voice is raised against this injustice, but is at once fiercely silenced"—SANDAY. As in chaps. 5 and 6, Christ is set forth as the *Source and Support of Life*, so in chaps. 7, 8, and 9, He is set forth as the *Source of Truth and Light*. **After these things.** About six months elapsed. "The Feast of Tabernacles this year began on 11th Oct."—LEWIN. Christ's labours for a period of six months, from the Passover (April 16) to the Feast of Tabernacles (Oct. 11–17), A.D. 29, are unrecorded by S. John, except the notice in a single verse (ch. 7. 1), that this time was spent in Galilee. During this period are the events recorded in Matt. 15–18; Mark 7–9; and Luke 9. 18–50. These include the healing of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman in the land of Tyre and Sidon; of the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis; the feeding of the five thousand; the Transfiguration; Peter's profession of faith; and several conversations with His disciples.

1. **After these things Jesus walked in Galilee**—"that is, continued there for some months after the second Passover. **For He would not walk**—continue **in Judea. Because the Jews**—those of them who did not believe; and in particular the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, **sought** an opportunity **to kill Him**"—WESLEY.

2. **The feast of tabernacles**—"the time, manner, and reason of this feast may be seen (Lev. 23. 34, etc.)"—WESLEY.

A JEWISH FEAST—THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.—1. *Time*—This feast was held from the 15th to the 21st of Tisri (Sept.–Oct.) of each year, the first and last days being kept sacred, like Sabbaths, the other days being semi-holidays.

2. *Object*—It is called in Exodus (ch. 23. 16) the Feast of Ingathering, and was in one aspect a thanksgiving for the produce of the year, the corn, wine, oil, and other things having all been gathered in. It was also a commemoration of the life in the wilderness, and a thanksgiving for the settlement in permanent habitation; hence the command to dwell in booths (or "tabernacles") during the week the feast lasted. (See Lev. 23. 33–44.)

3. *How celebrated*—In Jerusalem booths were

erected everywhere, in court and on house-top, in street and square. These arbours, or booths, were made of branches of trees—palms, sycamores, olives, pines, and willow. Nobody was living at home ; everybody in these booths—all the people of the city and crowds from the country. At night the vast Temple buildings stood out, illuminated by the eight great lights that burned in the court of the women, and by the glare of torches.

4. *The symbolism* — The whole symbolism of the feast, beginning with the completed harvest, for which it was a thanksgiving, pointed to the future. The ceremony of the outpouring of water, which was considered of such vital importance as to give to the whole festival the name of House of Outpouring, was symbolical of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit ; the Temple illumination, of the light which was to shine from out the Temple into the dark night of heathendom ; then, at the first dawn of morn, the blasts of the priests' silver trumpets, of the army of God, as it advanced with festive trumpet sound and call, to awaken the sleepers and to utter solemn protest against heathenism. Let us suppose ourselves in the number of worshippers who, on **the last, the great day, of the feast**, are leaving their "booths" at daybreak to take part in the service. The pilgrims are all in festive array. In his right hand each carries a branch, consisting of a myrtle or willow branch tied together with a palm branch (Lev. 23. 40). In his left hand he carries a bough of the so-called Paradise apple, a species of citron. Thus armed, the festive multitude would divide into three bands. One of these, to the sound of music, started in a procession from the Temple. It followed a priest, who bore a golden pitcher, capable of holding three *log* (rather more than two pints). They proceeded to the fountain of Siloam, in the valley south of the Temple. Here the priest filled from this fountain the golden pitcher, and brought it back into the court of the Temple, amid the shouts of the multitudes, and the sound of cymbals and trumpets. The rejoicing was so great that the rabbis used to say that he who had never been present at this ceremony, and at the other similar ceremonies, by which this feast was distinguished, did not know what rejoicing meant. The return was so timed that they should arrive just as they were laying the pieces of the sacrifice on the great altar of burnt-offerings, towards the close of the ordinary morning sacrifice service. The water from the golden pitcher was poured upon the altar. Immediately the great "Hallel," consisting of Pss. 113–118, was chanted, with responses, to the accompaniment of the flute. At the close of this festive morning service there was a pause in the services while the priest prepared to offer the special sacrifices for the day. At this moment there arose, so loud as to be heard throughout the Temple, the voice of Jesus. He interrupted not the services, for they had for the moment ceased ; He interpreted and He fulfilled them.—*Condensed, chiefly from* EDERSHEIM.

3. **His brethren**—"so called according to the Jewish way of speaking. They were His cousins, the sons of His mother's sister. **Depart hence** — from this obscure place"—WESLEY.

4. **For no man doeth anything**—"of this kind—**in secret ; but rather desireth to be** of public use. **If Thou** really **dost these things** —these miracles which are reported—**show Thyself to the world**—to all men"—WESLEY.

"His brethren seem to have been converted by the resurrection. Immediately after the Ascension we find them with the apostles and the holy women. (Acts 1. 14 ; comp. 1 Cor. 9. 5 ; Gal. 1. 19)"—PLUMMER.

6. **Jesus saith, Your time is always ready.** "This or any time will suit you"—WESLEY.

7. **The world cannot hate you**—"because ye are of the world. **But Me it hateth**—and all that bear the same testimony"—WESLEY.

10. **He also went up to the feast.** "This was His last journey but one to Jerusalem. The next time He went up, He suffered"—WESLEY.

Every Jew was expected to go up each year to some one of the three great feasts. Jesus had been up to the Passover in A.D. 28 (ch. 5. 1), but did not go up to the Passover of A.D. 29 (ch. 6. 4 ; comp. 7. 1) ; and, therefore, He went to the Feast of the Tabernacles in the face of the danger from the Pharisees, but He went up secretly. Suddenly, in the midst of the feast, He appeared in the Temple and taught the people.

11. **The Jews**—"the men of Judea, particularly of Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

12. **There was much murmuring among the multitude** — "much whispering ; many private debates with each other, among those who were come from distant parts"—WESLEY.

13. **However, no man spake openly of Him**—"not in favour of Him. **For fear of the Jews**—those that were in authority"—WESLEY.

14. **Now at the middle of the feast**—"which lasted eight days. It is probable this was on the Sabbath day. **Jesus went up into the Temple**—directly, without stopping anywhere else"—WESLEY.

"The heavenly *precaution* with which Jesus guarded His life from a premature end, that He might sacrifice it with full effect at the right hour, forms a contrast with the heedless *boldness* with which His brothers would push Him upon the stage of the most glaring publicity (vers. 1–9) ; and a contrast with the many premature sacrifices which occur in the lives of worldly heroes, and even of Christian missionaries and martyrs. The life of the believer must be, in spirit, offered up to God at all times ; but the actual sacrifice of it must be put with all decision under the law of

Christian wisdom. No one should prematurely squander his life; everyone should, in the holiest sense, 'sell it at the highest possible price.' But for His wise reserve, the life of the Lord would perhaps have fallen before the hatred of Judaism in the very first year of His ministry; certainly at the Feast of Purim, in the spring of the second year. A ministry of about three years in the midst of pharisaic Judea would be secured to Jesus only by His heavenly wisdom. The subsequent *appearance* of Christ at the Feast of Tabernacles does not contradict this caution. By this oft-repeated sudden appearance, He places Himself as an astounding wonder before His enemies; they themselves are restrained by fear, and they do not venture to seize Him. They are disarmed, not only by the personal impression of Jesus, but also by fear of the powerful popular following which He had. Not till the continuous stay of Christ among them at the last Passover could they carry out a definite plan against Him"—LANGE. He was immortal until His work was done. This sense of being in the hands of God sustained Him, speaking of Him on the manward side of His nature. His quiet walking amidst unquiet opposition is a sign of His glorious majesty and tranquil superiority. It is, as GOSSNER phrases it, as if He had said, "I guide Myself by the hour-glass of My Father; ye can go according to your pleasure; ye may say what ye will, ye will never be arraigned for it; but I must walk cautiously, that I may not wantonly encounter any suffering. He who follows his own will, who does everything out of his own head, and *never consults the Divine moment*, his time is always ready. But he who loves God, lets all his moments depend on the will and indication of God." The sense of loneliness that comes now and then to the noblest souls is awful. But it is better to be alone with God than in a crowd without Him. A man can dare the world's opinion when he hears duty's footsteps behind him. Herein Jesus hath left us an example that we should follow His steps. He was unknown in another sense. At times He hid Himself. But when He appeared they did not understand Him. The Jews sought Him at the feast, and when they had found Him they disputed about Him, **How knoweth this man letters?** They marvelled that He knew all things; and yet they knew that He had not passed through their schools. Here we get an interesting glimpse of the *private life of Jesus*. This is an echo from the voice of His contemporaries. Dr. SCHAFF well expresses it: "Christ spent His youth in poverty and manual labour, in the obscurity of a carpenter's shop; far away from universities, academies, libraries, and literary or polished society; without any help, as far as we know, except the parental care, the daily wonders of nature, the Old Testament Scriptures, the weekly Sabbath services of the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4. 16), the annual festivals in the Temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2. 42, *et seq.*), and the secret intercourse of His soul with God, His heavenly Father. Christ can be ranked neither with the school-trained, nor with the self-trained or self-made men; if by the latter we understand, as we must, those who, without the regular aid of living teachers, yet with the same educational means, such as books, the observation of men and things, and the intense application of their mental faculties, attained to vigour of intellect, and wealth of scholarship—like Shakespeare, Jacob Bœhme, Benjamin Franklin, and others. All the attempts to bring Jesus into contact with Egyptian wisdom, or the Essenic theosophy, or other sources of learning, are without a shadow of proof, and explain nothing after all. He never quotes from books, except from the Old Testament. He never refers to secular history, poetry, rhetoric, mathematics, astronomy, foreign languages, natural sciences, or any of those branches of knowledge which make up human learning and literature. He confined Himself strictly to religion. But from that centre He shed light over the whole world of man and nature. In this department, unlike all other great men, even the prophets and the apostles, He was absolutely original and independent. He taught the world as one who had learnt nothing from it, and was under no obligation to it. He speaks from Divine intuition, as One who not only knows the truth, but is the Truth; and with an authority that commands absolute submission, or provokes rebellion, but can never be passed by with contempt or indifference." In this sense He needed not that any man should teach Him, for He knew well what was in man. Weigh well the unapproachableness of Jesus, and it will become more and more clear that He who came amongst us in great humility was allied to heaven and God.

15. **How does this Man know letters, having never learned?** "How comes He to be so well acquainted with sacred literature, as to be able thus to expound the Scripture, with such propriety and gracefulness, seeing He has never learned this at any place of education?" —WESLEY.

16. **My doctrine is not Mine**—"acquired by any labour of learning. **But His that sent Me**—immediately infused by Him"—WESLEY.

17. **If any man be willing to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.** "This is a universal rule, with regard to all persons and doctrines. He that is thoroughly willing to do it shall certainly know what the will of God is"—WESLEY.

If any man will do His will. "As in ch. 6. 67 and ch. 8. 44, 'will' is too weak; it is not the simple future, but the verb 'to will': **If any man** willeth to do **His will.** The mere mechanical performance of God's will is not enough; there must be an inclination towards Him, a wish to make our conduct agree with

His will; and without this agreement Divine doctrine cannot be recognised as such. There must be a moral harmony between the teaching and the taught, and this harmony is in the first instance God's gift (ch. 6. 44, 45), which each can accept or refuse at will (comp. ch. 14. 21)"—C. B.

18. **There is no unrighteousness in him**—"no deceit or falsehood"—WESLEY.

19. "But ye are unrighteous; for ye violate the very Law which ye profess so much zeal for"—WESLEY.

20. **The people answered, Thou hast a devil**—"a lying spirit. **Who seeketh to kill Thee?** These, coming from distant parts, probably did not know the design of the priests and rulers"—WESLEY.

21. **I did**—"at the pool of Bethesda—**one work**—out of many. **And ye all marvel at it**—are amazed, because I did it on the Sabbath day"—WESLEY.

22. **Moses gave you circumcision.** "The sense is, Because Moses enjoined you circumcision (though indeed it was far more ancient than him) you think it no harm to circumcise a man on the Sabbath: and are ye angry at Me (which anger had now continued sixteen months) for doing so much greater a good, for healing a man, body and soul, on the Sabbath?"—WESLEY.

27. **When Christ cometh, none knoweth whence He is.** "This Jewish tradition was true with regard to His Divine nature: in that respect none could 'declare His generation.' But it was not true with regard to His human nature; for both His family and the place of His birth were plainly foretold"—WESLEY.

28. **Then cried Jesus**—"with a loud and earnest voice—**Do ye both know Me, and know whence I am?**—ye do indeed know whence I am as a man; but ye know not My Divine nature, nor that I am sent from God"—WESLEY.

29. **I am from Him**—"by eternal generation. **And He hath sent Me**—His mission follows from His generation. These two points answer those, 'Do you know Me?' Do ye 'know whence I am?'"—WESLEY.

30. **His hour**—"the time of His suffering"—WESLEY.

33. **Then said Jesus**—"continuing His discourse from ver. 29, which they had interrupted"—WESLEY.

34. **Ye shall seek Me**—"whom ye now despise. These words are, as it were, the text which is commented upon in this and the following chapter. **Where I am.** Christ's so frequently saying, while on earth, 'Where I am,' when He spake of His being in heaven, intimates His perpetual presence there in His Divine nature; though His going thither was a future thing with regard to His human nature"—WESLEY.

35. **Will He go to the dispersed among the Greeks?**—"the Jews scattered abroad in heathen nations, Greece particularly. Or, **will He teach the Greeks** — the heathens themselves?"—WESLEY.

37. **On the last day, the great day of the feast.** "On this day there was the greatest concourse of people, and they were then wont to fetch water from the fountain of Siloam, which the priests poured out on the great altar, singing one to another, 'With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation.' On this day, likewise, they commemorated God's miraculously giving water out of the rock, and offered up solemn prayers for seasonable rains"—WESLEY.

38. **He that believeth.** "This answers to, 'Let him come' to Me. And whosoever doth come to Him by faith, his inmost soul shall be filled with **living water**, with abundance of peace, joy, and love, which shall likewise flow from him to others. **As the Scripture hath said**—not expressly, in any one particular place. But here is a general reference to all those Scriptures which speak of the effusion of the Spirit by the Messiah, under the similitude of pouring out water"—WESLEY.

39. **The Holy Ghost was not yet given**—"that is, those fruits of the Spirit were not yet given, even to true believers, in that full measure"—WESLEY.

He went not up to the feast until the clock had struck the hour of the Divine purpose. **On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried.** On the mornings of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the sacrifice had been laid on the altar, one of the priests went down with a golden ewer to the pool of Siloam, not far from the foot of Mount Zion. There, with great solemnity, he drew water, which was carried in triumphant procession through the water gate into the Temple. The sacred trumpets breathed out a joyous blast. When the priest reached the top of the altar slope, he poured the water into a silver bason on the western side, while wine was poured into another silver basin on the eastern side. Then the great Hallel was sung, and when they came to the verse, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever," each of the gaily-clad worshippers, as he stood beside the altars, shook his palm branch in triumph. In the evening they abandoned themselves to such rejoicing, that the rabbis say that the man who has not seen this "joy of the drawing water" does not know what joy means. In allusion to this glad custom, Jesus pointed the yearnings of the festal crowd in the Temple, as He had done those of the Samaritan woman by the lonely well, to a new truth, and to one which more than fulfilled alike the spiritual (Isa. 12. 3) and the historical meaning (1 Cor. 10. 4) of the scenes which they had witnessed. Some began openly to speak of Him as the Christ. But the rulers were not prepared for such a revolution. They knew Him, they thought;

but the Christ would come as an unexpected, although long-expected, wonder. "Does not the Scripture say that the Christ comes of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" Meanwhile, divisions amongst themselves made organised opposition impossible. Once more God made the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He restrained. Jews of recent times declare that the Messiah is to come from Galilee, and they settle at Tiberias, because they believe that He will rise from the waters of the lake; and at Safed, the city set on a hill, because they believe that He will there fix His throne.

Through all the murmurings, discussions, and contentions of this and associated chapters there comes out, clearly and distinctly, like the rising of the first star at eventide, the supremacy of Jesus Christ. One whose record you can find in the Old Testament tried the world, drank its reservoirs empty, and then wrote, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." A conqueror vanquished the then known world, and wept because there was not another world to conquer. Byron pursued the phantom of pleasure, and then in the noon of life and of fortune took up his parable and said:

"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers and fruits of love are gone—
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone, as some volcanic isle,
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile."

There is a Russian story of one who entered a diamond mine in search of great riches. He filled his pockets with great gems, and then threw them away to make room for larger ones. At length he became very thirsty, but there was no water there. He heard the flow of rivers, but they were rivers of gems; he hastened forward at the sound of a waterfall, but it was a cascade of jewels. He was very rich in precious stones, but he was dying of thirst, and his riches were worse than useless. Jesus says, **If any man thirst, let him come unto ME and drink.**

40. **The prophet**—"whom we expect to be the forerunner of the Messiah"—WESLEY.

42. **From Bethlehem**—"and how could they forget that Jesus was born there? Had not Herod given them terrible reasons to remember it?"—WESLEY.

43. **A division.** "*Schisma*, whence our word 'schism.' It means a serious and possibly violent division. (Ch. 9. 16; 10. 19; 1 Cor. 1. 10; 12. 25; comp. Acts 14. 4; 23. 7.) In New Testament it is never used in the modern sense of a separation *from* the Church, but of parties in the Church. By the Synoptists it is used only in its original sense of physical severing; 'a worse *rent* is made.' (Matt. 9. 16; Mark 2. 21)"—PLUMMER.

45. **Then came the officers.** "Better, *Therefore* came the officers, *i.e.* because neither they nor any of the multitude had ventured to arrest Him. Under the control of God's providence (ver. 30), they had been unable to find any good opportunity for taking Him, and had been overawed by the majesty of His words (ver. 46)"—PLUMMER.

48. **Have any of the rulers**—"men of rank or eminence—**or of the Pharisees**—men of learning and religion—**believed on Him?**"—WESLEY.

49. **But this populace, who know not the Law**—"this ignorant rabble—**are accursed**—are by that ignorance exposed to the curse of being thus seduced"—WESLEY.

50. **Nicodemus, he that came to Him by night**—"having now a little more courage, **being one of them**—being present as a member of the great Council. **Saith to them**—Do not we ourselves act as if we knew not the Law, if we pass sentence on a man before we hear him?"—WESLEY.

52. **They answered**—"by personal reflection; the argument they could not answer, and therefore did not attempt it. **Art thou also a Galilean**—one of His party? **Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.** They could not but know the contrary. They knew Jonah arose out of Gath-hepher, and Nahum from another village in Galilee. Yea, and Thisbe, the town of Elijah the Tishbite, was in Galilee also. They might likewise have known that Jesus was not born in Galilee, but at Bethlehem, even from the public register there, and from the genealogies of the family of David. They were conscious this poor answer would not bear examination; and so took care to prevent a reply"—WESLEY.

53. **And every man went to his own house.** "So that short, plain question of Nicodemus spoiled all their measures, and broke up the Council! 'A word spoken in season, how good is it,' especially when God gives it His blessing!"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 53 of the seventh chapter and ver. 1 of the eighth chapter are closely connected:—**And they went every man unto his own house: but Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.** "The return of the people to the inert quiet and security of their *dwellings* (ch. 7. 53), at the close of the feast, is designedly contrasted with our Lord's *homeless* way, so to speak, of spending the short night, who is early in the morning on the scene again. One cannot well see why what is recorded in Luke 21. 37, 38, may not even thus early have taken place: it might have been the Lord's ordinary custom from the beginning to leave the brilliant misery of the city every night, that so He might compose His sorrowful and interceding heart, and

collect His energies for new labours of love, preferring for His resting-place Bethany and the **Mount of Olives**, the scene thus consecrated by many preparatory prayers for His final humiliation and exaltation"—STIER. He had said (Matt. 8. 20), "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.' And the Apostle of the Gentiles was one day to write, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." **Mount of Olives.** About a mile directly east of Jerusalem. The Garden of Gethsemane was on the western side of the mountain, and Bethany on the east of it. This is the only instance in which S. John names the Mount of Olives. It is mentioned several times in each of the other Gospels in connection with the last scenes of the life of the Lord. The name only occurs once in the Old Testament. (Zech. 14. 4.) The ascension was from Olivet. From the central summit there rises the Church of the Ascension. Here the rabbis say the Last Judgment will be held. We read in the margin of the Revised Version, "Most of the ancient authorities omit John 7. 53–8. 11. Those which contain it vary much from each other." The doubt, however, is as to whether it is a part of the Gospel of S. John. There is no doubt as to its being a genuine part of the gospel history. "The special importance of the narrative lies in the fact that it records the single case in which the Lord deals with a specific sinful act. And this He does (1) by referring the act to the inward spring of action, and (2) by declining to treat the legal penalty as that which corresponds to the real guilt. So there is opened to us a glimpse of a tribunal more searching and yet more tender than the tribunals of men"—WESTCOTT. VAN DOREN bids us note in reading this section: (1) its evident Divine originality; (2) its every allusion to the morals of that age is true; (3) its lofty position of the Redeemer, seemingly shielding the guilty, but actually crushing the *hypocrites;* (4) its tendency to *purity*—that book is pure that makes men pure; (5) its grandeur in dealing with cunning foes; (6) its utter annihilation of the snare laid so artfully; (7) its matchless *wisdom* proves the footprints of a Divine Being." "It is eminently Christlike," says Dr. SCHAFF, "and full of comfort to penitent outcasts. It breathes the Saviour's spirit of holy mercy which condemns the sin and saves the sinner. It is a parallel to the parable of the prodigal, the story of Mary Magdalene, and that of the Samaritan woman, and agrees with many express declarations of Christ, that He came not to condemn, but to save the lost. (Ch. 3. 17; 12. 47; Luke 9. 56; 19. 10; comp. ch. 5. 14; Luke 7. 37 ff.)."

5. **Moses commanded us to stone such**—"in Deut. 22. 22. In later times other forms of punishment were adopted, but stoning was most common. **Moses hath commanded us to stone such.** "If they spoke accurately, this must have been a woman who, having been betrothed to a husband, had been guilty of this crime before the marriage was completed; for such only Moses commanded to be stoned. He commanded, indeed, that other adulteresses should be put to death; but the manner of death was not specified"—WESLEY.

6. **That they might have to accuse Him**—"either of usurping the office of a judge, if He condemned her, or of being an enemy to the Law, if He acquitted her. **Jesus stooping down, wrote with His finger on the ground.** God wrote once in the Old Testament; Christ once in the New; perhaps the words which He afterwards spoke, when they continued asking Him. By this silent action He (1) fixed their wandering, hurrying thoughts, in order to awaken their conscience, and (2) signified that He was not then come to condemn, but to save, the world"—WESLEY.

What then sayest Thou?—"hoping, whatever He might answer, to put Him in the wrong: if He said, Stone her, that would seem a stepping out of His province; if He forbade it, that would hold Him up as a relaxer of the public morals"—Dr. BROWN. **Wrote.** "Both here and in ver. 8 the tense in the original presents the action as going on before the witnesses. It is quite vain to conjecture what was written, if indeed we are to understand anything more than the mere mechanical action of writing. The attitude represents one who follows out his own thoughts, and is unwilling to give heed to those who question him"—WESTCOTT. And yet as this is the only recorded instance of our Lord's writing, the incident arrests the imagination, and almost compels conjecture. And so saintly students and subtle thinkers have found such suggestions as these, "I also can write even as Moses could. Ye bring this sinful woman before My bar—ye know not, and will not believe it, but it is nevertheless true, that before My judgment-seat all persons will finally come, and every question be finally adjudicated. If this floor of the Temple, if this whole land could speak—what would it record concerning all of you, and what would still have to be recorded of you? Stoop down with Me and read the sin of your whole people. Oh, how much could I say concerning you, how much could I reveal and condemn, which I would rather now bury in silence—constrain Me not to speak!" The Lord writes our sins on the *sand* here, as a warning in time: after death they will be written in *immortal* characters, if not forgiven. Jesus, the great Teacher of men, wrote but one line, and that in the dust, and yet He is the cause of more writing, more study, more books, more learning, than all other teachers of our world. The italicised clause, "as though He heard them not," must be excluded. It is

scarcely probable that our Lord wished that to be thought.

9. **He that is without sin**—"he that is not guilty (his own conscience being the judge) either of the same sin, or of some nearly resembling it. **Let him first**—as a witness, **cast the stone at her**"—WESLEY.

"The colour of the word 'sinless,'" says WESTCOTT, "is caught from the context. Though it would be unnatural to assume that all in the group of accusers were actually guilty of adultery, there is nothing unnatural in supposing that each could feel in himself the sinful inclination which has here issued in the sinful act. In this way the words of the Lord revealed to the men the depths of their own natures, and they shrank in that Presence from claiming the prerogative of innocence. At the same time the question as to the woman's offence was raised at once from a legal to a spiritual level. The judges were made to feel that freedom from an outward guilt is no claim to sinlessness. And the offender in her turn was led to see that flagrant guilt does not bar hope. The Law as in a figure dealt with that which is visible; the gospel penetrates to the inmost soul."

9. **Convicted by their own conscience**—"that judge of right and wrong who holds his court in every man's breast. **Beginning at the eldest**—or the elders. **Jesus was left alone**—by all those scribes and Pharisees who proposed the question. But many others remained, to whom our Lord directed His discourse presently after"—WESLEY.

Jesus was left alone, and the woman. "She still remained, bound as it were by her sin, in the presence of Christ"—WESTCOTT. "Two persons were left," AUGUSTINE says, "the unhappy woman and COMPASSION INCARNATE." "She stood as if bound to His judgment-seat"—LANGE. "That the woman continued to stand there, instead of stealing away also, as in decorum bound, is of itself intimation enough of that *penitent feeling* which expositors have generally lost sight of, and which the Lord's word to her not only *presupposes* but *proves*. The anguish of death is past, but the bitterness of conscience is almost stronger than that. Alas! the poor woman had been driven by a very different thirst from that of which Jesus spoke in the feast, into the slough where His mercy now finds her. What will He say unto her? Is He also not without sin? Will He, who in His first word mentioned the first *stone* of Moses' obligation, now in His final adjudication contradict Moses—or confirm his decree? She stands and awaits her doom"—STIER. "They, convicted by their conscience, get away from Jesus; she, convicted by her conscience, stays by Jesus"—LUTHER.

10. **Hath no man condemned thee**—"has no judicial sentence been passed upon thee?" WESLEY.

11. **Neither do I condemn thee**—"neither do I take upon Me to pass any such sentence. Let this deliverance lead thee to repentance"—WESLEY.

Neither do I condemn thee. "Though I am truly sinless. The words are not words of forgiveness (Luke 7. 48), but simply of one who gives no sentence. (Comp. Luke 12. 14.) The condemnation has reference to the outward punishment and not to the moral guilt; that is dealt with in the words which follow"—WESTCOTT. **Go thy way; from henceforth sin no more.** He did not condemn, as S. Augustine remarks, the woman, but the sin. The exhortation to penitence, Macdonald finds in the **sin no more.** It is brief, but, as Tholuck suggests, how mightily had the circumstances spoken; would not many words have weakened rather than strengthened the impression? He who restores the sinner to penitence does *more* than he who punishes him. The service of the Midnight Mission is to approach fallen women in the spirit of the Saviour. "In ch. 8. 12–46 the word 'true' occurs six times, the word 'truth' seven times"—C. B.

"*The after-teaching* (ch. 8. 12–20).—The Lord had applied to Himself one of the typical miracles of the Exodus (ch. 7. 37, *seq.*), in this section He seems to apply to Himself that of the fiery pillar,—as **the Light of the World** He is self-attested (ver 12 f.). But for the apprehension of His nature, sympathy is needed (vers. 14, 15). At the same time, even as the Lord's judgment was an expression of the Divine will, so His witness included that of the Father (vers. 16–18), who could be recognised by those who truly knew Christ"—WESTCOTT.

12. **I am the Light of the World.** At the Feast of Tabernacles golden candelabra were lighted. This may have suggested the metaphor. But as this illumination commemorated the pillar of fire, which led the Israelites through the wilderness, the listeners would regard His claim as strange and wondrous. Light is a scriptural emblem of knowledge, holiness, and happiness. The sun is its own revealer, so is Christ. Darkness images ignorance, error, guilt, misery, and the grave. "The Light of the World"—not of the Jewish nation only.

He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness—"in ignorance, wickedness, misery. **But shall have the light of life.** He that closely, humbly, steadily follows Me, shall have the Divine light continually shining upon him; diffusing over his soul, knowledge, holiness, joy, till he is guided by it to life everlasting"—WESLEY

The light of life. The light which both springs from life and issues in it.

13. **Thou testifiest of Thyself; Thy testimony is not valid.** "They retort upon our Lord His own words (ch. 5. 31), 'If I testify of Myself, My testimony is not valid.' He had

then added, 'There is another who testifieth of Me.' To the same effect He replies here (ver. 14), **Though I testify of Myself, yet My testimony is valid**—for I am inseparably united to the Father. **I know**—and from the firm and certain knowledge proceeds the most unexceptionable testimony—**whence I came, and whither I go.** To these two heads may be referred all the doctrine concerning Christ. The former is treated of (ver. 16, etc.), the latter (ver. 21, etc.). **For I know whence I came**—that is, for I came from God, both as God and as Man; and I know it, though ye do not"—WESLEY.

15. **Ye judge after the flesh**—"as the flesh, that is, corrupt nature, dictates. **I judge no man**—not thus; not now; not at My first coming"—WESLEY.

16. **I am not alone**—"no more in judging than in testifying. **But I and the Father that sent Me.** His Father is in Him, and He is in the Father. (Ch. 14. 10, 11.) And so the Father is no more alone without the Son, than the Son is without the Father. (Prov. 8. 22, 23, 30.) His Father and He are not one and another God, but one God (though distinct Persons), and so inseparable from each other. And though the Son came from the Father, to assume human nature, and perform His office as the Messiah upon earth, as God is sometimes said to come from heaven, for particular manifestations of Himself, yet Christ did not leave the Father, nor the Father leave Him, any more than God leaves heaven when He is said to come down to the earth"—WESLEY.

19. **Then said they to Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered**—"showing the perverseness of their question, and teaching that they ought first to know the Son, if they would know the Father. Where the Father is He shows (ver. 23). Meantime, He plainly intimates that the Father and He were distinct Persons, as they were two witnesses; and yet one in essence, as the knowledge of Him includes the knowledge of the Father"—WESLEY.

"The thought of knowledge passes into that of judgment. The Pharisees had not the knowledge, nor could they in their present state gain the knowledge. They judged **after the flesh.** (Comp. 2 Cor. 5. 16.) They were content to form their conclusions on an imperfect, external, superficial examination. Without feeling any necessity for deeper or wider insight, they decided according to the appearance of things, and so by that part of our nature which deals with appearances. Christ, on the other hand, though He embraced in this knowledge all the circumstances and aspects and issues of life, **judged no man.** The time for this was not yet; nor was this His work (ch. 12. 47)"—WESTCOTT. Christ was always ready with the right reply. The "answers" of Jesus are wonderful.

20. **These words spake He in the treasury.** The treasury was in the court of the women, the most public part of the Temple. (Comp. Mark 12. 41 ff.; Luke 21. 1.) **His hour.** (Comp. ch. 2. 4; 7. 30; 13. 1.) Nothing happens till the clock of the Divine purpose strikes.

Vers. 21–59. THE TRIAL OF TRUE AND FALSE FAITH.—"This section describes the spiritual crisis in the preaching to Israel. It consists of two parts. The first part (vers. 21–30) contains the distinct presentation of the one object of faith, with the declaration of the consequences of unbelief (ver. 24). This is closed by the notice of a large accession of disciples (ver. 30). The second part (vers. 31–58) gives an analysis of the essential character and issues of selfish belief and false Judaism. This is closed by the first open assault upon the Lord with violence"—WESTCOTT.

23. **Ye are.** "Again He passes over their interruption, and proves what He advanced (ver. 21). **Of them that are beneath**—from the earth. **I am of them that are above.** Here He directly shows whence He came, even from heaven, and whither He goes"—WESLEY.

24. **If ye believe not that I AM.** "Here, as in ver. 58, our Lord claims the Divine name, I AM (Ex. 3. 14). But the Jews, as if He had stopped short, and not finished the sentence, answered, **Who art Thou?**"—WESLEY.

25. **Even what I say to you from the beginning**—"the same which I say to you, as it were in one discourse, with one even tenor, from the time I first spake to you"—WESLEY.

26. **I have many things to say and to judge of you**—"I have much to say concerning your inexcusable unbelief. **But He that sent Me is true**—whether ye believe or no. **And I speak the things which I have heard from Him**—I delivered truly what He hath given Me in charge"—WESLEY.

27. **They understood not**—"that by Him that sent Him He meant God the Father. Therefore, in vers. 28 and 29, He speaks plainly of the Father, and again claims the Divine name, I AM"—WESLEY.

28. **When ye shall have lifted up**—"on the cross—**ye shall know**—and so many of them did—**that I AM**—God over all—**and that I do nothing of Myself**—being one with the Father"—WESLEY.

29. **The Father hath not left Me alone**—"never, from the moment I came into the world"—WESLEY.

After this many believed on Him.

Vers. 31–59.—"This conversation," says WESTCOTT, "lays open the essential differences between the men who would have given permanence to the old dispensation, and Christ who fulfilled it. The historical and the spiritual, the external and the moral, the temporal and the eternal, are placed side by side. The contrast is made more complete, because Abraham, and not Moses, is taken as the representative of Judaism. The successive pleas of the Jews give in a natural order the objections which they took to Christ's claims.

We are Abraham's seed. . . . How sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free? (ver. 33). **Abraham is our father** (ver. 39). **We have one Father, even God** (ver. 41). **Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil** (ver. 48). **Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, who died?** (ver. 53). **Hast Thou seen Abraham?** (ver. 57). The first three press the claims of inheritance, of kinsmanship, of religious privilege; the last three contain decisive judgments on Christ's character, on His authority, on His implied Divine nature. With the help of the clue thus given, it is more easy to follow the course of the argument. At the outset Christ promises freedom to those who honestly follow out an imperfect faith (ver. 31, *seq.*). **But we are free,** is the answer (ver. 33). Not spiritually (vers. 33–36); nor does descent carry with it religious likeness (vers. 37–42). Inability to hear Christ betrays and springs from a close affinity with the powers of evil (vers. 43–47). Such a judgment is sober and true (vers. 48–50). The word which Christ brings is life-giving (vers. 51–53); and He Himself was before Abraham (vers. 54–58)."

31. **Abide in My word.** The word is the element in which the Christian lives. He abides in the word, and the word abides in Him. In S. Paul's language the believer lives in Christ, and Christ in the believer.

The Word and the Disciples.—**If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples.** So Christ spoke to certain Jews who believed Him and did not believe in Him. They were convinced by what He said, but they retained their own prejudices and convictions. The Jews of ver. 31 are distinguished from the general company of ver. 30. Hence the emphasis is on "ye," and not as we generally place it—on the verb "abide." Our Lord recognises the first rude beginning of faith. He accepts the child's homage not less than the devotion of the aged saint who can say, "I have surrendered my will to God." The word of Christ is not simply an echo, a voice, as if it came from Him, and was outside Himself; His word is His own revelation.

32. **The truth**—"written in your hearts by the Spirit of God. **Shall make you free**—from guilt, sin, misery, Satan"—WESLEY.

The truth is no mere abstract speculation. It is living and personal, **Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,** is one of these great sayings of Jesus which the world has treasured. Know here is more than mere knowledge, it is the knowledge which begets sympathy and leads to obedience. Some things must be known to be loved; Divine things must be loved to be known. Knowledge grows from less to more, through acquaintance and fascination. The truth here is not so much the truth of the doctrine as the doctrine of the truth. "Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "Pilate said unto Him, Art Thou a king?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?" Christ is the Lord of the truth.

33. **They**—"the other Jews that were by, not those who believed, as appears by the whole tenor of the conversation. **We were never enslaved to any man**—a bold, notorious untruth; at that very time they were enslaved to the Romans"—WESLEY.

34. **Jesus answered**—"each branch of their objection, first concerning freedom, then concerning their being Abraham's offspring (ver. 37, etc.). **He that committeth sin is,** in fact, **the slave of sin**"—WESLEY.

Everyone that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin. "To commit sin is not simply to commit single isolated acts of sin, but to live a life of sin (1 John 3. 4, 8). The exact contrast is *doing the truth* (ch. 3. 21; 1 John 1. 6) on one side, and *doing righteousness* on the other (1 John 2. 29; 3. 7). Sin as a whole—complete failure, missing of the mark, in thought and deed—is set over against truth and righteousness"—WESTCOTT. Licence is not liberty. If a three-year-old child crept out of doors at night into the dark and endangered streets of the city, would that be liberty? If a young man or maiden walks along the dark paths of evil, and gives up the reins of self-government to wild passions, is that liberty? When the beautiful Madame Roland was led to the guillotine, she said, "O Liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name!" And when we see the wrecks of society, we say, "O Liberty, what miseries have been endured by misnaming thee!" Acts of sin become habits. Done once, twice, thrice voluntarily, they are done a fourth time, a fifth time, a sixth time, as if by a power outside ourselves. Instance—the drunkard, the libertine, the covetous, the tyrannical. To sign the pledge is well, but without a Divine hand be laid on the enfeebled will, the pledge will be broken. To moan and mourn over an impure imagination will not bring salvation. The sinner is gripped by his sin as by handcuffs of steel. Is there any freedom? **If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.** "The last discourse," says Dr. SCHAFF, "had made an impression on many, and brought them to the door of a superficial discipleship (ver. 30), while yet their heart was full of prejudice. These half-converts the Lord now addresses, and warns them not to be satisfied with a passing excitement of feeling, but to become true and steady disciples; then they would know the truth, and the truth would give them true freedom from the degrading bondage of sin and error. Knowledge appears here as the fruit of faith, and freedom as the

fruit of knowledge." HENGSTENBERG well says: "A difference of degree of knowledge is put in the form of knowledge itself as opposed to ignorance, because in comparison with future attainments of knowledge in the path of fidelity, the present knowledge would be quite insignificant. The truth is not merely something thought; it has taken flesh and blood in Christ, who says, *I am the Truth.* By a deeper and deeper knowing of Christ they would know also the truth, after which, as after freedom, every man who is not utterly lost has a deep constitutional longing, and this living truth would make them free from the bondage of sin and error; while the truth, considered merely as a thought of mind, would be utterly powerless. The same liberating effect, which in ver. 32 is ascribed to the truth, is in ver. 36 ascribed to Christ." Such a truth had, however, to force its way through the thick wall of obduracy born of pride of ancestry, pride of nationality, and pride of religion. **We are Abraham's seed—we were never in bondage to any man.** The Bible and the Talmud abound in proofs of the intense national arrogance with which the Jews regarded their religion and their descent.

I am the Truth—which of you convinceth Me of sin? If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Truth is not merely a conception, bread for the intellect. The heart has its own hunger. Christ is the personal truth. The heart craves a person—Christ, and Christ only; Christ fully. Christ always responds to that felt need. The Jews had a saying, "Thou wilt find no free man but him who is occupied in learning of the Law." Socrates spoke of vice as ignorance; the service of the truth is perfect freedom. The moral perfection of Christ has seldom been assailed, never successfully. He is the incarnation of holiness and truth, of freedom and life. His sinlessness is implied in His mission, in His affirmations, in His assumptions. It is declared by John the Baptist (Matt. 3. 14; ch. 1. 15; 3. 31) and the apostles (Acts 3. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 19; ch. 2. 22; 3. 18; 2 Cor. 5. 21; 1 John 2. 29; ch. 3. 5, 7; Heb. 4. 15; ch. 7. 26.) He never asked God's forgiveness for any thought or word or deed of His. He needed neither conversion nor reform. The Lord and Giver of Life had Divine life in Himself. "Truth is personal in Christ; Christ is universal in truth. Truth is the light, freedom the might of life. Truth is the enlightenment of the reason, liberty the redemption of the will. Truth is the harmony of the contrasts of life, having its central point in the life and work of Christ, its source in God, its ways in all fragments of knowledge; liberty, the harmony of man, in his true self-destination, in accordance with his abilities and the reality of God. Truth corresponds to revelation, liberty to redemption." Change and decay we see in all around. One changes not. Jesus has a dateless life.

THE LIBERTY OF SERVICE.—Ponder that noble paradox: "God's service is perfect freedom." It is a contradiction in words, yet it is a blessed harmony, as thousands can testify. How easy it is to serve those we love! What marvellous things have been done for us by another! Martyrs have died for those they loved, for the causes they adored. True liberty consists in giving up the will to God; doing what He commands; going where He bids; bearing what He appoints. The superiority of Christianity over other religions was thus illustrated by a converted Chinaman. A man had fallen into a deep pit, and was unable to move. Confucius passed by, and said, "Poor fellow, I am sorry for you. Why were you so foolish as to get in there? If you ever get out, don't get in again." Next came a Buddhist priest; he looked down and said, "Poor fellow, if you scramble up two-thirds of the way, I might reach down and help you out." Last of all, the Saviour came, reached entirely down to the bottom, lifted him up, set him on his feet, and said, **Go, and sin no more.** None who wish to be free from the tyranny of their passions will be left to their own devices. God will help them.

35. **And the slave abideth not in the house.** "All sinners shall be cast out of God's house, as the slave was out of Abraham's. **But I the Son abide** therein **for ever**"—WESLEY.

36. **If I therefore make you free, ye** "shall partake of the same privilege; being made free from all guilt and sin, ye shall abide in the house of God for ever"—WESLEY.

37. **I know that ye are Abraham's offspring.** "As to the other branch of your objection, **I know that ye are Abraham's offspring** after the flesh, but not in a spiritual sense. Ye are not followers of the faith of Abraham: My word hath no place in your hearts"—WESLEY.

41. **Ye do the deeds of your father.** "He is not named yet. But when they presumed to call God their Father, then he is expressly called the devil (ver. 44)"—WESLEY.

42. **I proceeded forth**—"as God—**and come**—as Christ"—WESLEY.

43. **Ye cannot**—"such is your stubbornness and pride—**hear**—receive, obey, **My word**—not being 'desirous to do My will,' ye cannot understand My doctrine (ch. 7. 17)"—WESLEY.

44. **He was a murderer**—"in inclination—**from the beginning**—of his becoming a devil. **And abode not in the truth**—commencing murderer and a liar at the same time. And certainly 'he' was 'a killer of men' (as the Greek word properly signifies) *from the beginning* of the world. For from the very creation he designed and contrived the ruin of men. **When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own**—for he is the proper parent, and, as it were, creator of it. See the origin, not only of lies, but of evil in general!"—WESLEY.

Ye are of your father. "A strong emphasis is on the pronoun in answer to the 'we' (ver. 41). Ye so-called children of Abraham, children of your father, were children of your true father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. **The devil.** (Ch. 13. 2; 1 John 3. 8, 10; Rev. 12. 9.) **A murderer from the beginning.** He brought death upon the race of man by his falsehood. (Rom. 5. 12.) **He stood not in the truth**—the Divine sum of all truth—**because there is no truth in him.** Nothing in him responded to the truth. The reference appears to be to the fall, and not to the death of Abel. (1 John 3. 12.) The death of Abel was only one manifestation of the ruin wrought by selfishness. Alford declares this passage to be one of the most decisive testimonies to the personality of Satan"—WESTCOTT.

45. **Because I speak the truth**—"which liars hate"—WESLEY.

46. **Which of you convicteth Me of sin?** "And is not My life as unreprovable as My doctrine? Does not My whole behaviour confirm the truth of what I teach?"—WESLEY.

Falsehood in action is sin. Falsehood within must show itself. The words suggest, rather than prove perhaps, the sinlessness of Jesus, and certainly they strongly confirm other testimonies.

47. **He that is of God**—"that either loves or fears Him—**heareth**—with joy and reverence—**God's words**—which I preach"—WESLEY.

He that is of God—the true child of God. (Comp. ch. 3. 31; 8. 23; 15. 19; 17. 14.)

48. **Say we not well**—"have we not just cause to say, **Thou art a Samaritan**—an enemy to our Church and nation—**and hast a devil**—art possessed by a proud and lying spirit?"—WESLEY.

Thou art a Samaritan. "There is bitter irony," says WESTCOTT, "in the original words, from the position of the pronoun at the end of the clause, which it is difficult to reproduce. Thou that boasteth great things of a kingdom and a fulfilment of the Law, after all art but a Samaritan."

49. **I honour My Father**—"I seek His honour only"—WESLEY.

50. **I seek not My own glory**—"that is, as I am the Messiah I consult not My own glory. I need not. For My Father consulteth it, and will pass sentence on you accordingly"—WESLEY.

51. **If a man keep My word.** "So will My Father consult My glory. We keep His doctrine by believing; His promises, by hoping; His commands, by obeying. **He shall never see death**—that is, death eternal. He shall live for ever. Hereby He proves that He was no Samaritan. For the Samaritans in general were Sadducees"—WESLEY.

If a man keep My word. "Keep is characteristic of S. John, and implies rather intent watching than safeguarding. It is the opposite of disregard. **Shall never see death.** Exact phrase in the original is not found elsewhere in New Testament, although the thought recurs. The sight here is that of long, steady, exhaustive vision. Life in S. John is present, or rather eternal; so death is not an evil, but a state, that selfish isolation which is the negation of life"—WESTCOTT.

52. **Taste of death.** From the image of the cup of suffering (ch. 18. 11; Rev. 18. 6; 14. 10; 16. 19). The "cup of death" is an Arabian image.

54. **If I honour Myself**—"referring to their words, 'Whom makest Thou Thyself?'"—WESLEY.

56. **My day.** The New Testament speaks of the day of the Son of Man. According to a Jewish tradition, Abraham saw the whole history of his descendants in the mysterious vision recorded in Gen. 15. 8, *et seq.*

56. **He saw it**—"by faith, in types, figures, and promises. As particularly in Melchisedec; in the appearance of Jehovah to him in the plains of Mamre (Gen. 18. 1); and in the promise, that in his 'seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.' Possibly he had likewise a peculiar revelation, either of Christ's first or second coming"—WESLEY.

57. **Thou art not yet fifty years old**—"at the most. Perhaps the gravity of our Lord's countenance, together with His afflictions and labours, might make Him appear older than He really was. **Hast Thou seen Abraham?**—which they justly supposed must have been, if Abraham had seen Him"—WESLEY.

58. **Before Abraham was, I AM**—"even from everlasting to everlasting. This is a direct answer to the objection of the Jews, and shows how much greater He was than Abraham"—WESLEY.

I am. A phrase marking timeless existence.

59. **Then took they up stones**—"to stone Him as a blasphemer. **But Jesus concealed Himself**—probably by becoming invisible. **And so passed on**—with the same ease as if none had been there"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Authorised Version reads: **Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth.** A connection is thus maintained between the stoning and the miracle. This view was upheld by most of the early interpreters, and has been espoused by many in more recent times. Our Revisers, however, read: **Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple. And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from his birth.** Here the connection, though possible,

is not necessary. It may have been on another day than the day of the stoning. The best biblical students are not agreed. Farrar says, "It is impossible to decide." Westcott affirms that ch. 9 begins abruptly like ch. 6. Trench considers that it is, on the whole, most probable that this work of grace and power crowned the day of that long debate with Jewish adversaries, which, beginning at ch. 7. 14, reaches to the end of ch. 10. Our Lord, then, as He passed from the Temple, to escape those stones which were the last arguments of His foes (ch. 8. 59), will have paused probably in the immediate neighbourhood of the Temple, where beggars, cripples, and other afflicted persons took their station (Acts 3. 2–10), to accomplish this miracle. What we may, perhaps, call the traditional interpretation, laid great stress upon the calmness of Jesus, and upon His intense devotion to His duty, seeing that having barely emerged from personal danger, He paused in self-forgetfulness to heal the man born blind. In this calmness and quiet devotion we recognise the Lord and Master. For practical purposes we may assume then that this miracle of mercy grew out of the occasion. Jesus had just quitted the Temple, at the entrance to which the blind beggar is seated. (Comp. Acts 3. 1–3.) We recognise the Lordship of Christ in His tranquillity amid outward excitement, and in His halt after the moment of most imminent peril of death, and while He was still in the vicinity of danger. The blind beggar meets His eye at the door. (Contrast the scene in Luke 18. 35–44.) One was a city scene, the other a country incident. In the quiet country the noise of the multitude awakens the attention of the blind man; in the crowded city there is nothing to announce a new arrival. In one case the blind man appeals to Christ; in the other, Christ heals without any appeal at all. Note the humanity and sweet reasonableness of the Son of Man—in a pre-eminent sense the Man amongst men. The sight of the needy, sightless, helpless man awakened compassion in the Infinite pity; awakened questioning in the curious and critical disciples, **Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?** According to Jewish ideas, afflictions were a Divine punishment for sin. Experience teaches that special diseases are hereditary. The Bible affirms that disease is the fruit of sin. The error of the disciples consisted in supposing that the connection between special sin and personal punishment could be traced. And the error was corrected by our Lord's reply, **Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.** This does not deny their sinfulness. All have sinned. But it does deny that the connection is so immediate as to be perceived by a critical questioner. Whatever the causes of the misfortune, the removal of it would show forth the glory of God. The Lord concerned Himself with the sufferer, the disciples occupied themselves with the sinner. The Jews were trained to regard special suffering as connected with special sin. We all instinctively associate sin with suffering, as seed-time with harvest. "Perhaps," says FARRAR, "the disciples supposed that the words of our Lord to the paralytic, whom He had healed at the pool of Bethesda, as well as to the paralytic at Capernaum, might seem to sanction such an impression. They asked, therefore, how this man came to be born blind. Could it be in consequence of the sins of his parents? If not, was there any way of supposing that it could have been for his own? The supposition in the former case seemed hard; in the latter, impossible. They were therefore perplexed. Into the unprofitable regions of such barren speculation our Lord refused to follow them, and He declined, as always, the tendency to infer, and to sit in judgment upon the sins of others. Neither the man's sins, He told them, nor those of his parents, had caused that lifelong affliction; but now, by means of it, the works of God should be made manifest."

2. **Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind**—"that is, Was it for his own sins, or for the sins of his parents? They suppose (as many of the Jews did, though without any ground from Scripture) that he might have sinned in a pre-existent state, before he came into the world"—WESLEY.

3. **Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents.** "It was not the manner of our Lord to answer any questions that were of no use but to gratify an idle curiosity. Therefore He determines nothing concerning this. The scope of His answer is, It was neither for any sin of his own, nor of his parents; but that the power of God might be displayed"—WESLEY.

4. **The night is coming**—"Christ is the Light. When the light is withdrawn, night comes. **When no man can work**—no man can do anything towards working out his salvation after this life is ended. Yet Christ can work always. But He was to work upon earth only during the **day** or season which was appointed for Him"—WESLEY.

5. **I am the Light of the World**—"I teach men inwardly by My Spirit, and outwardly by My preaching, what is the will of God; and I show them, by My example, how they must do it"—WESLEY.

Christ here compares Himself to the sun, the light of day, as in ch. 8. to the pillar of fire.

As is His wont, our Lord passes from the particular instance to the general law. **I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the World.** (But see R.V.). The contrast of day and night is the contrast of light and darkness, labour and rest, activity

and indolence, life and death. Every man has for his day's work his one day; when his night comes he can work no more. So, too, must Christ perform His great official day's work during His earthly pilgrimage. The day of life is irrecoverable. The great word of Christ's grew out of the incident, but it did not lead Him from His purpose of mercy. His thought expanded, but His heart still overshadowed the sufferer. He, the Light of the World, must for a short time longer dispel its darkness. Then He spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle, and smearing it on the blind man's eyes, bade him **Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.** The blind man went, washed, and was healed.

6. **He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.** This might almost have blinded a man that had sight. But what could it do towards curing the blind? It reminds us that God is no farther from the event when He works either with or without means, and that all the creatures are only that which His almighty operation makes them"—WESLEY.

7. **Go, wash at the pool of Siloam.** "Perhaps our Lord intended to make the miracle more taken notice of. For a crowd of people would naturally gather round Him, to observe the event of so strange a prescription. And it is exceeding probable, the guide who must have led him in traversing a great part of the city, would mention the errand he was going upon, and so call those who saw him to a greater attention. From the fountain of Siloam, which was without the walls of Jerusalem, a little stream flowed into the city, and was received in a kind of bason, near the Temple and called the Pool of Siloam. **Which is by interpretation, Sent**—and so was a type of the Messiah, who was 'sent' of God. **He went and washed, and came seeing**—he believed and obeyed, and found a blessing. Had he been wise in his own eyes, and reasoned like Naaman, on the impropriety of the means, he had justly been left in darkness. Lord, may our proud hearts be subdued to the methods of Thy recovering grace! May we leave Thee to choose how Thou wilt bestow favours, which it is our highest interest to receive on any terms"—WESLEY.

As to the use of means, TRENCH, with his usual beauty and suggestiveness, says: "A medicinal value was attributed in old time to saliva, above all for disorders in the eyes; it is similarly used in the case of another blind man (Mark 8. 23), and of one suffering from a defect in the organs of speech and hearing (Mark 7. 33); neither are we altogether without examples of a medicinal use of clay. Still we must not suppose that, *besides* His Divine power, the Lord *also* used natural remedies, or that these were more than conductors, not in themselves needful, but such as of His own free will He assumed, as channels to convey His grace. (Comp. 2 Kings 4. 41; Isa. 38. 21.) For other blind eyes He opened without employing any such means (Matt. 9. 27-30; 20. 30, 34). Probably the reasons which induced their use were ethical. It may have been a help to the weak faith of this man to find that something external was done. Nor may we leave out of sight a symbolic reference to Gen. 2. 7. The same creative Hand which wrought at the beginning is again at work. Christ ever made incidents illustrate principles, accidental occasions become the pivot on which moved eternal laws." **I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.** He said, as introductory to the sign-full miracle, which Dr. Brown calls a most interesting statement from the mouth of Christ; intimating (1) that He had a precise work to do upon earth, with every particular of it arranged and laid out to Him; (2) that all He did upon earth was just the works of God—particularly going about doing good, though not exclusively by miracles; (3) that each work had its precise time and place in His programme of instructions, so to speak; hence (4) that as His period for work had definite termination, so by letting any one service pass by its allotted time, the whole would be disarranged, marred, and driven beyond its destined period for completion; (5) that He acted ever under the impulse of these considerations, as man—the night cometh when no man can work. This familiar proverb is as true for the heavenly kingdom as for this present world. No man who has not done his work in the day can do it in the night. Now or never is a phrase of solemn significance, which the young especially must ponder. There is a striking Jewish saying, "The day is short, and the task is great, and the workmen are sluggish, and the reward is much, and the master of the house is urgent." **When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.** Clay and spittle were both believed in ancient times to possess curative properties. Why Christ used them is only a matter of conjecture. That they were totally inadequate to cure one blind from his birth was evident to the old-world observers. Hence they assumed that some moral object was contemplated, the object of arousing the popular observation more thoroughly by the man's going to the pool, or of putting the blind man's faith to the test, or of giving his faith, yet feeble, some outward action to which it might cling. As in other instances of healing, the look, the touch, the word of Jesus served as the medium of the Divine healing power. To the pool of Siloam some have attributed medicinal qualities. But the power was behind all second causes; it dwelt in the Cause of causes—the Almightiness of the Son of God. The sufferer believed,

obeyed, and was healed. What were the emotions of the healed man as he first gazed upon a world to which he had been blind so long? "It is noticeable," says Dr. ABBOTT, "that Christ never cured without giving the healed something to do, as a test of his faith and obedience. When He was asked to heal, the simple request served as an indication of faith; when, as here, He volunteered the cure, He seems always to have required some act as an evidence of faith."

11. **A man called Jesus**—"he seems to have been before totally ignorant of Him"—WESLEY.

But now the blind man found himself in the presence of the Light of the World. There is no instance in the Gospels of our Lord becoming tired of helping. Misery confronted Him, suffering lay in His path, need followed Him. It has been profoundly said that He came into the world on account of sin. It is also true that He came on account of sorrow. He was the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul. God at the creation said, "Let light be"; here Christ says, **Let there be light.**

14. "**Anointing the eyes** with any kind of medicine on the Sabbath was particularly forbidden by the tradition of the elders"—WESLEY.

When God selects unlikely means He shows that all the glory is His. Elisha bade Naaman wash in the Jordan seven times. "God is His own Designer as well as Interpreter." The Sabbath is to be a day of rest for oneself, but a day of toil in blessing others.

16. **This man is not of God**—"not sent of God. **How can a man that is a sinner**—that is, one living in wilful sin—**do such miracles?**"—WESLEY.

17. **What sayest thou of Him, for that He hath opened thine eyes**—"what inference dost thou draw herefrom?"—WESLEY.

These words, **of God** and **sinner,** describe all times. We are "for" or "against" the truth. This miracle and the raising of Lazarus were important links in the chain by which His enemies led Christ to the cross. Faith in the *Prophet* led the blind man rapidly to faith in the Son of God. (See ver. 35.) But these questioners will not see. The owl in the fable affirmed that *sunlight was of small account.* How intense was the malignity that would have compelled this healed man to deny his Benefactor! The foes of Christ cared nothing for the beggar's sufferings.

22. **He should be put out of the synagogue**—"that is, be excommunicated"—WESLEY.

An investigation was conducted by hostile judges. (Read vers. 18–22.) Opinions were heard and possibilities weighed, and the result is, that while the miracle is not comprehended, the healing cannot be denied. They laboured hard to prove that the man was not *born* blind, and failed. They strove to make him deny the Healer, and failed. Then they placed his person under anathema, making him an outcast and an alien. But they only sent him through the land proclaiming the faith they wanted to destroy. Christianity is a fact. It has wrought its miracles of grace in every age. They cannot be explained away.

27. **Are ye also**—"as well as I, at length convinced, and **willing to be His disciples?**"—WESLEY.

And so the suffering, sightless man becomes an apostle and confessor of Christ. A double miracle was wrought upon him—the opening of the eyes of the body and then of the eyes of the soul. He became more than a match for these official guides of the people. How many know the right, yet fear to do it.

29. **We know not whence He is**—"by what power and authority He does these things"—WESLEY.

They reviled him—"but the insult was intended for our Lord." They had heard His claims, and now deliberately reject Him. Night birds are blind in the day-time.

30. **The man answered**—"utterly illiterate as he was. And with what strength and clearness of reason! So had God opened the eyes of his understanding, as well as his bodily eyes. **Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye**—the teachers and guides of the people, should not know that a man who has wrought a miracle, the like of which was never heard of before, must be from heaven, sent by God"—WESLEY.

31. **We**—"even we of the populace—**know that God heareth not sinners**—not impenitent sinners, so as to answer their prayers in this manner. The honest courage of this man in adhering to the truth, though he knew the consequence (ver. 22), gives him claim to the title of a confessor"—WESLEY.

33. **He could do nothing**—"of this kind; nothing miraculous"—WESLEY.

And yet more miracles are recorded as to the blind than any other disease. *One* of palsy, *one* of dropsy, *two* of leprosy, *two* of fever. *Three* dead were raised, but *four* blind were restored to sight. This miracle strikes us with greater power—the only one born blind.

34. **Born in sins**—"and therefore, they supposed, born blind. **They cast him out**—of the synagogue; excommunicated him"—WESLEY.

(See verse 22.) Humility will learn anywhere. Apollos was taught by two tent-makers. But these rabbis are too proud to learn, too malignant to inquire calmly. The healed man becomes the first *confessor,* as S. James was the first *martyr.* Excommunication in latter times has proved a terrible ban. In the days of ignorance men thought the priests could shut the gates of heaven.

35. **Having found him**—"for He had sought him"—WESLEY.

36. **Who is He, that I may believe?** "This

implies some degree of faith already. He was ready to receive whatever Jesus said"—WESLEY.

37. **Lord, I believe.** "What an excellent spirit was this man of! of so deep and strong an understanding (as he had just shown, to the confusion of the Pharisees), and yet of so teachable a temper!"—WESLEY.

There is a pause between vers. 34 and 35. We know not how long Christ was searching. Place this by the side of the parable of the prodigal son, the story of Mary Magdalene, and the parable of the Good Shepherd, and you have a picture of the seeking Saviour, the One who died for men.

39. **For judgment am I come into the world**—"that is, The consequence of My coming will be, that by the just judgment of God, while the blind in body and soul receive their sight, they who boast they see will be given up to still greater blindness than before"—WESLEY.

The act He made a test of wavering. His texts were always concrete: they grew out of the occasion. They tried to destroy the light. Proud self-righteousness is a long way from the kingdom of God. Our Lord was always anticipating the day of judgment.

41. **If ye had been blind**—"invincibly ignorant; if ye had not had so many means of knowing—**ye would have had no sin**—comparatively to what ye have now. **But now ye say**—ye yourselves acknowledge—**we see; therefore your sin remaineth**—without excuse, without remedy"—WESLEY.

If they had been conscious of moral blindness they would have come to the Light of the World. They closed their eyes. The judgment hour of death will open the eyes of many. Will not that be too late?

THE TRIAL.—1. *The Neighbours.*—The first investigation is made formally and without prejudice by the common people. The answer of the man was short, sharp, and decisive, **I went, and washed, and received sight.** It is not unlike Cæsar's famous report, "I came, I saw, I conquered."

2. *The Pharisees.*—Between ver. 11 and ver. 35 the Evangelist tells how the beggar was brought before the Pharisees and cross-questioned.

3. *The Parents.*—With a prudence not divorced from a certain bluntness, they cast aside responsibility.

4. *Recalled.*—During the examination of the parents the man had been dismissed, he is now recalled, coaxed, and threatened.

5. *Jesus* heard that they had cast him out, and found him. He always seeks the outcasts. Recall the parables in Luke 15; the scene in the house of Simon (Luke 7. 36, *seq.*). Having found the man whom others spurned, our Lord drew him to Himself. (Read vers. 35–38.) Every miracle is an acted parable. We see in the healing of the blind man the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual truth that Christ brings the soul out of darkness into light. The Saviour is as prominent as the sufferer. Christ is the Light of heaven and earth's Fountain of salvation. Everyone who receives spiritual blessing confirms the New Testament revelation, and makes religion more real to the world. **One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.** No preaching equals these facts of a spiritual change. "The history of the man who was born blind," LANGE says, "is the portrait or type of the great and sudden conversion of an upright man; the portrait of a simple, wise, cheerful, vigorous, and valiant manner of belief; the portrait of a leading from belief in the living God of miracles to the personal Christ; the portrait of a Jewish inquisition, as of the impotence of hierarchic excommunication. Hierarchic excommunication may have been ultimately impotent, but it was for the present, doubtless, inconvenient, and something more." FARRAR styles this man "Christ's first confessor," and adds, "Christ too, in all probability had either at this, or some previous time, been placed under the ban of lesser excommunication, or exclusion from the synagogue; for we scarcely ever again read of His re-entering any of those synagogues which, during the earlier years of His ministry, had been His favourite places of teaching and resort." The mystery of suffering cannot be resolved until we reach the Land of the Silences. But we can see a little way into the awful deeps. Sorrow helps us to realise the Unseen; it awakens spiritual susceptibilities. The man who has never had an ache or a pain is apt to be too occupied with the world to see visions of God or sympathise with others' suffering. There is a world behind the world of pleasure and success—the world of pain. The thought of this may awaken personal gratitude, and relative sympathy. Why should *we* escape? we are not better than others. Suffering which softens some, hardens others. Why was suffering sent? We know not. It is here. We can minister to it. And when death comes to the sufferer's relief we can remind him that in the world to which he goes there will be no more pain. Do not ponder *the origin of evil*, strive to remove it.

CHAPTER X.

S. JOHN has only two parables—the parable of the Vine and the parable of the Good Shepherd. There was so much in the life of Jesus, that each Evangelist was able to find something new. Strictly speaking, S. John has no parables, these two instances being allegories, the only instance of allegory in the Bible. An allegory is a sentence or discourse in which the principal subject is described by another subject resembling it, and we are left to collect the intention of the writer or speaker by the resemblance. Here the Shepherd is Jesus Christ, the sheep His

followers. To the Jews, who first listened, the meaning would be simple. They had learned to think of God as the Shepherd of Israel. One of the most beautiful of the Psalms is the Song of the Divine Shepherd. Many of the prophets used the same similitude. When they went to the synagogue they heard the reader utter the rhythmic words: "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." And in the latter scriptures our Lord is described as the great Shepherd of the sheep (Heb. 13. 20), and as the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5. 4). But a chief shepherd implies under-shepherds. The prophets were so named; so are Christian ministers; so are Sunday-school teachers. And as the shepherds would have to account to the chief shepherd for the sheep intrusted to them, so will they. A reference to the shepherd-life of the East is necessary to clear conceptions of the images here used. In the evening the flock was led to an unroofed enclosure, surrounded with a low wall of stones—hence the **climbeth up.** Sometimes watch was kept at the door by a servant furnished with arms—**the porter.** In the morning comes the **shepherd,** is admitted by the porter, and calls the bell-wether. The particular animals in the flock had, and in our own day still have, their own names. **Robbers** often scaled the low wall by night. In France, a shepherd may be seen walking before his flock — not driving them as in England. A traveller in Greece met three shepherds with their flocks. One had under his care about six hundred and fifty sheep, another about seven hundred, and the third about seven hundred and fifty; in all, twenty-one hundred. These three flocks were put together. Each sheep had a separate name; it would not answer to any other name, nor to its own, unless called by its own shepherd. Each shepherd knew all his sheep, and also their names. If he saw that one was going in a dangerous direction, he called it, and it retraced its steps. If the way was narrow or steep he walked first, and the sheep followed. It was cold: the cold made the lambs tremble, and they could scarcely walk. The shepherds were clothed in large cloaks, gathered in at the waist by a girdle. They took these little lambs and put them in their bosoms. They took care not to stifle them, but they kept them warm. It is thus that Jesus did. "He shall gather the lambs with His arms," the Bible tells us, "and carry them in His bosom." Jesus has not left children to perish. Amongst the twenty-one hundred sheep, some were weak or fatigued. They could not walk much, especially in steep or miry places. Then the shepherds approached them, and placing their crooks beneath them, helped them to advance. They always treated them with the greatest tenderness. The Good Shepherd also does the same: He pities the weak, and assists them in their journey; He never abandons them: He makes them go out to find pasture.

1. **He that entereth not by the door**—"by Christ. He is the only lawful entrance. **Into the sheepfold**—the Church. **He is a thief and a robber**—in God's account. Such were all those teachers to whom our Lord had just been speaking"—WESLEY.

3. **To him the doorkeeper openeth.** 'Christ is considered as the Shepherd (ver. 11); as 'the door,' in the first and following verses. And as it is not unworthy of Christ to be styled 'the door,' by which both the sheep and the true pasture enter; so neither is it unworthy of God the Father to be styled 'the doorkeeper.' (See Acts 14. 27; 16. 14; Col. 4. 3; Rev. 3. 8.) **And the sheep hear his voice.** The circumstances that follow exactly agree with the customs of the ancient Eastern shepherds. They called their sheep by name, went before them, and the sheep followed them. So real Christians hear, listen to, understand, and obey, the voice of a shepherd whom Christ hath sent. And He counteth them His own, dearer than any friend or brother; calls, advises, directs, each 'by name, and leadeth them out in the paths of righteousness,' beside the waters of comfort"—WESLEY.

The sheep distinguish the voice of their shepherd from the cleverest imitations. In many flocks each sheep is named, and knows his name. An American, travelling in Syria, saw three shepherds bring their flocks to the same brook, and the flocks drank together. One shepherd arose and called out: "Men-ah! Men-ah!" (Arabic for "Follow me"). His sheep came out of the common herd and followed him. The next shepherd did the same, and his also came and followed him. They did not stop to count them. The American said to the remaining shepherd, "Give me your cloak, turban, and crook, and see if they won't follow me." So he arose and called out, "Men-ah! Men-ah!" but not a sheep moved, they knew not the voice of a stranger. Of the shepherd and his flock three things are stated—(1) the sheep know him (vers. 3, 4); (2) they follow him (vers. 4, 5); (3) they hear his voice (vers. 4–16). We are the sheep, and we may know by this test our relation to the Good Shepherd.

4. **He goeth before them**—"in all the ways of God; teaching them, in every point, by example as well as by precept. **And the sheep follow him**—they tread in his steps. **For they know his voice**—having the witness in themselves, that his words are 'the wisdom and the power of God.' Reader, art thou a shepherd of souls? Then answer to God,—Is it thus with thee and thy flock?"—WESLEY.

5. **They will not follow a stranger**—"one whom Christ hath not sent; who doth not answer the preceding description. Him 'they will not follow'—and who can constrain them

to it? **But will flee from him**—as from the plague. **For they know not the voice of strangers**—thay cannot relish it; it is harsh and grating to them. They find nothing of God therein"—WESLEY.

"Some sheep," Dr. THOMSON, the Oriental traveller, tells us, "always keep near the shepherd, and are his especial favourites. Each of them has a name to which it answers joyfully, and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such choice portions, which he gathers for that purpose. These are the contented, happy ones. They are in no danger of getting lost, or into mischief, nor do wild beasts or thieves come near them. The great body, however, are mere worldlings, intent upon their own pleasure or selfish interests; they run from bush to bush searching for variety or delicacies, and only now and then lift their heads to see where the shepherd is, or rather where the general *flock* is, lest they get so far away as to occasion remark in their little community, or rebuke from their keeper. Others, again, are restless and discontented, jumping into everybody's field, climbing into bushes, and even into leaning trees, whence they often fall and break their limbs. These cost the good shepherd incessant trouble. Then there are others incurably reckless, who stray far away, and are often utterly lost." Some of this description would apply to young men and maidens, if not old men and children. All we like sheep have gone astray. And astray is near akin to endangered. In the East the shepherds are well armed to defend their flocks against fierce wolves, leopards, and panthers, who prowl about the wild wadies, and frequently attack the sheep in the very presence of the shepherd. And when the thief and the robber come, the faithful shepherd has often to risk his life for the flock. Dr. THOMSON says, "I have seen more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest."

6. **They**—"the Pharisees, to whom our Lord more immediately spake, as appears from the close of the foregoing chapter"—WESLEY.

Christ stands out here expressly as the object and meaning of the parable. We must distinguish two acts: in the one Christ appears as the door of access to the Church and to God (vers. 1–10); in the other as the true Shepherd of the flock (vers. 11–18). Some have made a triple division. The Shepherd, in general (vers. 1–6); the door (vers. 7–10); the Good Shepherd (vers. 11–18). The division is not important: the truth is essential. Christ is all and in all. At first the lesson is involved in the simple story. Afterwards, the two chief facts are considered separately, the fold and the flock. In relation to the fold, Christ is the door; in relation to the flock, He is the Good Shepherd. Though all this admits of direct and important application to ministers, Sunday-school teachers, and others, who are faithful shepherds of the flock of God, it is, in its highest sense, true only of the great Shepherd of the sheep, who is here drawing His own portrait.

7. **I am the door.** "Christ is both the door, and the Shepherd, and all things"—WESLEY.

8. **Whosoever are come**—"independently of Me, assuming any part of My character, pretending, like your elders and rabbis, to a power over the consciences of men, attempting to make laws in the Church, and to teach their own traditions as the way of salvation: all those prophets and expounders of God's word, that enter not by the door of the sheepfold, but run before I have sent them by My Spirit. Our Lord seems in particular to speak of those that had undertaken this office since He began His ministry. **Are thieves**—stealing temporal profit to themselves. **And robbers**—plundering and murdering the sheep"—WESLEY.

9. **If any one**—"as a sheep—**enter in by Me**—through faith—**he shall be safe**—from the wolf, and from those murdering shepherds. **And shall go in and out**—shall continually attend on the shepherds whom I have sent. **And shall find pasture**—food for his soul in all circumstances"—WESLEY.

Jesus said, I am the door of the sheep.—Not the door of the fold; the door to the sheep; the door by which sheep alike and shepherd enter. Jesus identified Himself with us. **He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep is a thief and a robber** (ver. 1). **I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture.** Only through Christ can we enter the fold. "There is one God, one Mediator also between God and men." "Through Him we both have our access by one Spirit unto the Father." The fulness of the Christian life is here presented in its three elements—safety, liberty, and support: safety, "he shall be saved"; liberty, "he shall go in and go out"; support, "he shall find pasture." The old city of Troy had but one gate. Go round and round and round the city, and you could find no other. So to the strong and beautiful city of heaven there is but one gate, and no other. Do you know what it is? Christ says, "I am the door."

Christ, the door of the fold.—He is the ordained way to God. There is no door between the soul and Christ. The Incarnation is the world's salvation; the cross, the hope of the trusting spirit. He came to give thee more abundant life. In Him is life, and in this sense in Him only. So far as the under-shepherds are concerned, they exist only by His appointment. Whoever enters the Church to teach, except through Christ the door, the same is a thief and a robber.

10. **The thief cometh not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy**—"that is, nothing else can be the consequence of a shepherd's

coming, who does not 'enter in by Me'"—WESLEY.

But the hireling. "It is not the bare receiving hire, which denominates a man an hireling (for 'the labourer is worthy of his hire,' Jesus Christ Himself being the judge; yea, and 'the Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel'), but the loving hire—the loving the hire more than the work, the working for the sake of the hire. He is an hireling, who would not work, were it not for the hire; to whom this is the great, if not only, motive of working. O God! if a man who works only for hire is such a wretch, a mere thief and a robber, what is he who continually takes the hire, and yet does not work at all? **The wolf**—signifies any enemy who, by force or fraud, attacks the Christian's faith, liberty, or life. **So the wolf seizeth, and scattereth the flock**—he seizeth some, and scattereth the rest: the two ways of hurting the flock of Christ"—WESLEY.

13. **The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling**—"because he loves the hire, not the sheep"—WESLEY.

The thief cometh that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. (Comp. ver. 8.) **All that came before Me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.** The false Messiahs and the self-commissioned teachers sought gain and dominion. Christ came not to get, but to give. Life itself is not all. The heathen knew this. They said one asked the gods for immortality, but forgot to pray for freedom from the incidents of age. He lived, but feebleness and weariness made life a misery. Christ is the Life of life; the Life of the body, soul, and spirit. And the Divine life He gives is life abounding—more life and fuller. The work of the shepherd was to (1) feed the sheep, (2) guard them. This implied labour and danger. Our Lord refers to this when He speaks of laying down His life. If a shepherd sees a sheep or goat wandering, he calls it back; but should it still keep on its course, he hurls a stone from his sling so as to fall just beyond it, and frighten it back to the flock. The fidelity of Eastern shepherds to their flocks is proverbial. In some districts of Palestine they are exposed to the Bedouins—wandering Arabs, who live by plunder. The yell of the hyæna and the shriek of the jackal may, even at this day, be heard close to Jerusalem, and venomous snakes are common in the hot seasons. Besides these, the shepherd has to guard against huge birds of prey, which swoop down on a stray kid or lamb. There are no lions in Palestine now, and bears are only seen in the upper gorges of Lebanon. But the shepherds of to-day are as manly and faithful as David long ago, when he went out single-handed at one time after a lion, and at another after a bear, and delivered the lambs out of their mouths, catching the lion by the beard when it turned on him, and slaying it. The good shepherd still giveth his life for the sheep. Now read our Lord's beautiful words: **He that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.**

14. **I know My sheep**—"with a tender regard and special care. **And am known of Mine**—with an holy confidence and affection"—WESLEY.

15. **As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father**—"with such a knowledge as implies an inexpressible union. **And I lay down My life**—speaking of the present time; for His whole life was only a going unto death"—WESLEY.

I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. GEIKIE, condensing the thoughts of others, well illustrates this: "In the East, as in lonely mountainous districts of our own country, the relation of a shepherd to his flock is very close. The loneliness of shepherd life in these countries throws man and the creatures he tends so much together—binds them so to each other by a sense of companionship, and pleasures mutually enjoyed—that the Eastern shepherd, like the shepherd of our own mountains, forgets the distance between himself and his flock, and becomes their friend. We learn to love that for which we brave peril; and the dangers of torrents, of robbers, of wolves, of thirst, or of straying, endear the flock for which they are borne, to the shepherd." Herein lies the blessed mystery of the cross of Christ. **The hireling fleeth: the good shepherd**, if need be, **gives his life.** Jesus said, **I am the door.** Jesus said, **I am the Good Shepherd.** He came into the world to live among us, to live like us, and then to lay down His life for us. As ABBOTT says: "The good shepherd may or may not be called on to die for his sheep; but he always lays down his life for them. To lay down the life is to consecrate it, devote it to the flock, as a mother, who, living or dying, belongs to her children, surrenders herself to them. So we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3. 16), though comparatively few are ever called on to die for them. Wyclif and Luther as truly laid down their lives for the flock as Huss and Tyndale. The sacrifice of Christ consisted not merely in His death, but in His whole Incarnation. His entire life—from His advent to the grave—was laid down for His sheep." David encountered the lion and the bear when he kept his father's sheep. In the martyr ages, bishops and teachers died in defence of their helpless flocks. Jesus is the pattern, the inspirer, and the reward of all who resist, even unto blood.

16. **I have also other sheep**—"whom He

foreknew—**which are not of this fold**—not of the Jewish Church or nation, but Gentiles. **I must bring them likewise**—into My Church, the general assembly of those whose names are written in heaven. **And there shall be one flock**—(not one *fold*, a plain false print), no corrupt or divided flocks remaining—**and one Shepherd**—who laid down His life for the sheep, and will leave no hireling among them. This unity both of the flock and the shepherd shall be completed in its season. The shepherd shall bring all into one flock; and the whole flock shall hear the one Shepherd"—WESLEY.

17. **I lay down My life, that I may take it again**—"I cheerfully die to expiate the sins of men, to the end I may rise again for their justification"—WESLEY.

18. **I lay it down of Myself**—"by My own free act and deed. **I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again**—I have an original power and right of Myself, both to lay it down as a ransom, and to take it again, after full satisfaction is made for the sins of the whole world. **This commission have I received of My Father**—which I readily execute. He chiefly spoke of the Father, before His suffering; of His own glory, after it. Our Lord's receiving this commission, as Mediator, is not to be considered as the ground of His power to lay down and resume His life. For this He had in Himself, as having an original right to dispose thereof, antecedent to the Father's commission. But this commission was the reason why He thus used His power in laying down His life. He did it in obedience to His Father"—WESLEY.

Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice: and they shall become one flock, and one Shepherd. (Read also vers. 27-29.) Several flocks were often gathered into one fold. We are to be "one flock," the same relation to the "one Lord." But we shall not be gathered into one fold until we reach heaven. Now, the sheep are scattered. Jesus said, **Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring; and they shall hear My voice, and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd.** Not one fold, but one flock; many communions, but one Christ. It is said that Mr. Wesley once dreamt that he came to the gate of Paradise, and asked, "Have you any Churchmen here?" and they answered, "No." "Have you any Baptists here?" and they answered, "No." "Have you any Methodists here?" and they answered, "No." The dreamer was troubled: but he was not long left in pain, a voice from within said, "They are all Christians here."

Christ the Shepherd of the sheep.—He knows His own sheep by name. He calls them. He feeds them. He guides them. He protects them. He gives His life for them. He gives, not simply He gave. Life is still in Christ; from Christ; leading towards Christ. The little band of disciples gathered about Him when He spake this parable, expanded into a world-wide and all-embracing Church, one flock and one Shepherd. The two flocks, Jews and Gentiles, became one under the care of the one Shepherd. We look forward to the day when Christendom and heathendom will become one flock, owned by, fed by, the one Shepherd. The rule of Christ over human souls is an invisible rule; their acquaintanceship is mutual and blessedly real. Thrice wretched is he who turns away from the true Shepherd, and seeks guidance elsewhere.

19, 20. **A division arose.** Our word "schism." Alas, the divisions of Christendom have been a scandal and a weakness! The garment of our Lord was without seam, woven from the top throughout. So should the Church be.

21. **These are not the words**—"the word in the original takes in actions too"—WESLEY.

Madness o'erleaps itself. **A demon, a madman**—this Son of God who had wrought such wonders, spoken such words. He was also separating men.

22. **It was the Feast of the Dedication**—"instituted by Judas Maccabæus (1 Macc. 4. 59) when he purged and dedicated the altar and Temple after they had been polluted. So our Lord observed festivals, even of human appointment. Is it not, at least, innocent for us to do the same?"—WESLEY.

23. **In Solomon's portico.** "Josephus informs us, that when Solomon built the Temple, he filled up a part of the adjacent valley, and built a portico over it towards the east. This was a noble structure, supported by a wall four hundred cubits high; and continued even to the time of Albinus and Agrippa, which was several years after the death of Christ"—WESLEY.

"A greater than Solomon is here." He came to His own Temple, and the worshippers received Him not.

24. **Tell us plainly.** Were they sincere? He read their hearts.

26. **Ye do not believe, because ye are not of My sheep**—"because ye do not, will not, follow Me; because ye are proud, unholy, lovers of praise, lovers of the world, lovers of pleasures, not of God"—WESLEY.

27, 28, 29. **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me**, etc. "Our Lord still alludes to the discourse He had had before this festival. As if He had said, My sheep are those who (1) hear My voice by faith; (2) are known, that is, approved, by Me, as loving Me; and (3) follow Me, keep My commandments, with a believing, loving heart. And to those who (1) truly believe, observe three promises annexed to three conditions, **I give eternal life.** He does not say, I *will* give, but I *give:* for 'he that believeth *hath* everlasting life.' Those whom (2) I know truly

to love Me **shall never perish,** provided they abide in My love: (3) Those who follow Me, neither men nor devils can **pluck out of My hand. My Father who hath,** by an unchangeable decree, **given Me** all that believe, love, and obey, **is greater than all** in heaven or earth; **and none is able to pluck them out of His hand**"—WESLEY.

I give. What majesty, what consciousness of Divinity! He was never less than LORD. Eternally safe, because of God's *power.*

30. **I and the Father are one**—"not by consent of will only, but by unity of power, and consequently of nature. 'Are'—this word confutes Sabellius, proving the plurality of persons. 'One'—this word confutes Arius, proving the unity of nature in God. Never did any prophet before, from the beginning of the world, use any one expression of himself, which could possibly be so interpreted as this and other expressions were by all that heard our Lord speak. Therefore, if He was not God, He must have been the vilest of men"—WESLEY.

Such language must have startled the most stoical. "In this verse He calmly takes His seat upon the ETERNAL THRONE." Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ!

31. Their purpose to stone Him He met by calm argument (see ver. 23). Note the objection and answer (vers. 33, 34).

35. **If He**—"God—**called them gods, unto whom the word of God came**—that is, to whom God was then speaking. **And the Scripture cannot be broken**—that is, nothing which is written therein can be censured or rejected"—WESLEY.

36. **Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world.** "This sanctification, whereby He is essentially the Holy One of God, is mentioned as prior to His mission, and, together with it, implies, Christ was God in the highest sense, infinitely superior to that wherein those judges were so called"—WESLEY.

The argument is from the less to the greater. All prophets were sanctified, how much more the Son of God.

37, 38. He is content to be judged by His actions.

38. **That ye may know and believe.** "In some, a more exact knowledge precedes, in others, it follows, faith. **I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. I and the Father are one.** These two sentences illustrate each other"—WESLEY.

39, 40. **They sought to kill Him, but He quietly escaped.** A man is immortal until his work is done. His day's work was not yet finished. The hour for the cross had not yet come. He went to the neighbourhood of Jordan—the river of Palestine. **To the** desert **place where John baptized**—"and gave so honourable a testimony of Him"—WESLEY.

There the Baptist pointed Him out to the multitude. (Ch. 1. 36.) There the testimony was given by the opening heavens and the Divine voice.

41. **John did no miracle**—"an honour reserved for Him, whose forerunner he was"—WESLEY.

But all things that John spake of this man were true. The miracle worker had arrived. John the herald had spoken truly, and must soon retire.

42. **And many believed on Him there.** Divine sovereignty overruled their malice.

CHAPTER XI.

WE have no desire to multiply difficulties. But it is useless in these days of magazines to assume that our hearers are innocent of doubts, ignorant of denials that block the path of scriptural investigation. If ever mysterious truths were accepted without questioning, they are not in our time. Reverence need not be destroyed by rational inquiry, and faith has no fear of earnest research. *The miracles* of Jesus would be inexplicable if they were not the miracles *of Jesus.* "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" When we rightly see Jesus, we are prepared to listen with reverent attention to His teaching, and to watch with wise, calm wonder His deeds of mercy and mystery. The chapter begins with the statement that a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha. A few verses afterwards Jesus Christ is reported to have said, **This sickness is not unto death.** A moment or two later, Jesus said, **Lazarus is dead.** The apparent contradiction is explained by the miracle of the resurrection. These two words—"sick," "dead,"—are the keynotes of the narrative, and we all learn all too soon how they bridge the gulf of nearly two thousand years. Martha and Mary seem to be our sisters, because they went to the school of sorrow, in which school we are all learners. We all have to shake hands with pain; to walk sometimes with sorrow for our companion.

1. **One Lazarus.** "It is probable, Lazarus was younger than his sisters. Bethany is named the town of Mary and Martha, and Lazarus is mentioned after them (ver. 5). Ecclesiastical history informs us that Lazarus was now thirty years old, and that he lived thirty years after Christ's ascension"—WESLEY.

BETHANY.—Next only to the garden of agony, Bethany is the most sacred spot to stricken hearts. Bethlehem was the cradle of His infancy; Nazareth, the home of His childhood; Capernaum, the city of His manhood; Bethany, His retreat from the world. Jesus loved Lazarus and wept by his grave. Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha, owes everything to association with Jesus Christ. In itself only a wild mountain hamlet, the last collection of human habitations before the

desert hills which reach to Jericho. High in the distance are the Perræan mountains; the foreground is the deep descent to the Jordan valley. On the farther side of that dark abyss, Martha and Mary knew that Christ was abiding when they sent their messenger; up that long ascent they had often watched His approach—up that long ascent He came, when, outside the village, Martha and Mary met Him, and the Jews stood round weeping. Bethany is the home of the closing days of our Lord's life. From thence He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Here He slept His last six nights of His earthly life. From the vicinity of Bethany, on the wooded slopes beyond the ridges of Olivet, He ascended to heaven, still seen to the moment of His being parted from His disciples, and carried up from their steadfast gaze, blessing them with uplifted hands.

2. **It was that Mary who** afterwards **anointed**, etc. "She was more known than her elder sister Martha, and as such is named before her"—WESLEY.

THE HOUSEHOLD.—The family, so far as we know, consisted only of **Martha**, **Mary**, and their brother **Lazarus**. It has been conjectured that Martha was a widow, that her husband was, or had been, Simon the leper; and that Lazarus is identical with the gentle and holy rabbi of that name mentioned in the Talmud. These conjectures may or may not be true. From the Gospels we learn that they were a family in easy circumstances, and of sufficient dignity and position to excite considerable attention, not only in the little village of Bethany, but even in Jerusalem. "Martha" was the unchanged native equivalent of "lady." "Mary" and "Lazarus" were Greek forms of the old Hebrew "Miriam" and "Eleazar." Martha, the elder sister, has always stood in the sanctified imagination of the Church as the type of *activity*. Bustling, energetic, impulsive, she seized the realities of life with both hands earnestly—this "busy, motherly Martha." Mary was as still, sedate, and reflective as Martha was bustling and energetic. Mary is the type of *reflection*. Calm, meek, devotional, contemplative, she sat and listened to the words of Jesus. Of Lazarus we have but few notices. Judging from his sisters' intense grief, we may infer that he was a gentle, loving brother; hence he was so beloved. It is distinctly stated that Jesus loved Lazarus, and a friend of Jesus was worthy of friendship. Perchance Lazarus was cast into much the same human mould as that of his beloved Lord, and that the friendship of Jesus for him had been formed on the same principles on which friendships are formed still—a similarity of disposition, and some mental and moral resemblances. They may have been like-minded, so far as a fallible nature and the nature of a stainless humanity could be assimilated. Gentle, retiring, amiable, forgiving, heavenly-minded Lazarus—an imperfect and shadowy, but still a faithful, reflection and transcript of his Incarnate Lord!

3. **He whom Thou lovest is sick.** What a lovely portrait, and "a most womanly appeal to His known affection." "Note—(1) There are some followers of Jesus for whom He hath a special kindness." (Ch. 13. 23.) "(2) It is no new thing for those whom He loves to be sick. (3) It is a great blessing, when we are sick, to have those about us who will pray for us. (4) There is great encouragement to prayer for the sick, when we have reason to believe they are those Christ loves"—HENRY.

4. **This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God.** "The event of this sickness will not be death, in the usual sense of the word, a final separation of his soul and body, but a manifestation of the glorious power of God"—WESLEY.

This saying was "Sufficient for the moment as a preparation both for the sisters and the disciples"—MEYER.

7. **Let us go into Judea**—"from the country east of Jordan, whither He had retired some time before, when the Jews sought to stone Him. (Ch. 10. 39, 40)"—WESLEY.

8. The disciples objected to the journey, on the ground of danger. But He knew that His hour was not yet come.

9. **Are there not twelve hours in the day?** "The Jews always divided the space from sunrise to sunset, were the days longer or shorter, into twelve parts; so that the hours of their day were all the year the same in number, though much shorter in winter than in summer. **If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not**—as if He had said, So there is such a space, a determinate time, which God has allotted Me. During that time, I stumble not, amidst all the snares that are laid for Me. **Because he seeth the light of this world**—and so I see the light of God surrounding Me"—WESLEY.

10. **But if a man walk in the night**—"if he have not light from God; if His providence does no longer protect him"—WESLEY.

"The duty of the day is the day of the duty." A Christian must not move until God points out the way. Then, like Luther going to Worms, he feels all is well.

11. **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.** "This He spoke just when he died. 'Sleepeth'—such is the death of good men in the language of Heaven. But the disciples did not yet understand this language. And the slowness of our understanding makes the Scripture often descend to our barbarous manner of speaking"—WESLEY.

Those dying in their sleep angels kiss their breath away, say the rabbis. Remember the speaker is the PRINCE OF LIFE.

12. The disciples did not pierce beneath the surface of the word. Hence Christ speaks plainly (vers. 13–15).

16. **Thomas** in Hebrew, as **Didymus** in

Greek, signifies a twin. **With Him**—"with Jesus, whom he supposed the Jews would kill. It seems to be the language of despair"—WESLEY.

Thomas is despondent, but he will not forsake his Master. He will die with Him. Jesus did not hurry to the smitten home. Sorrow has lessons to teach that nothing else can. Endurance is a virtue. "Love and a cross," says GOSSNER, "man cannot make the two rhyme, but it is thus that God always rhymes." Jesus helped them in His way, not in theirs. Prayer is always answered; not always, perhaps seldom, after our own fashion and desires. Of course there is mystery in sickness and death. But where mystery is God is. As one has said, "Lazarus died, Judas Iscariot lived." True. What then? Let the earth keep silence. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Heaven will not be the home of the silences; earth is; but in heaven explanations will be given. "We shall know." Death is a comma, not a full stop. **He that believeth hath everlasting life.**

17. **He had been in the tomb four days.** If much is told, much left untold in this narrative of wonder, it leaves on the mind a symmetrical impression. Jesus, Martha, Mary, Thomas, Lazarus, the Jews, the mourners, are individual, natural, distinct. The miracle itself is *the last of a series.* The seven miracles of the ministry, which S. John relates, are the turning the water into wine, the healing of the nobleman's son, the healing of the impotent man at Bethesda, the miraculous feeding of five thousand, the walking on the sea, the opening of the eyes of one born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. The first and last of these miracles were wrought in the centre of the family, as if to give the hearthstone reconsecration, and bind together heaven and earth.

19. **Many of the Jews had come.** The high social position of the sisters attracted citizens of Jerusalem. "Possibly they wished to re-gain this family in His absence."

20. Hearing of His approach, **Martha went and met Him.**

Mary sat in the house—"probably not hearing what was said"—WESLEY.

Sorrow had lessons to teach the memorable sisters. Their Divine Friend led them through the gate of death to the house of life. He said, **Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep.** Men have always thrown a veil over the grave by calling death a sleep. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Jesus said, **I am the Resurrection and the Life.** The Book says, "In God we live"; Jesus says, **I am the Life.** When His hour was come, our Lord went to the house of sadness. Martha met Him; Mary waited for Him. Just like the different dispositions. One thought had occupied their minds, and now found expression, **If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.** Neither of the sisters says, "Our brother." **Grief is a lonely thing. It always says,** "My brother," "my mother," "my sister," "my father," "my friend" is dead.

21. **If Thou hadst been here.** "'If, if' is the universal cry of humanity. 'But, but' is the reply of Omnipotence. 'If,' *sinful*, when an expression of grief that will not be reconciled to the will of God. 'If,' *warranted*, when an expression of pain investigating the causes of suffering. 'If,' *salutary*, when an expression of humiliation before God on account of actual neglect"—LANGE.

22. **Whatsoever thou wilt ask, God will give it thee**—"so that she already believed He could raise him from the dead"—WESLEY.

23. **Thy brother shall rise again.** We are arrested by the simple grandeur of the scene. Lazarus was still her brother though death had separated them—

> "One family we dwell in Him,
> One Church, above, beneath,
> Though now divided by the stream,
> The narrow stream, of Death."

24. **I know that he shall rise again at the last day.** It is the resignation of disappointment. She half expected a present deliverance. Hence the answer which has been the world's comfort through two thousand years.

25. **I am the Resurrection**—"of the dead—**and the Life**—of the living. **He that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live**—in life everlasting"—WESLEY.

Note the emphasis on the **I.** It is I, the ever-living, life-giving Saviour.

26. **Whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.** "This great work is like the sun among the planets." Faith believes what transcends reason, while still believing that reason is not contradicted. Death is a loss if there be no hereafter, but a gain if there be. "To die is gain" (Phil. 1. 21). "Were there no other, Christ is Providence"—JEAN PAUL. "Were there no other, Christ is Resurrection"—STIER.

27–32. Mark the individual traits of character in the sisters. Mary uses the same words, half in reproach and half in expectation, which her sister had used. (See ver. 21.)

32. **She fell at His feet.** "This Martha had not done. So she makes amends for her slowness in coming"—WESLEY.

33. **He groaned.** "So He restrained His tears; so He stopped them soon after (ver. 38). **He troubled himself**—an expression amazingly elegant, and full of the highest propriety. For the affections of Jesus were not properly passions, but voluntary emotions, which were wholly in His own power. And this tender trouble, which He now voluntarily sustained, was full of the highest order and reason"—WESLEY.

The Greek Litany contains the sentence, "By Thine unknown agonies." Bethany, Gethsemane, and Calvary were not far apart.

34. **Where have ye laid Him?** Omniscience need not ask for information. But we cannot penetrate the mystery of the union of the human and Divine. "It was necessary," says Dr. PLUMMER, "to His work that He should know of Lazarus' death; it was not necessary that He should know how long he had been buried, nor where he had been buried. (Comp. 1. 48; 4. 18.) Similarly, S. Peter's prison-gate 'opens of its own accord'; Mary's house-door does not. (Acts 12. 10–16.)

35. **Jesus wept**—"out of sympathy with those who were in tears all around Him, as well as from a deep sense of the misery sin had brought upon human nature"—WESLEY.

It has been sometimes noted, that although Jesus is said to have wept, yet He was never, according to the record, seen to smile. The argument from silence is not a safe one. We can sympathise with the child who said in answer to this, Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me," and they would not come if He had not smiled. He who saw a beauty in every wayside flower, and heard a sermon on providence in the twitter of every tiny bird, was awake to the inspirations of life's joyous side. We know that He went to the marriage. We know, too, that He did not neglect the funeral. He may or may not have laughed. He did weep. He thirsted. He hungered. He groaned. He slept. He shed tears by the grave of Lazarus. He wept aloud over Jerusalem. Tears fell from Him at one time; at another He wept with the sorrow of lamentation. "The tears of the text," says DONNE, "are as a spring, a well, belonging to one household, the sisters of Lazarus. The tears over Jerusalem are as a river belonging to a whole country. The tears upon the cross are as the sea, belonging to the whole world." (Read Luke 19. 41; 22. 44; Heb. 5. 7.) **Jesus wept** is the shortest, and one of the most significant verses in the Bible.

36. **The Jews therefore said, Behold how He loved him.** "We thank you, O ye friends from Jerusalem! for this testimony to His *human tenderness*"—Dr. BROWN. Even a mother's love is but a reflection of the love of Christ. All our noblest faculties have dropped out of heaven.

37. **Could not this person have even caused that this man should not have died?**—"yet they never dreamed that He could raise him again. What a strange mixture of faith and unbelief!"—WESLEY.

38. **It was a cave**—"so Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their wives, except Rachel, were buried in the grave of Machpelah. (Gen. 49. 29–31.) These caves were commonly in rocks, which abounded in that country, either hollowed by nature, or hewn by art. And the entrance was shut up with a great stone, which sometimes had a monumental inscription"—WESLEY.

39. **Lord, by this time he stinketh.** "Thus did reason and faith struggle together"—WESLEY.

Occurring only in S. John, the question has been pressed over and over again, Why did not the other Evangelists notice so wonderful an exhibition of Divine power? This may be explained — (1) by the characters of the Gospels, each one of which being a particular view of the life of Jesus, uses only such material as suits its purpose; (2) by historical circumstances, which made it seem advisable to the Evangelists, who wrote earlier, to omit from their records the history, probably because it needlessly awakened fanaticism; (3) by the fact that the other Evangelists concerned themselves chiefly with our Lord's Galilean ministry. Not one of the Evangelists proposes to give an exhaustive account of the parables, discourses, and miracles of Jesus. If this miracle differs in degree, it does not differ in principle from the corresponding miracles recorded by the other writers. The raising of Jairus' daughter recorded in Matt. 9. 18, 19, 23–26; Mark 5. 22, 24, 33–43; Luke 8. 41, 42, 49–56; and the raising of the widow's son recorded by S. Luke only (ch. 7. 11–16). Thus the three awakenings have a natural gradation. The child on his deathbed in the hushed circle of friends; the youth on his bier in presence of a funeral procession of acquaintances; the man in his grave in the midst of the Jews. One miracle may seem to us greater, more marvellous than another, but power belongeth unto God. The Lord of the violet is the Lord of the rose. Small and great are relative to earth, they may not be relative to heaven. The question to ask is, Was the miracle worthy of Jesus Christ? Regard what He is, then mark what He says, and what He does. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. I am the Lord."

40. **Said I not.** "It appears by this, that Christ had said more to Martha than is before recorded"—WESLEY.

41. **Jesus lifted up His eyes**—"not as if He applied to His Father for assistance; there is not the least show of this. He wrought the miracle with an air of absolute sovereignty, as the Lord of life and death. But it was as if He had said, I thank Thee that, by the disposals of Thy providence, Thou hast granted My desire, in this remarkable opportunity of exerting My power, and showing forth Thy praise"—WESLEY.

Father, I thank Thee—"words expressing confidence, and referring probably to earlier prayers"—LANGE. It has been said that the next verse furnishes the *key* to all the Father's responses, and the proof that their *will is one.* It is also the interpretation our Lord put on His Divine deeds among men. (See ver. 42.)

43. **He cried with a loud voice**—"that all who were present might hear—**Lazarus, come forth.** Jesus called him out of the tomb as easily as if he had been not only alive, but awake also"—WESLEY.

44. **And he came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes**—"which were wrapped round each hand and each foot. **And his face was wrapped about with a napkin**—if the Jews buried as the Egyptians did, the face was not covered with it, but it only went round the forehead, and under the chin; so that he might easily see his way"—WESLEY.

The same Divine Voice that said "Be light," and light was, said, **Come forth,** and he came forth. S. John does not tell us what himself or the other apostles thought or said. The miracle is declared, but not detailed. We know that Lazarus rose; we know not how. We have no picture of the joy with which the sisters welcomed their brother. This is left to imagination—

> "When Lazarus left his charnel cave,
> And home to Mary's house returned;
> Was this demanded—if he yearned
> To hear her weeping by his grave:
>
> Where wert thou, brother, those four days?
> There lives no record of reply.
> Which, telling what it is to die,
> Had surely added praise to praise.
>
> From every house the neighbours met,
> The streets were filled with joyful sound,
> A solemn gladness even crown'd
> The purple brows of Olivet.
>
> Behold a man raised up by Christ!
> The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
> He told it not; or something seal'd
> The lips of that Evangelist."

Little is told us concerning another world, not enough to satisfy curiosity, but enough to sustain courage. "Death and his brother Sleep" have been locked hand in hand. Death is destroyed, and immortality revealed and assured in Jesus Christ.

45. **Many believed on Him.** "And so the Son of God was glorified, according to what our Lord had said (ver. 4)"—WESLEY.

46. **But some of them went to the Pharisees.** "What a dreadful confirmation of that weighty truth, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead'!"—WESLEY.

47. **What do we?**—"What? Believe. Yea, but death yields to the power of Christ sooner than infidelity"—WESLEY.

48. **All men will believe**—"and receive Him as the Messiah. **And** this will give such umbrage to **the Romans,** that they **will come and subvert both our place**—Temple—**and nation**—both our Church and State. Were they really afraid of this, or was it a fair colour only? Certainly it was no more; for they could not but know, that He that raised the dead was able to conquer the Romans"—WESLEY.

And so cowardice made them cruel.

49. **That year**—"that memorable year in which Christ was to die. It was the last and chief of Daniel's seventy weeks, the fortieth year before the destruction of Jerusalem, and was celebrated for various causes in the Jewish history. Therefore that year is so peculiarly mentioned. Caiaphas was the high priest both before and after it. **Ye know nothing**—he reproves their slow deliberations in so clear a case"—WESLEY.

50. **It is expedient, that one man should die for the people.** "So God overruled his tongue; for **he spake not of himself**—by his own spirit only, but by the spirit of prophecy. And thus he gave unawares as clear a testimony to the priestly, as Pilate did to the kingly, office of Christ"—WESLEY.

52. **That He might gather into one** Church **all the children of God that were scattered abroad**—"through all ages and nations"—WESLEY.

Caiaphas was unconsciously a prophet of God.

53. **They took counsel.** "The beginning of the end. The resurrection of Lazarus was connected with the death of Jesus"—WESLEY.

54. **Jesus walked no more openly.** "Note our Lord's prudence"—WESLEY.

55. **The Passover of the Jews was at hand.** "At this feast He became our Passover. Theirs was the shadow; ours the substance"—WESLEY.

Many went up, to purify themselves—"that they might remove all hindrances to their eating the Passover"—WESLEY.

56. **They sought therefore for Jesus.** His enemies *cannot* banish the thought of Him from their minds, and His friends *will not.*

57. **The chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment.** The high priest issued a decree of arrest, and, says HENGSTENBERG, "on this decree of arrest Judas acted, and may have silenced his conscience by pretending obedience to the Church."

CHAPTER XII.

Vers. 1-11. THE FEAST AT BETHANY.—1. **Six days before the Passover**—"namely, on the Sabbath; that which was called by the Jews 'the great Sabbath.' This whole week was anciently termed, 'The great and holy week.' **Jesus came**—from Ephraim. (Ch. 11. 54)"—WESLEY.

2. "It seems, Martha was a person of some figure, from the great respect which was paid to her and her sister, in visits and condolences on Lazarus' death, as well as from the costly ointment mentioned in the next verse. And probably it was at their house our Lord and His disciples lodged, when He returned from Jerusalem to Bethany, every evening of the last week of His life, upon which He was now entered"—WESLEY.

3. **Then Mary, taking a pound of ointment.** There were two persons who poured ointment on Christ; one, toward the beginning of His ministry, at or near Nain (Luke 7. 37, etc.), the other, six days before His last Passover, at Bethany, the account of which is given here, as well as by S. Matthew and S. Mark.

This narrative must be compared with the parallels in S. Matthew and S. Mark.

S. MATTHEW.	S. MARK.	S. JOHN.
Ye know that after two days the Passover cometh, and the Son of Man is delivered up. Then were gathered together the chief priests and the elders, and they took counsel to kill Him. But they said not during the feast. Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto Him a woman having an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment, and she poured it upon His head as He sat at meat.	Now after two days was the feast of the Passover, and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him. But they said not during the feast. And while He was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment, of spikenard, very costly, and she brake the cruse, and poured it over His head.	Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper there, and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with Him. Mary, therefore, took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

S. John gives the true note of time, six days before the Passover. S. Matthew and S. Mark disregard time for the sake of its connection with the treachery of Judas, which was called out by it. The Sabbath day was spent in quiet, in preparation for the tragic events that were near at hand, and on the evening they made Him a supper. Reverent fancy may compare the six days' work of creation with the six days' events that preceded the cross, the symbol of our redemption. S. Matthew and S. Mark say that this feast was given in the house of Simon the leper, a name which does not occur elsewhere. "Who, then, was this Simon the leper?" asks FARRAR. "That he was no longer a leper is of course certain, for otherwise he could not have been living in his own house, or mingling in general society. Had he then been cleansed by Jesus? and, if so, was this one cause of the profound belief in Him which prevailed in that little household, and of the tender affection with which they always welcomed Him? or again, was Simon now dead? We cannot answer these questions, nor are there sufficient data to enable us to decide whether he was the father of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, or, as some have conjectured, whether Martha was his widow, and the inheritor of his house." In an earlier period of our Lord's ministry a similar scene had been enacted. "One of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him. And He entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold a woman which was in the city, a sinner, and when she knew that He was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment." This was an unknown woman; she was a sinner, an outcast from society. Mary of Bethany has a name; was well known; greatly honoured; probably she had often heard of the deed of the unknown sister. Such a remarkable act had entered the tradition of the scattered disciples. Mary of Bethany is the central object of this picture. But others played an important and natural part. Martha served. And there is a beauty of service as well as of self-forgetfulness; of cost and endurance. There could have been no feast without Martha. **Lazarus sat at the table.** He had been the recipent of restored life. Wonder and gratitude and awe would be marked in his face and demeanour, as he sat in the presence of the Lord and Giver of Life.

4. **But one of His disciples saith, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?** Disciples complained. According to S. Matthew the disciples had indignation. According to S. Mark, some had indignation. According to S. John, Judas Iscariot one of His disciples. The murmuring originated with Judas, and became contagious. S. John records Christ's vindication of the womanly deed, but he does not mention the promise that the deed should be proclaimed in all the world. Mary anointed Christ in silence; His speech defended her, and in the records and memories and affections of Christendom she hath an earthly immortality, in Christ's presence an eternal reward.

5. **Three hundred pence.** "With the change in values, three hundred shillings would be nearer the mark"—WESLEY.

6. **The bag**—"in which the funds of the small company were kept. The word bare

may carry in itself the idea of misuse. Our Lord was sufficiently poor to receive the gifts of friends and followers"—WESLEY.

Let her alone, etc. (R.V. "Suffer her to keep it against the day of My burying." The simplest interpretation of this is, "Let her preserve what remains of it, not however to be sold for the poor, but to be used for My burial, which is near at hand"—C. B.

7. **Against the day of My burial**—"which now draws nigh"—WESLEY.

8. **For the poor always ye have with you; but Me ye have not always.** (Comp. Deut. 15. 11.) Every word of this verse occurs in the first two Gospels, though not quite in the same order. Here the emphasis is on "the poor," there on "always." The striking originality of the saying, and the large claim which it makes, are evidence of its origin from Him who spake as never man spake"—C. B. "It is remarkable," says WESTCOTT, "that the promise of the future record of the act of love (Matt. 26. 13; Mark 14. 9) is omitted by the one Evangelist who gives the name of the woman who showed this devotion to her Master."

9. **Much people** (R.V. "the common people"). Large caravans would be coming up from the Passover, and the news would quickly spread through the shifting crowds, who were already on the alert (ch. 11. 55) about Jesus, and were now anxious to see Lazarus"—C. B.

10. **The chief priests consulted how to kill Lazarus also.** "Here is the plain reason why the other Evangelists, who wrote while Lazarus was living, did not relate his story"—WESLEY.

Nothing is here said about the Pharisees (comp. ch. 11. 47, 57), who are, however, not necessarily excluded. **Put Lazarus also to death.** "These repeated references to the raising of Lazarus (ch. 11. 45, 47; 12. 1, 9, 10, 17) greatly strengthen the historical evidence for the miracle. They are quite inconsistent with the theory either of a misunderstanding or of deliberate fraud"—C. B.

11. **Many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.** Going away is indefinite, but it carries with it the idea of forsaking the priestly party. The open-minded were convinced of the reality of the miracle, and in some measure of the claims of Christ.

Vers. 14–19. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.—"In this incident again S. John's narrative is parallel to that of the Synoptists, but more exact in details. The Synoptists say nothing of the rest at Bethany; and it appears at first sight as if they placed the triumphal entry on the same day as the journey from Jericho. (Matt. 20. 29 ff. and parallels.) And yet in each case there is the sign of a break. (Matt. 21. 1; Luke 19. 29.) And the return to Bethany noticed by S. Mark (ch. 11. 11) suggests at least that village for the starting-point. The same passage of S. Mark shows that the expulsion of the traders took place on the next day. So that it may be reasonably conjectured that the entry did not take place till the afternoon, when the Lord had time only to regard the whole state of things without doing any special work"—WESTCOTT.

12. **The next day**—"on Sunday. **Who were come to the feast**—so that this multitude consisted chiefly of Galileans, not men of Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

"The whole narrative must be compared with Matt. 21. 1 ff.; Mark 11. 1 ff.; Luke 19. 29 ff., in order to gain a sense of the tumultuous excitement of the scene. At last Christ yielded, on the eve of the Passion, to the enthusiasm of the people (ch. 6. 15)"—WESTCOTT.

Vers. 13–15.—The road from Bethany to Jerusalem wound through rich plantations of palm trees, and fruit and olive gardens. Eastern gardens are not flower gardens, nor private gardens, but the orchards, vineyards, and fig enclosures round a town. The way would be crowded with pilgrims going to the feast. Amongst these would be many who had witnessed His miracles, and heard His discourses. The voice of ancient prophecy had declared that her King would come to Zion, meek and sitting on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass; and the hour for its fulfilment had now come. The triumphal entry was, therefore, the outcome of popular enthusiasm and national hope. The stream that followed Him from Bethany was met by a second, issuing from the Holy City, coming forth to meet the restorer of Lazarus. The two streams flowed together into Jerusalem. As they approached the descent of the Mount of Olives, their feelings found expression in the prophetic language of the Psalms, and with loud hosannas they glorified God, and uttered songs of welcome to the Son of David. Only a few Pharisees murmured. Soon the magnificent city, as if rising from an abyss, burst into view, with its background of gardens and suburbs, and its glorious Temple tower. The crowd uttered their emotions of gladness. He paused to weep. They saw only the outside of the glorious vision, the merely passing present. He beheld things as they are; and foresaw the future that had in it disgrace and doom.

15. **Fear not**—"for His meekness forbids fear, as well as the end of His coming"—WESLEY.

16. **These things His disciples understood not at first.** "The design of God's providential dispensations is seldom understood at first. We ought therefore to believe, though we understand not; and to give ourselves up to the Divine disposal. The great work of faith is, to embrace those things which 'we know not now,' but 'shall know hereafter.' **When He had been glorified**—at His ascension"—WESLEY.

17. **When He called Lazarus out of the tomb.** "How admirably does the apostle express as well the greatness of the miracle, as the facility with which it was wrought! The easiness of the Scripture style, on the most grand occurrences, is more sublime than all the pomp of orators"—WESLEY.

18. **The multitude went to meet Him, because they heard**—"from those who had seen the miracle. So in a little time both joined together to go before and to follow Him"—WESLEY.

19. **Perceive ye,** etc.—"the exaggerated expression of their chagrin, which in this Divine epic is brought into strong contrast with the triumph of Jesus. Compare a similar exaggeration from a similar cause (ch. 3. 26), 'All men come to Him.' After this confession of helplessness the Pharisees appear no more alone; the reckless hierarchy help them on to the catastrophe"—C. B.

Vers. 20-33. THE PETITION OF THE GREEKS AND THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.—20. **Certain Greeks**—"a prelude of the Gentile Church. That these were circumcised does not appear: but they **came up** on purpose **to worship** the God of Israel"—WESLEY.

"The word is translated 'Gentiles' (ch. 7. 35). Care must be taken to distinguish in the New Testament between *Hellenes* or 'Greeks,' *i.e.* born Gentiles, who may or may not have become either Jewish proselytes or Christian converts, and *Hellenistæ* or 'Grecians,' as our Bible renders the word, *i.e.* Jews who spoke Greek and not Aramaic. Neither word occurs in the Synoptists. *Hellenes* are mentioned here (ch. 7. 35), and frequently in the Acts and in S. Paul's Epistles. *Hellenistæ* are mentioned only in Acts 6. 1 and 9. 29"—C. B.

21. **These came to Philip, of Bethsaida in Galilee.** "Perhaps they used to lodge there, in their journey to Jerusalem; or they might believe a Galilean would be more ready to serve them herein than a Jew. **Sir**—they spake to Him as to one they were little acquainted with. **We would see Jesus**—a modest request. They could scarce expect that He would now have time to talk with them"—WESLEY.

Wise men from the East came to the cradle of King Jesus; these Greeks from the West came to His cross. These "Emissaries from the West" opened the kingdom of heaven to Gentile believers. They were the first in that long line which reaches to our own time. We Westerns came to Jesus that day in the person of these representative men. An interesting tradition, but one on which we can lay no stress, says that they were emissaries from Abgarus V., king of Edessa, who, having been made aware of the miracles of Jesus and of the dangers to which He was now exposed, sent these emissaries to offer Him an asylum in His dominions. The legend adds, that though Jesus declined the offer, He rewarded the faith of Abgarus by writing him a letter, and healing him of a sickness. The tradition may be worthless, but the underlying truth is important. Hospitals, asylums, and ministries to the sick are born of the spirit which Christ infused into society. Indeed, the continental nations call the hospital "the Guest-house of God." S. John does not tell us who these Greeks were, why they sought Jesus, or why they came to Philip in particular. The unwritten in the Bible is very significant. Philip did not at once prefer their request to Jesus. He went and consulted his fellow-townsman, Andrew. He was unwilling without further counsel to grant or to refuse the strange request. Andrew and Philip appear in connection again (ch. 1. 44; 6. 7, 8; comp. Mark 3. 18). Andrew takes the first place. Perhaps at the time our Lord was in the interior of the Temple, into which no Gentiles dared to intrude. The Court of the Gentiles was divided from the inner square of the Temple by a stone fence, bearing, upon pillars placed at regular distances, the following words in Greek and Latin: "No alien must pass within the fence around the Temple and the Court. If anyone be caught doing so, he must blame himself for the death that will follow." The words, "We would see Jesus," spoken by the Greeks to Philip, have been regarded as an expression of the desire of the whole heathen world. It is the great missionary text. The world needs Jesus Christ, its Lord, who will one day come to be its Judge, and to that need He responds in His cross.

23. **The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified**—"with the Father, and in the sight of every creature. But He must suffer first"—WESLEY.

The hour is come. At first Christ's coming was predicted. Ages waited. Then came the fulness of the time. Now the "hour" of His agony approaches; but He speaks of His glorification. After Good Friday comes Easter Day; after the night, the morning; after storm, sunshine; after winter, spring. There is another meaning implied rather than expressed. The Western world was now seeking Him. His own nation was rejecting Him, but the world was His. He made it; He redeemed it. His glorification at the right hand of God could not, however, be reached except by the way of the cross. For Him, as for us, was it true, "No cross, no crown." He illustrates by the parable of the grain of wheat. Life springs out of decay and death. Nature is a great preacher of spiritual truth. All that is best and truest and noblest in the life of eighteen centuries comes to us through Jesus Christ. Men perish; times change; dynasties are overthrown—but Christ is King of the ages.

24. **Unless a grain of wheat die.** "The late resurrection of Lazarus gave our Lord a natural occasion of speaking on this subject.

And, agreeable to His infinite knowledge, He singles out, from among so many thousands of seeds, almost the only one that dies in the earth; and which, therefore, was an exceeding proper similitude, peculiarly adapted to the purpose for which He uses it. The like is not to be found in any other grain, except millet and the large bean"—WESLEY.

These guests at the feast were to see the cross succeeding the triumphal entry, and He presents to their reflection beforehand the solution of the mystery, and a relief to its offence, in His words concerning the grain of wheat. Thus in a way in which no teacher had ever spoken He explains to them His system. The disciples with the Greeks, and the Greeks with the disciples, expect after the Hosanna still greater things, His universal glorification; and the Lord tells them, "Yea, verily the hour is come, but My glorification will proceed differently from your thoughts of it. As King, rather as the Saviour of all people, shall I soon be glorified, and deeper still, as the Son of Man, the universal and central Man, the Second Adam. But only by My dying will the Divine energy of My humanity be set free, and exerted for all mankind"—STIER. The civilisation of the Greeks has been defined as uniting in itself these characteristics—high perfection of the intellect and imagination, displaying itself in all the various forms of art and poetry, literature and philosophy — restless activity of mind and body, finding its exercise in athletic games, or in subtle disputations—love of the beautiful, quick perception, indefatigable inquiry. Death to them was a horror, a disharmony. Christ shows them that fuller life comes through death, glory through sacrifice, first by an example from nature (ver. 24), showing how the world is a great parable of God; then in the experience of discipleship (ver. 25); and lastly, and above all, in the Lord's own work (ver. 27). The Greek fear of death was reproved by *the annual miracle of the grain of wheat.* Selfishness is unworthy and unwise. We lose by retaining, and gain by surrendering.

25. **He that loveth his life**—"more than the will of God—**shall lose it**—eternally—**and he that hateth his life**—in comparison of the will of God—**shall preserve it**"—WESLEY.

26. **Let him follow Me**—"by hating his life. **And where I am**—in heaven. **If any man serve Me** thus, **him will the Father honour**"—WESLEY.

27. **Now is My soul troubled.** "He had various foretastes of His passion. **And what shall I say**—not, What shall I choose? For His heart was fixed in choosing the will of His Father; but He laboured for utterance. The two following clauses, **Save Me from this hour**—**for this cause I came**—into the world; 'for' the sake of **this hour** of suffering, seems to have glanced through His mind in one moment. But human language could not so express it"—WESLEY.

28. **Father, glorify Thy name**—"whatever I suffer. Now the trouble was over. **I have glorified it**—by Thy entrance into this hour. **And I will glorify it**—by Thy passing through it"—WESLEY.

These words have been interpreted in two different modes—(1) Shall I say, Father, save Me from this hour? as if it were a reflective monologue, instead of an address to the Father. (2) A veritable prayer, the prelude of Gethsemane. Our Lord lets us know His feelings. Pain, tears, blood, death, were to Him what they are to us. Compare the prayer in Gethsemane (Matt. 26. 39), and the prayers in the Psalms (ch. 6. 3, 4; 25. 17; 40. 12, 13; 69. 1). Gladness and sadness are interwoven. In the triumphal entry here; after the high priestly prayer; at the Supper (ch. 13. 31). Something more than momentary shrinking from death was in this great tragic grief of Jesus. The place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Let us be thankful that He came so near to us.

29. **The multitude who stood, and heard**—"a sound, but not the distinct words. In the most glorious revelations there may remain something obscure, to exercise our faith. **Said it thundered**—thunder did frequently attend a voice from heaven. Perhaps it did so now"—WESLEY.

The voice of God declares that the sublime prayer which had resulted from so great a conflict was answered. Divine voices are only intelligible to those who have susceptibility. Some regard it as natural; some as a Divine voice speaking in uninterpretable words; a few understood its message. A Divine voice accredited to Jesus at the Baptism and Transfiguration. The New Testament has its voices. (Acts 9. 7; 10. 13, 15.) Josephus records them. The "take read" of S. Augustine's conversion is a not remote parallel. In sublime anticipation the Saviour beholds the setting up of His mediatorial kingdom (vers. 31–36). All things shall gravitate to Christ.

31. **Now**—"this moment. And from this moment Christ thirsted more than ever, till His baptism was accomplished. **Is the judgment of this world** — that is, Now is the judgment given concerning it, whose it shall be. **Now shall the prince of this world**—Satan, who had gained possession of it by sin and death—**be cast out**—that is, judged, condemned, 'cast out' of his possession, and out of the bounds of Christ's kingdom"—WESLEY.

32. **Lifted up from the earth.** "This is an Hebraism, which signifies dying. Death in general is all that it usually imported; but our Lord made use of this phrase, rather than others that were equivalent, because it so well suited the particular manner of His death. **I will draw all men**—Gentiles, as well as Jews.

And those who follow My drawings Satan shall not be able to keep"—WESLEY.

THE ATTRACTION OF THE CROSS.—**I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself.** Here is the triumph of defeat. If we could have stood around the cross we should have heard the bystanders say, "All is over; the end has come." That end was a beginning. We may not judge by appearances. Defeat is often victory; failure success. He was lifted up upon the cross, before the gaze of Jew, Greek, and Roman. He rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. For nigh upon two thousand years He has been lifted up before the gaze of the world. His drawing is an attraction, but not an enforcement. As in the days of His flesh, so now He has to say, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." "Christ, by His cross, will draw to Himself, not only men of all classes and climes, but all human interests and resources, all commerce, all enterprise, all art and science, all wealth and power in the world"—JACOBUS. Wyclif was burnt, and his ashes carried by the river to the sea. Wesley was persecuted, and by many rejected. To-day we enjoy the liberty Wyclif bought so dear; and twenty-five millions revere Wesley's name. Thus the truth wins its widening way. The crucified Saviour is to be the world's Lord and Master.

34. **How sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up**—"how can these things be reconciled? Very easily. He first dies, and then **abideth for ever. Who is this Son of Man**—Is He the Christ?"—WESLEY.

35. **Then Jesus said to them** — "not answering them directly, but exhorting them to improve what they had heard already. **The light**—I and My doctrine"—WESLEY.

36. **The children of light**—"the children of God; wise, holy, happy"—WESLEY.

Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not. Now is sometimes now or never. Within forty years of the time our Lord spake these words, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. Thus, literally, was the word fulfilled. But it is always fulfilling itself in the moral and spiritual life of men and women, girls and boys. He who would walk in darkness cannot really do so; he stumbles and falls. Progress is possible while the light shines. He came as a Light into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light. Light streams from Christ upon the road we have to travel. The rays of the Sun of Righteousness fall on the path. How impressive are these farewell words of Jesus!

37. **Though He had done so many miracles before them**—"so that they could not but see them"—WESLEY.

38. **The arm of the Lord**—"the power of God, manifested by Christ, in His preaching, miracles, and work of redemption"—WESLEY.

39. **Therefore** now **they could not believe**—"that is, by the just judgment of God, for their obstinacy and wilful resistance of the truth, they were at length so left to the hardness of their hearts, that neither the miracles nor doctrine of our Lord could make any impression upon them"—WESLEY.

41. **When he saw His glory**—"Christ's. (Isa. 6. 1, etc.) And it is there expressly said to be the glory of the Lord, Jehovah, the supreme God"—WESLEY.

44. **Jesus said with a loud voice.** "This which follows to the end of the chapter is, with S. John, the epilogue of our Lord's public discourses, and a kind of recapitulation of them. **Believeth not on Me** — not on Me alone. **But** also **on Him that sent Me**—because the Father hath sent the Son, and because He and the Father are one"—WESLEY.

45. **And he that seeth Me**—"by the eye of faith"—WESLEY.

47. **I judge him not**—"not now. **For I am not** now **come to judge the world**—see, Christ **came to save** even them that finally perish! Even these are a part of that world which He lived and died to save"—WESLEY.

50. **His commandment**—"kept — **is life everlasting**—that is, the way to it, and the beginning of it"—WESLEY.

"With this the first main division of the Gospel ends. *Christ's revelation of* HIMSELF *to the world in His ministry* is concluded. The Evangelist has set before us the *testimony* to the Christ, the *work* of the Christ, and the *judgment* respecting the work, which has ended in a conflict, and the conflict has reached a climax. We have reached the beginning of the end."

CHAPTER XIII.

"WE now enter upon the second main division of the Gospel. The Evangelist has given us thus far a *narrative* of Christ's ministry, presented to us in a series of typical scenes—ch. 1. 18–12. 50. He goes on to set forth the *issues* of Christ's ministry (chaps. 13–20.). The last chapter (ch. 21) forms the *epilogue*, balancing the first eighteen verses (ch. 1. 1–18), which form the *prologue*. The second main division of the Gospel, like the first, falls into three parts — (1) the inner glorification of Christ in His last discourses (chaps. 13–17); (2) the outer glorification of Christ in His passion (ch. 18, 19); (3) the victory completed in the Resurrection (ch. 20)"—C. B.

1. **Before the feast**—"namely, on Wednesday in the Paschal week. **Having loved His own**—His apostles. **Loved them to the end**—of His life"—WESLEY.

The narrative of the feet-washing is a page of contrasts.

DEATH CONFRONTS THE PRINCE OF LIFE.—**Jesus knew that His hour was come**—"the years of the ministry were closing. The Prince of Life must die. Strange that the Author and Giver of life should lay down His own. **His hour was come.** There are hours in our

lives in which life is more intense: weeks, months, years of experience are crowded in them. We call them turning-points, decisive moments. When thinking and purposing are over, these must merge themselves into action or endurance, perhaps both. Such hours were those our Lord was now spending. Yet they did not stand alone. Ages prepared the way for the coming of Christ. The years of the ministry were closing. The Author and Giver of life will lay down His own. **The hour was come that He should depart.** Death to Him was only a departure. What's in a name? Much. Everything. A name is a thing revealed. It requires genius to pierce to the heart of a thing, and name it rightly. We are all tyrannised over by names. Death is a word that comes to us clothed with terror. Departure is tenderer, more soothing. In itself death is but the angel of God, sealing up the springs of life. But we are less fearful when this angel changes his name. Moses the lawgiver and Elijah the reformer, who came down from heaven to talk of our Saviour's going there, spake of His exodus, His departure. From this world to the next He Himself journeyed. "The exact word used," says WESTCOTT, "is only used here in this connection. It marks the transference from one sphere to another. (Comp. 1 John 3. 14.) Death for Christ, and in Him for the Christian, is not an interruption of being, but a change of the mode of being, a going to the Father, to His Father and ours." On the cross He robed Himself to enter the King's presence-chamber.

2. **Having now**—"probably now first"—WESLEY.

3. **Jesus knowing**—"though conscious of His own greatness, thus humbled Himself"—WESLEY.

To all outward appearance Christ was destitute. He had no emblems of royalty. Satan, Judas, and the priests were plotting against Him, and about to take His life. But Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, knew that He was come from God, and going back to God. So strangely were misery and majesty, poverty and princeliness, united.

4. **Layeth aside His garments**—"that part of them which would have hindered Him"—WESLEY.

5. **Into the basin.** "A large vessel was usually placed for this very purpose, wherever the Jews supped"—WESLEY.

This is the contrast of contrasts—the Divine Christ abasing Himself to the lowest servitude. The disciples had striven, perhaps were now at that moment striving, as to who should be the greatest. An act of service was to be performed. They will not acknowledge that one is greater than the rest; but He will bow to the lowliest ministry.

6. **Coming to Simon Peter**—this disciple, with a too ready tongue obeying a too hasty purpose, said, **Thou shalt never wash my feet.** His question was prompted by *reverence*—**Dost Thou wash my feet?** The emphasis is on Thou and my—Thou whom we have called "Master and "Lord."

7. **What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.** "We do not now know perfectly any of His works, either of creation, providence, or grace. It is enough that we can love and obey Him 'now,' and that we shall 'know hereafter'"—WESLEY.

8. **If I wash thee not**—"if thou dost not submit to My will—**thou hast no part with Me:** thou art not My disciple. In a more general sense, it may mean, If I do not wash thee in My blood, and purify thee by My Spirit, thou canst have no communion with Me, nor any share in the blessings of My kingdom"—WESLEY.

S. Peter's resolve was marked by self-will. **Thou shalt never wash my feet. Never, Peter?** Christ echoes the word in a tone of regretful tenderness—**Never, do you say? But if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.** A light flashed across his mind, and he cried, **Lord, if that be so, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.** This prayer was marked by *hastiness*. Before he did not reach Christ's purpose, now he goes beyond it. It is the same spirit which prompted him to pray, "Bid me come unto Thee on the water," and to boast, "Though all men should be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." That *never!* His biography might be written around that word.

9. **Lord, not my feet only.** "How fain would man be wiser than God! Yet this was well-meant, though ignorant earnestness"—WESLEY.

10. And so ye, having been already cleansed, need **only to wash** your **feet**—"that is, to walk holy and undefiled"—WESLEY.

11. **For He knew him that should betray Him.** For *Judas* the feet-washing was a test. Around that table he gathered. He submitted to the washing, although his heart was full of evil thoughts. May we not read the act as Judas' last chance? A superhuman love was saying to him, "Will you be thus treacherous? Mark how I am submitting Myself. This is a slave's work I do for you. Why that treachery? Judas, abandon it."

12. **So when He had washed their feet.** For *all the disciples* the feet-washing was a gentle rebuke. **Ye call Me Master and Lord, and so I am; but I have washed your feet. I, the Master, am doing what you, the servants, have refused to do.**

13. **Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well.** He was never less than Lord. Though He humbled Himself, he had the mien of a king.

14. **Ye ought also to wash one another's feet.** "And why did they not? Why do we not read of any one apostle ever washing the

feet of any other? Because they understood their Lord better. They knew He never designed that this should be literally taken. He designed to teach them the great lesson of humble love, as well as to confer inward purity upon them. And hereby He teaches us (1) in every possible way to assist each other in attaining that purity; (2) to wash each other's feet, by performing all sorts of good offices to each other, even those of the lowest kind, when opportunity serves, and the necessity of any calls for them"—WESLEY.

15. **I have given you an example.** S. Peter forgot the command in the hour of denial, but he recalled it in the hour of restoration. And long afterwards in his letters he specially emphasised the doctrine of *Christ our Example.* "I have given you an example." Discover it, ponder it, follow it.

16. **The servant is not greater than his lord**—"nor therefore ought to think much of either doing or suffering the same things"—WESLEY.

18. **I speak not of you all**—"when I call you happy. **I know** one of **you twelve whom I have chosen**—will betray Me, whereby that scripture will be fulfilled"—WESLEY.

20. "And I put My own honour upon you My ambassadors"—WESLEY.

21. **One of you**—"the speaking thus indefinitely at first was profitable to them all"—WESLEY.

One of you shall betray Me. Our Lord closed the lesson of the feet-washing by the pregnant sentence, **If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.** He knew that all would not do them. (Read vers. 18–22.) The choice here spoken of, WESTCOTT declares to be the historical choice to the apostolate. On the mystery of the choice of such a man as Judas he well says, "There are two groups of explanations of the choice of Judas. The first group regards the choice from the side of the Divine counsel; the second from the side of the human call. (1) It is said that he was chosen in obedience to God's will, in order that he might betray Christ. (2) It is said again by some that Christ, in making His choice o Judas, did not read the inmost depths and issues of his character; and by others, that seeing all distinctly even to the end, He kept him near to Himself as one trusted equally with the others of the Twelve. The question raised by the second group leads us at once to the final mystery of the union of perfect Divinity and perfect humanity in the one person of the Lord. And here the records of the Gospel lead us to believe that the Lord had perfect human knowledge, realised in a human way, and therefore limited in some sense, and separable in consciousness from His perfect Divine omniscience. He knew the thoughts of men also—latent in their manifold possibilities, and yet, as man, not in their actual future manifestations. These two final mysteries are not created by the fact that Judas was chosen by Christ among the Twelve. They really underlie all religious life, and indeed all finite life. Thus we may be content to have this concrete mystery as an example—the most terrible example—of the issues of the two fundamental mysteries of human existence."

But His knowledge of the certainties of the future did not prevent the trouble of His spirit from breaking forth. David's nearest friend became his bitterest foe. And in the sacred circle of the Twelve there was a betrayer. His grief-stirred soul felt this, as only His sensitive nature could.

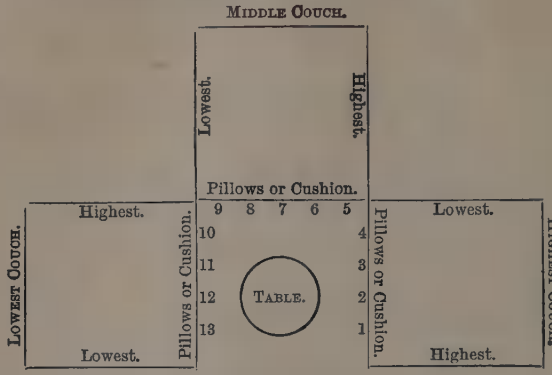
22. **The disciples looked one on another, doubting.** The words give a vivid reminiscence of the actual scene.

23. **There was lying in the bosom of Jesus**—"that is, sitting next to Him at table. This phrase only expresses the then customary posture at meals, where the guests all leaned sideways on couches. And each was said to 'lie on the bosom' of him who was placed next above him. **One of the disciples, whom Jesus loved**—S. John avoids with great care the expressly naming himself. Perhaps our Lord now gave him the first proof of His peculiar love, by disclosing this secret to him"—WESLEY.

As the New Testament so often refers to the Eastern posture at meals, it will be well to illustrate through the eye, the organ that best receives and retains mental impressions. We copy from GEIKIE (who acknowledges that he has taken the diagram from the *Dictionary of Antiquities*) both text and illustration.

As the head of the group, Jesus naturally took the first place on the highest couch—the outermost, on the right of the hollow square—His face towards the second place; His feet outwards. Resting His left elbow and side on a cushion the whole breadth of the couch, His right hand was thus free, while the apostle next Him reclined so that his head lay, as it were, in his Master's bosom. It had been the custom in ancient times to eat the Passover standing, but the rabbis had changed it for the Gentile practice of reclining. It was like slaves, they said, to eat standing, and as Israel was not a race of slaves, but free men, they should eat the feast reclining; a flattery so pleasing to Jewish pride, that even the poorest adopted the new mode. But this Jewish pride in the apostles, made still more fierce by selfish ambition, in prospect of the political glory they still perversely hoped for, could ill brook to take a lower place than others. It was a grave matter for them, as for the Pharisees, who should have the highest seats; for, in their delusion, they assumed that it might affect their future position in the messianic state, to be founded, as they dreamed, presently. So the strife that had broken out on the other side of Jericho, once more distressed their

Master, and He could only still it by repeating the keen rebuke He then gave them. "In My kingdom," said He, "to be humble is to be great: the lowest is, in it, the highest."



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begin, and girding Himself with a towel, like a slave, after laying aside His upper garments, He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples. Farrar has tried to picture the disciples around the table. Jesus, after having washed their feet, resumed His garments, and once more reclined at the meal. As He leaned there on His left elbow, John lay at His right, with his head quite close to Jesus' breast. Next to John, and at the top of the next mat or cushion, would probably be his brother James; and, as we infer from the few details of the meal, at the left of Jesus lay the Man of Kerioth, who may either have thrust himself into that position, or who, as the holder of the common purse, occupied a place of some prominence among the little band. It seems probable that Peter's place was at the top of the next mat, and at the left of Judas. And as the meal began, Jesus taught them what His act had meant.

24. **Simon Peter**—"behind Jesus, who lay between them"—WESLEY.

25. **Leaning**—"down, and so asking Him privately"—WESLEY.

26. **Jesus answered**—"in his ear. So careful was He not to offend (if it had been possible) even Judas himself. **The sop**—which He took up while He was speaking. **He giveth it to Judas**—and probably the other disciples thought Judas peculiarly happy. But when even this instance of our Lord's tenderness could not move him, then Satan took full possession"—WESLEY.

27. **What thou doest, do quickly.** "This is not a permission, much less a command. It is only as if He had said, If thou art determined to do it, why dost thou delay? hereby showing Judas that he could not be hid, and No more was needed; the struggle now would rather be for the lowest place. But He did not confine Himself to words. Rising from the couch, when the supper was just about to expressing His own readiness to suffer"—WESLEY.

28. **None knew why He said this**—"save John and Judas"—WESLEY.

30. **He went out**—"to the chief priests. But he returned afterward, and was with them when they ate the Passover (Matt. 26. 20), though not at the Lord's Supper"—WESLEY.

The die was cast. S. John delineates the stages of Judas' growing obduracy. Into the darkness of the night Judas went out. An outward symbol of the inner darkness of his disturbed life. After his departure our Lord spoke of the victory that lay on the other side the approaching conflict. Indeed, He regards the victory as already gained. "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

31. **Jesus saith**—"namely, the next day, on Thursday, in the morning. Here the scene, as it were, is opened for the discourse which is continued in the following chapters. **Now**—while I speak this. **The Son of Man is glorified**—being fully entered into His glorious work of redemption. This evidently relates to the glory which belongs to His suffering in so holy and victorious a manner"—WESLEY.

33. **Little children.** Nowhere else in the Gospels does Christ use this expression of tender affection. S. John appears never to have forgotten it. It occurs frequently in his First Epistle. **Ye cannot come**—"not yet; being not yet ripe for it"—WESLEY.

34. **A new commandment**—"not new in itself, but new in the school of Christ; for He had never before taught it them expressly. Likewise new as to the degree of it, **as I have loved you**"—WESLEY.

An anecdote of S. John's extreme old age,

preserved by Jerome, is a striking comment on the commandment. It is related that the disciples of the apostle, wearied by his constant repetition of the words, "Little children, love one another," which was all he said when he was carried into their assembly, asked him why he always said this. "Because," he replied, "it is the Lord's commandment; and, if it only be fulfilled, it is enough."

35. **By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples.** "This is the true 'Note of the Church': not miracles, not formularies, not numbers, but *love*"—PLUMMER.

36. **Peter saith, Lord, whither goest Thou?** "S. Peter seems to have thought that Christ being rejected by the Jews would go to some other part of the earth to erect His throne, where He might reign without disturbance, according to the gross notions he had of Christ's kingdom. **Thou canst not follow Me now**—but Peter would not believe Him. And he did follow Him (ch 18. 15); but it was 'afar off,' and not without great loss"—WESLEY.

Where apostles fell, we may well stand with tremulous watchfulness.

37. **Why cannot I follow Thee even now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake** (R.V. "even now . . . life for Thee"). His courage was careless; his loyal devotion was proud of itself. Impetuous to a fault he required sternness, lest he should fall in the hour of danger. "Why cannot I follow Thee?" He knew not how nearly akin his strength was to weakness, his courage to cowardice. But his Lord did. (Read ver. 38.)

38. **The cock shall not have crowed**—"that is, cock-crowing shall not be over—**till thou hast denied Me thrice.** His threefold denial was thrice foretold: first, at the time mentioned here; secondly, at that mentioned by S. Luke; lastly, at that recorded by S. Matthew and S. Mark"—WESLEY.

The exact repetition of S. Peter's words gives a singular pathos to our Lord's reply.

CHAPTER XIV.

"We now come to that portion of the evangelical history which we may with propriety call its Holy of Holies. Our Evangelist, like a consecrated priest, alone opens up to us the view into this sanctuary. It is the record of the last moments spent by the Lord in the midst of His disciples before His passion, when words full of heavenly thought flowed from His sacred lips. All that His heart, glowing with love, had still to say to His friends, was compressed into this short season. At first (from ch. 13. 31) the intercourse took the form of conversation; sitting at the table, they talked familiarly together. But when (ch. 14. 31) the repast was finished, the language of Christ assumed a loftier strain; the disciples, assembled around their Master, listened to the words of life, and seldom spoke a word (only ch. 16. 17, 29). At length in the Redeemer's sublime intercessory prayer, His full soul was poured forth in express petitions to His heavenly Father on behalf of those who were His own. It is a peculiarity of these last chapters that they treat almost exclusively of the most profound relations—as that of the Son to the Father, and of both to the Spirit, that of Christ to the Church, and of the Church to the world. Moreover, a considerable portion of these sublime communications surpassed the point of view to which the disciples had at that time attained; hence the Redeemer frequently repeats the same sentiments, in order to impress them more deeply upon their minds, and, because of what they still did not understand, points them to the Holy Spirit, who would remind them of all His sayings, and lead them into all truth (ch. 14. 26)"—OLSHAUSEN. Such an evening, remarks Schaff, occurred but once in the world's history; the fulness of eternity itself was condensed into a few fleeting moments. The farewell words of our Lord (ch. 13. 31–17. 26) stand alone even in the Book of books. The nearest approach to them we may find in the parting song and blessing of Moses (Deut. 32 and 33), and the farewell address of S. Paul to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20. 17, *seq.*). We have here more than words, we have things, verities, acts of infinite love going out from God, and going into the hearts of men. The main idea is—I in the Father, the Father in Me; I in the believers, the believers in Me, sharing My glory; or, as BENGEL puts it, "I came from My Father in heaven, I fulfilled His will on earth; I now return to My Father."

1. **Let not your heart be troubled**—"at My departure. **Believe**—this is the sum of all His discourse, which is urged, till they did believe (ch. 16. 30); and then our Lord prays and departs"—WESLEY.

Perhaps no page of the Bible has been read so often or by so many myriads of people as this. Trouble is so common; and our Lord gives us here a revelation concerning heaven. But before speaking of the next world He comforts us on the way thither. The humbled Peter is speechless and troubled, but the Lord, the great Consoler, utters His words, **Let not your heart be troubled.** Probably He would have spoken some such word with reference to Judas' defection, had not Peter's forwardness interrupted Him. Trust in God, trust in Me. The Revised Version reads as does the Authorised Version, **Ye believe in God, believe also in Me**, but inserts in *margin*, **believe in God.** "The words," says WESTCOTT, "are ambiguous, and can be interpreted in four ways, according as the verbs are taken severally, as in the indicative or imperative mood—(1) *Ye believe in God*, and if this be true, as assuredly it is, *ye believe also in Me;* (2) *Ye believe in God, believe also in Me;* (3) *Believe in God, and*

(as a natural consequence) *ye believe in Me;* (4) *Believe in God, and believe in Me.* The double imperative (4) suits the context best. Believe in God, and let your faith find in Me One on whom it can rest. Faith is the armour and consolation of the soul and of the life." "Jesus saw that His disciples were troubled (1) by the treachery of one of their number; (2) by the foretold fall of another; (3) by the number and intense hatred of their enemies; (4) by the knowledge that soon their Master would be taken away; (5) by their disappointment that the kingdom of God was not set up in the open and glorious way they expected; (6) by their dread of the unknown future"—PELOUBET. Hence their Divine Friend and ours said, **Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me.** Jesus makes God known to us.

2. **In My Father's house are many mansions**—"enough to receive both the holy angels, and your predecessors in the faith, and all that now believe, and a great multitude which no man can number"—WESLEY.

How simple and childlike is this picture! The idea of Father, house, home, rest, and room for all have entered into the world's language. The Old Testament teaches us that the Lord's throne is in heaven; and in our daily prayer, we say, "Our Father, who art in heaven." There are many mansions in the house on high. Nothing is said about their differing in dignity and beauty. There may be degrees of happiness hereafter, but such are neither expressed nor implied here. What is said is that there are *many* mansions; there is room enough for all. Heaven is both a place and a state. It is where God dwells, and manifests Himself. There we shall have a Father's love and care; every want will be supplied; sorrow and pain will be unknown; coldness and bitterness cannot enter there. The New Testament tells us more of what heaven is not than of what it is. Jesus Christ, who came from heaven, and knew so much, said so little. We have to wait until we get there, and then we shall say of it what the Queen of Sheba said of the wisdom of Solomon, "The half hath not been told us."

4. **The way**—"of faith, holiness, sufferings"—WESLEY.

5. **Thomas saith**—"taking Him in a gross sense"—WESLEY.

"The revelation which the Lord had given of the purpose of His approaching separation creates questioning among the disciples. How can they have any true conception of the way of which He spoke? How can they have any true knowledge of the Father? The first question is proposed by S. Thomas (vers. 5–7); and the second by S. Philip (vers. 8–11)"—WESTCOTT. **How know we the way?** the question shortly reads in the R.V. The answer of the Lord is more comprehensive than the question of the disciples; the question would have been answered by the simple, **I am the way.** But that required explanation, and the great Teacher was always pitiful towards the weakness and ignorance of the inquirers. THOMAS À KEMPIS beautifully paraphrases the reply of Jesus, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Without the Way, there is no going; without the Truth, there is no knowing; without the Life, there is no living. I am the Way, which thou oughtest to follow; the Truth, which thou oughtest to trust; the Life, which thou oughtest to hope for. I am the inviolable Way, the infallible Truth, the endless Life."

6. "To the question concerning the way, He answers, **I am the Way**; to the question concerning knowledge, he answers, **I am the Truth**; to the question whither, **I am the Life.** The first is treated of in this verse; the second (vers. 7–17); the third (ver. 18, etc.)"—WESLEY.

Christ went to prepare a place for us, but we must be prepared for the place. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. The heavenly life begins now. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." A poor man told Rowland Hill that the way to heaven was short, easy, and simple; comprising only three steps —"*Out* of self, *unto* Christ, *into* glory."

7. **Ye have known**—"ye have begun to know Him"—WESLEY.

8. **Philip.** For the fourth and last time S. Philip appears in this Gospel. Thrice he is mentioned in close connection with S. Andrew. Our Lord's answer silenced S. Thomas. S. Philip seizes on the last word, and seeks a more unquestionable vision. He will have the sight of the body rather than the sight of the soul. Possibly he thought of the vision once vouchsafed to Moses (Ex. 33. 17, *seq.*). The answer is direct and pathetic. **Dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.** No man hath seen God except as revealed. He is revealed in His Son. The wondrous Life is the all-sufficing revelation. The Son is the visible face of the Father. Let us set Christ before our eyes. To see God is blessedness; to see Christ is to see God; to see God in Christ is heaven. Look for no sign in the heavens or on the earth. Say with the Greeks of an earlier chapter, "We would see Jesus."

10. **I am in the Father. The words that I speak,** etc.—"that is, I am one with the Father in essence, in speaking, and in acting"—WESLEY.

11. **Believe Me**—"on My own word. **Because I am**—God. **The works.** This respects not merely the miracles themselves, but His sovereign, God-like way of performing them"—WESLEY.

"The English obliterates the fact that Christ now turns from S. Philip and addresses all the eleven: **Believe** is plural, not singular. **You have been with Me long enough to believe**

what I say; but if not, at any rate believe what I do. My words need no credentials; but if credentials are demanded, there are My works. He had said the same, somewhat more severely to the Jews (ch. 10. 37, 38); and He repeats it much more severely in reference to the Jews (ch. 15. 22-24.) Note the progress from 'believe Me' here to 'believe *on* Me' in the next verse; the one grows out of the other"—C. B.

12. **Greater works than these shall he do**—"so one apostle wrought miracles merely by his shadow (Acts 5. 15); another by 'handkerchiefs carried from his body' (Acts 19. 12); and all spake with various tongues. But the converting one sinner is a greater work than all these. **Because I go to My Father**—to send you the Holy Ghost"—WESLEY

13. **Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name.** "(Comp. ch. 15. 16; 16. 23, 24, 26.) Anything that can rightly be asked in His name will be granted; there is no other limit. By 'in My name' is not, of course, meant the mere using the formula, 'through Jesus Christ.' Rather it means praying and working as Christ's representatives, in the same spirit in which Christ prayed and worked—'Not My will, but Thine, be done.' Prayers for other ends than this are excluded; not that it is said that they will not be granted, but there is no promise that they will. (Comp. 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9)"—C. B.

15. **If ye love Me, keep My commandments.** "Immediately after faith He exhorts to love and good works"—WESLEY.

16. **And I will ask the Father.** "Ver. 21 shows the connection between this and the preceding verses. **And He will give you another Comforter.** The Greek word signifies also an advocate, instructor, or encourager. **Another**—for Christ Himself was one. **To remain with you for ever**—with you, and your followers in faith to the end of the world"—WESLEY.

17. **The Spirit of truth**—"who has, reveals, testifies, and defends the truth as it is in Jesus. **Whom the world**—all who do not love or fear God—**cannot receive, because it seeth Him not**—having no spiritual sense, no internal eye, to discern Him; nor, consequently, **knoweth Him. He shall be in you**—as a constant guest. Your bodies and souls shall be temples of the Holy Ghost dwelling in you"—WESLEY.

18. **I will not leave you orphans**—"a word that is elegantly applied to those who have lost any dear friend. **I come to you.** What was certainly and speedily to be, our Lord speaks of as if it were already"—WESLEY.

THE ABIDING COMFORTER.—The word translated **Comforter** is employed five times in the New Testament; four times in this Gospel, by Christ, of the Holy Spirit (ch. 14. 16, 26; 15. 26; 16. 7); once in the First Epistle, by John of Christ (ch. 2. 1). Our translators render it "Comforter" in the Gospel and "Advocate" in the Epistle. Its meaning is the same as our "Counsel," one who pleads for another at a court of law. Our English word "Comforter" originally meant not only "Consoler" as now, but also "Strengthener" and "Supporter." Our Lord was about to leave His disciples; but they were not to be left like orphan children. The Spirit of God, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, was to come and dwell in the Church for ever. Our Lord's last words echoed the first, "Peace I leave with you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled."

19. **But ye see Me**—"that is, ye shall certainly see Me. **Because I live, ye shall live also**—because I am the Living One in My Divine nature, and shall rise again in My human nature, and live for ever in heaven; therefore, ye shall live the life of faith and love on earth, and hereafter the life of glory"—WESLEY.

20. **At that day**—"when ye see Me after My resurrection; but more eminently at the day of Pentecost"—WESLEY.

21. **He that hath My commandments**—"written in his heart. **I will manifest Myself to him**—more abundantly"—WESLEY.

22. **Judas.** Excluding the genealogies of Jesus Christ we have six persons of this name in the New Testament—(1) This Judas, who was the *son* of a certain James (Luke 6. 16; Acts 1. 13); he is commonly identified with Lebbæus or Thaddæus. (2) Judas Iscariot. (3) The brother of Jesus Christ, and of James, Joses, and Simon (Matt. 13. 55; Mark 6. 3). (4) Judas, surnamed Barsabbas (Acts 15. 22, 27, 32.) (5) Judas of Galilee (Acts 5. 37). (6) Judas of Damascus (Acts 9. 11). Of these six the third is probably the author of the Epistle; so that this remark is the only thing recorded in the New Testament of Judas the apostle as distinct from the other apostles. Nor is anything really known of him from other sources"—C. B. There is no record of Iscariot having ever asked Jesus a single question. **"Manifest Thyself.** The word 'manifest' rouses Judas just as the word 'see' roused S. Philip (ver. 7). Both go wrong from the same cause, inability to see the spiritual meaning of Christ's words, but they go wrong in different ways. S. Philip wishes for a vision of the Father, a theophany, a suitable inauguration of the Messiah's kingdom. Judas supposes, with the rest of his countrymen, that the manifestation of the Messiah means a bodily appearance in glory before the whole world, to judge the Gentiles and restore the kingdom to the Jews. Once more we have the Jewish point of view given with convincing precision. (Comp. ch. 7. 4)"—C. B.

23. **Jesus answered.** Our Lord's answers are wider in meaning and range than their first application.

Jesus answered—"because ye love and obey Me, and they do not, therefore I will

reveal Myself to you, and not to them. **My Father will love him.** The more any man loves and obeys, the more God will love him. **And we will come to him, and make our abode with him**—which implies such a large manifestation of the Divine presence and love, that the former, in justification, is as nothing in comparison of it"—WESLEY.

"The thought of God dwelling among His people was familiar to every Jew. (Ex. 25. 8; 29. 45; Zech. 2. 10, etc.) This is a thought far beyond that—God dwelling in the heart of the individual; and later Jewish philosophy had attained to this also. But the united indwelling of the Father and the Son, by means of the Spirit, is purely Christian. In these two verses (23, 24) the changes 'words,' 'sayings,' 'word,' give a wrong impression; they should run—'word,' 'words,' 'word.' In the Greek we have the same substantive, twice in the singular and once in the plural"—C. B.

24. **Loveth Me not.** The world's characteristic mark.

25. **Being yet present** (R.V. "While yet abiding"). It is S. John's favourite word.

26. **The Comforter.** The discourse returns to the subject of the Paraclete. (See on ver. 16.)

The epithet "Holy" is given to the Spirit thrice in this Gospel—ch. 1. 33; 20. 22; and here.

26. **In My name**—"for My sake, in My room, and as My agent. **He will teach you all things**—necessary for you to know. Here is a clear promise to the apostles and their successors in the faith, that the Holy Ghost will teach them all that truth which is needful for their salvation"—WESLEY.

"It is on the fulfilment of this promise to the apostles, that their sufficiency as witnesses of all that the Lord did and taught, and consequently the *authenticity of the Gospel narrative*, is grounded"—ALFORD.

27. "**Peace I leave with you.** Finally, the discourse returns to the point from which it started. Its object had been to reassure the sorrowful disciples against their Lord's departure, and with words of reassurance and consolation it concludes. These are thrown into the form of a leave-taking or farewell"—SANDAY. "**Peace I leave with you** is probably a solemn adaptation of the conventional form of taking leave in the East. (Comp. 'Go in peace," Judges 18. 6; 1 Sam. 1. 17; 20. 42; 29. 7; 2 Kings 5. 19; Mark 5. 34, etc.) The Apostle of the Gentiles perhaps purposely substitutes in his Epistles, 'Grace be with you all' for the traditional Jewish 'peace'"—C. B. Our Lord repeats the word with the emphatic "My." In this word peace all the blessings of heaven are comprised.

27. **Peace I leave with you**—"peace in general; peace with God, and with your own consciences. **My peace**—in particular; that peace which I enjoy, and which I create. **I give**—at this instant. **Not as the world giveth**—unsatisfying, unsettled, transient; but filling the soul with constant, even tranquillity. Lord, evermore give us this peace! How serenely may we pass through the most turbulent scenes of life, when all is quiet and harmonious within! Thou hast made peace through the blood of Thy cross; may we give all diligence to preserve the inestimable gift inviolate, till it issue in everlasting peace!"—WESLEY.

28. **God the Father is greater than Me**—"as He was man. As God, neither is greater nor less than the other"—WESLEY.

29. **I have told you**—"of My going and return"—WESLEY.

30. **The prince of this world is coming**—"to make his grand assault. **But he hath nothing in Me**—no right, no claim, or power. There is no guilt in Me to give him power over Me; no corruption to take part with his temptation"—WESLEY.

31. **But**—"I suffer him thus to assault Me. (1) Because it is the Father's commission to Me (ch. 10. 18). (2) To convince the world of My love to the Father, in being 'obedient unto death' (Phil. 2. 8). **Arise, let us go hence**—into the city, to the Passover. All that has been related from ch. 13. 31 was done and said on Thursday, without the city. But what follows in ch. 15. 16, 17 was said in the city, on the very evening of the Passover, just before He went over the brook Cedron"—WESLEY.

"We are probably to understand that they rise from table and prepare to depart, but that the contents of the next three chapters are spoken before they leave the room. (Comp. ch. 18. 1.) Others suppose that the room is left now, and that the next two chapters are discourses on the way towards Gethsemane, ch. 17 being spoken at some halting-place, probably the Temple"—C. B.

CHAPTER XV.

S. John, more than the other Evangelists, gives the very words of our Lord's discourses, but he does not record the parables of Jesus. Two parabolic discourses only—the Good Shepherd and the Vine—he records. There was so much in the wondrous life, as in the miracle of feeding, every Evangelist could take "a little," and when all the records were completed there was still much unwritten. The sacred writers do not give full and complete biographies of Jesus. To employ modern phrases, we have not His "Life and Letters," but only "Selections from His Works." It is not difficult to see why S. John gives us the allegory of the vine and its branches. It forms a part of those farewell discourses which he alone has preserved for us. There is a tinge of pensive sadness in it. It has the ring of last words. Out of the separation then impending there rises another and more awful separation—a separation fixed and final. **If a man abide not in**

Me, he is cast forth as a branch. Whilst, by the laws of suggestion, the thought of separation leads to the thought of union, **abide in Me.**

1. **I am the true Vine** — "so 'the true Bread' (ch. 6. 32); that is, the most excellent"—WESLEY.

The most prominent symbols of Israel in the Old Testament are the palm tree, the olive tree, and the vineyard. The God of the Old Testament revealed Himself in picture-alphabet. Whether the allegory was suggested by the "fruit of the vine" they had just used in the Last Supper, or by the great golden vine over the gate of the Temple, or by the vines in the gardens round about them, the narrative does not tell. Christ, the Father, and the disciples, stood in exactly the same relationship as the vine, the husbandman, and the branches. We are in God's hands. All our life is divinely watched. All our goodness is a Divine creation. Our dependence is complete. Christ is the true ideal Vine. Earthly things are mere shadows and similitudes of heavenly realities. Other relations which Christ bears to His people are represented by the symbols of the Shepherd and the flock, the Head and the members, the Corner-stone and the stone built upon it, the Bridegroom and the bride. A child said, "Jesus is the Vine, the grown-up people are the branches, and we, the children, are the little buds." Christ is all and in all, in doctrine and character.

Everyone that beareth fruit He purifieth—"'by obeying the truth' (1 Pet. 1. 22), and by inward or outward sufferings (Heb. 12. 10, 11). So purity and fruitfulness help each other. **That it may bear more fruit**—for this is one of the noblest rewards God can bestow on former acts of obedience, to make us yet more holy, and fit for further and more eminent service"—WESLEY.

Our Lord speaks first of the *fruitless branches.* **Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit.** So that there are degrees of being in Christ. A dead, fruitless branch is in the tree, but it does not receive the living and life-giving sap. And here our Lord speaks of those who are in the Vine, and yet not living. He is the root of humanity. He is the Saviour of all men in purpose, and the enlightener of all men in fact. He is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Before He became incarnate there were men groping in darkness, but not content to remain. They asked timidly, often blindly, always anxiously, questions concerning duty and destiny—the mystery of being. And to-day in lands where the name of Christ has not yet been heard, there are those who strain their eyes towards the light. The world, as such, is given to Christ. Many have heard the call of the gospel. Thousands in the churches are not fruit-bearing branches The children, who are consecrated to God in baptism, are "in Christ" in possibility. And if hereafter they are not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, they may continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto their lives' end. When a door was opened in heaven, and S. John looked in, he saw the angelic and other worshippers gathered in circles round about the throne. So it is in the worship of earth. There is an outer circle of heathen, whether at home or abroad—the heathenism of ignorance, and the heathenism of obstinacy; a yet nearer circle of those who have identified themselves with God's Church. These stand in the outer courts of the Lord's house. **Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit.** A dead fruitless branch is in the tree, but it does not receive the living and life-giving sap. As ARNOT says, "The vine holds the branch, and the branch holds the vine. These two are one attachment. The mother clings to her child, and the child, in danger, clings to the mother. If the child were dead, neither would clasp the other. These two graspings stand or fall together; you must have both or neither."

3. **Ye are clean.** "All of you to whom I now speak are purged from the guilt and power of sin. **By the word**—which, applied by the Spirit, is the grand instrument of purifying the soul"—WESLEY.

4. **Abide in Me**—"ye who are now pure by living faith producing all holiness; by which alone ye can be in Me"—WESLEY.

Our Lord speaks of the *once fruitful* but *now fruitless branches.* **As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me.** Our Divine Teacher does not overstep the truth of life. Men may fall. As there is good amongst evil, so there is evil amongst good. Dives in Hades has his memories of goodness. Between the sun-like purity of a seraph, and the demoniac treachery of a Judas, there is an infinite sweep. Yet an archangel fell; and Judas felt remorse, if we may not call it penitence.

5. **I am the Vine, ye are the branches.** "Our Lord in this whole passage speaks of no branches but such as are, or at least were once, united to Him by living faith"—WESLEY.

Our Lord speaks of the *fruitful branches.*

I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. The fruitful branches are in the vine; the life of the tree flows through them, and they are fruitful. A Christian is to live a vigorous, growing life. The biblical figures for it are not the stunted shrub, and the mean thorn tree of the desert; but the nobly waving palm and the giant cedar of Lebanon—"the trees of the Lord," in the unrivalled imagery of Hebrew prophets. Ever upward, like the spiral flame. Ever onward, like the trained athlete. Ever outward, like

the life of the tree bursting into blossom, flower, and fruit. Thus may the Christian say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

6. **If anyone abide not in Me**—"by living faith, not by Church communion only. He may thus abide in Christ, and be **withered** all the time, and **cast into the fire** at last. **He is cast out**—of the vineyard, the invisible Church. Therefore he was in it once"—WESLEY.

The husbandman cuts all the branches—but with a difference. He cuts into the fruitful; he cuts away the unfruitful branches. **If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.** Out of Christ is to be a branch sapless, withered, dead. Judas was probably in our Lord's thought. But Judas is not alone. These are terrible words—"cast forth, withered, cast into the fire, burned." They are not to be spoken about. They are for each one to ponder; tremble as he ponders; and take heedful warning. Words could not deepen their solemnity. They are a sudden glance into the awful possibilities of the eternal world, where, as here, like gathers to like, and sympathy and companionship are sought and found. From parable our Lord passes to plain statement. **Continue in My love. Keep My commandments. Your joy shall be full. Ye are My friends. I have chosen you.** The highest service in the world is that of friendship and love. The greatest satisfaction comes from self-forgetfulness. To believe that we are where God placed us, gives the highest happiness we are capable of receiving.

7. **If ye abide in Me, ye shall ask.** "Prayers themselves are a fruit of faith, and they produce more fruit"—WESLEY.

8. **So shall ye be My disciples**—"worthy of the name. To be a disciple of Christ is both the foundation and height of Christianity"—WESLEY.

9. **Abide ye in My love**—"keep your place in My affection. See that ye do not forfeit that invaluable blessing. How needless a caution, if it were impossible for them not to abide therein!"—WESLEY.

10. **If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love.** "On these terms, and no other, ye shall remain the objects of My special affection"—WESLEY.

11. **That My joy might remain in you**—"the same joy which I feel in loving the Father, and keeping His commandments"—WESLEY.

12. **Your joy will be full** if ye so **love one another**"—WESLEY.

Only the love of God to us and our love to Him can satisfy the deepest desires of our being. The two great commandments are really one: "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

13. **Greater love**—"to his friends. He here speaks of them only"—WESLEY.

14. **Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you**—"on this condition, not otherwise. A thunderbolt for Antinomianism. Who then dares assert that God's love does not at all depend on man's work?"—WESLEY.

The Lord of all is not ashamed to call us brethren. "As He can only be received as *a complete Saviour*, so He can only be served as *a complete Lord*"—FLAVEL.

15. **Henceforth, I call ye not servants.** Christ's servants became friends, but remain servants in work and reward. (Matt. 25. 21.) All Christ's servants are God's children. **All things**—"which might be of service to you"—WESLEY.

16. **Ye**—"My apostles—**have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you** — as clearly appears from the sacred history. **And appointed you, that ye may go and bear fruit.** I have chosen and appointed you for this end, that ye may go and convert sinners. **And that your fruit may remain**—that the fruit of your labours may remain to the end of the world—yea, to eternity. **That whatsoever ye shall ask.** The consequence of your going and bearing fruit will be, that all your prayers will be heard"—WESLEY.

Ye have not chosen Me. "A wholesome memento after the lofty things He had just said about the friendship they had been admitted to"—BROWN. A Divine election is constantly seen in the course of Providence in the world, and in individual life. "No difficulty emerges in theology which has not already appeared in philosophy"—BERKELEY.

17. **These things I command you, that ye love one another.** This was the beginning and end of all His precepts.

18. **The world.** The children of this world, as distinguished from the children of God **It hath hated Me before it hated you.** "Together with its reference to time, the expression is indicative of casuality and comparison; *Me* first, *Me* most, *Me* as the predecessor for whose sake it hateth you"—LANGE.

19. **The world would love its own.** "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (Jas. 4. 4.) **I have chosen you.** The "I" is emphatic. **Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you**—"because your maxims, tempers, actions, are quite opposite to theirs. For the very same reason must the world in all ages hate those who are not of the world"—WESLEY.

20. **The servant is not greater than his lord.** "It belongs to the *perfection* of a disciple, who would be as his Master, that he should encounter the hatred of the world"—BRAUNE.

21. **All these things will they do to you, because they know not Him that sent Me**—"and in all ages and nations they who know

not God will 'for this cause' hate and persecute those that do"—WESLEY.

22. **If I had not come.** A great claim lies beneath these words. "I" greater than prophets and apostles. **They had not had sin**—"not in this respect"—WESLEY.

This specific sin of unbelief. **No cloke** (R.V. "No excuse"). "The idea in 'cloke' is to cover up, to hide as with a garment, so that they may not be seen; whereas here the idea is of excuse for manifest sin"—ELLICOTT.

23. **He that hateth Me**—"as every unbeliever doth. For as the love of God is inseparable from faith, so is the hatred of God from unbelief"—WESLEY.

24. Gradation of guilt is here implied. "My works, Me, and the Father, to see and yet to hate; these two irreconcilables are reconciled by a God-hating world"—LÜCKE.

25. **This cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled.** He constantly refers to Scripture.

26. **When the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.** "The Spirit's coming, and being sent by our Lord from the Father, to testify of Him, are personal characters, and plainly distinguish him from the Father and the Son; and His title as 'the Spirit of Truth,' together with His proceeding from the Father, can agree to none but a Divine Person. And that He proceeds from the Son, as well as from the Father, may be fairly argued from His being called 'the Spirit of Christ' (1 Pet. 1. 11), and from His being here said to be sent by Christ from the Father, as well as sent by the Father in His name"—WESLEY.

27. **And ye also shall bear witness.** "The witness is one and the same; the Spirit will witness in and by them"—ALFORD. "We" (of the present day) "*first* livingly experience and receive, through the New Testament Scriptures, the life, deeds, and sayings of our Lord, as eye and ear witnesses of the second degree; *then* we also wait humbly for power from on high; and *then* it is our obligation and right to testify with power and success what *we* have seen and heard in historical conviction and living experience"—LANGE. Only they are able to witness for Christ who have been with Him.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROMISE OF THE PARACLETE AND OF CHRIST'S RETURN.—The subjects are not kept distinct; they cross and interlace, like the strands in a rope. But the following divisions may conduce to clearness:—(1) *The World and the Paraclete* (vers. 1–11); (2) *The Disciples and the Paraclete* (vers. 12–15); (3) *The sorrow of Christ's departure turned into joy by His return* (vers. 16–24); (4) *Summary and Conclusion of the Discourses* (vers. 25–33)"—C. B.

1. **These things**—these discourses generally, especially the last section about the world's hatred of Him and them (ch. 15. 18–27). **Should not be offended**—should not be made to stumble—a metaphor frequent in Matthew and Mark, occurring thrice in Luke, and thrice in John. Through the world's persecution, the disciples might stumble and fall from the faith.

2. **The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think he doeth God service**—"but blessed be God, the time is so far past that those who bear the name of Christ do not now generally suppose they do Him service by killing each other, for a difference in opinion or mode of worship"—WESLEY.

A punishment involving the direst consequences, socially and religiously. It was a moral outlawry, like losing caste in India.

3. **They have not known the Father nor Me.** "This is the true root of persecution in all its forms"—WESLEY.

4. **I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you**—"to bear the chief shock in My own person, and to screen you from it"—WESLEY.

5. **None of you asketh Me**—"now, when it is most seasonable. S. Peter did not ask this before (ch. 13. 36)"—WESLEY.

"As far as words go, S. Peter had asked this question (ch. 13. 36), and S. Thomas had suggested it (ch. 14. 5); but altogether in a different spirit from what is meant here. They were looking only at their own loss, instead of at His gain"—C. B.

6. **Because I have said these things**—explanatory of the mild reproach in ver. 5.

7. **Nevertheless**—refers to the sorrow in ver. 6—**I tell you the truth.** "I" is again emphatic. **It is expedient for you**—"in respect of the Comforter (ver. 7, etc.), and of Me (ver. 16, etc.), and of the Father (ver. 23), etc."—WESLEY.

The Holy Ghost "I believe in God, the Father Almighty." "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." "I believe in the Holy Ghost." These are the three most important sentences in the Apostles' Creed, a summary of Christian faith, so called because it contains a brief statement of the doctrines which the apostles taught. It is of great antiquity. It was always used before the rite of baptism, and has been employed in the Daily Service of the Church for fourteen hundred years. In our own Catechism, to the question, "Who is the Holy Spirit?" the answer is given, "The Holy Spirit is the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, one in the Godhead with the Father and Son." This is the subject of revelation, and it is a great mystery. In answer to the question, "Is the Person of the Divine Spirit often mentioned in Scripture?" the reply is, "Yes, from the beginning of the

Bible to the end, but especially in the New Testament."

Comforter. The word Paracletus, translated Comforter (*margin*, "Advocate" or "Helper"), is found in the New Testament only in the writings of S. John. It occurs four times in the Gospel (ch. 14. 16, 26; 15. 26; 16. 7), and is in these places uniformly translated Comforter; and once in his First Epistle (ch. 2. 1), where it is translated Advocate. This double rendering dates from Wyclif. Tyndale has the same renderings; and the two words have been preserved in the later English Bibles. In addition to the sense of pleader, like the English counsel, this word bears the meaning of counsellor, helper, patron. Wordsworth even makes the term mean sanctifier, teacher, comforter, exhorter, inspirer, counsellor, and guide, all in one. Westcott says that, in 1 John 2. 1, the sense "advocate" alone suits the argument, though the Greek Fathers explain the term as applied to the Lord, in the same way as in the Gospel. In the Gospel again the sense of advocate, counsel, one who pleads, convinces, convicts, in a great controversy, who strengthens on the one hand, and defends on the other, meeting formidable attacks, is alone adequate. Christ as the Advocate pleads the believer's cause with the Father against the accuser Satan. (1 John 3. 1; comp. Rom. 8. 26, and also Rev. 12. 10; Zech. 3. 1.) The Holy Spirit as the Advocate pleads the believer's cause against the world (John 16. 8 ff.); and also Christ's cause with the believer (ch. 14. 26; 15. 26; 16. 14).

8. **He.** "Observe His twofold office; toward the world (ver. 8, etc.), toward believers (ver. 12, etc.). **Will convince**—all of **the world** who do not obstinately resist, by your preaching and miracle — **of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.** He who is convinced of sin, either accepts the righteousness of Christ, or is judged with Satan. An abundant accomplishment of this we find in the Acts of the Apostles"—WESLEY.

When He is come. Solemn and triumphant exaltation of spirit and proclamation. The effect of S. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost is the first great historical comment on this verse. The history of the Church's work continues that comment.

9. **Of sin**—"particularly of unbelief, which is the confluence of all sins, and binds them all down upon us"—WESLEY.

Sin. The idea is that of missing a mark; then aberration from a prescribed law or rule of duty, either in general, or spoken of particular sins. The Christian use of the term implies a fall, and assumes responsibility. It is something more than accidental; and it is not born of a relentless fate. One sin may be relatively greater than another, but all sins are sinful. Great and little, mortal and venial, must not blind our eyes to the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Conviction of sin is a consciousness of sin and guilt. Pricked to the heart, and smitten in conscience, such a one is brought to a crisis that he will either sincerely repent and be converted, or harden his heart, and bring upon himself condemnation and ruin. To know that I am a sinner, and to realise it so as to be penitent, are not necessarily one and the same. We have need to know what sin is, and how Heaven regards it, that we may learn how it may be forgiven and purged away.

10. **Of righteousness, because I go to My Father**—"which the Spirit will testify, though ye do not then see Me. But I could not go to Him if I were not righteous"—WESLEY.

11. **Of judgment.** The world has its false standards of judgment. The Advocate corrects this error also. **Righteousness.** Right, righteous, righteousness—our words of daily speech are pre-eminently biblical. In the New Testament meaning, righteousness is the doing and being what is just and right. Theologically speaking, righteousness is through faith in Christ. The word righteousness occurs only in the chapter before us in S. John's Gospel. In his First Epistle it is found in the phrase do "righteousness" (ch. 2. 29; 3. 7, 10; comp. Rev. 22. 11). Two interpretations have been given to the word here by the long line of learned and devoted Bible students: the personal righteousness of Christ; the communicated justifying righteousness, apprehended by faith. Some would combine the two ideas. "If the conviction of righteousness," says one of these, "which the Spirit works in us were merely the conviction of God's righteousness, or of Christ's, we could only fall to the ground with awe-struck, palsied hearts; we could no more venture to look upon Christ than the naked eye can look upon the sun. But when we are thoroughly convinced that Christ's righteousness is our righteousness, the righteousness which He purposes to bestow upon mankind—that He came to fulfil all righteousness, not for His sake, but for ours, in order that He might give us all that we lack out of His exceeding abundance, then, indeed, a bright ray of joy and comfort darts through the heart." As in this passage the world and sin stand together, so do Christ and righteousness. He is Christ the righteous One. **Judgment.** "The revelation of the Divine glory," observes WESTCOTT, "carries with it a judgment, a separation. The fundamental notion of this judgment lies in the authoritative and final declaration of the state of man as he is in relation to God and apart from God. Judgment is in this sense contrasted with salvation, life. In one sense judgment, like the gift of life, is immediate. It lies in the existence of an actual relation, which carries with it its final consequences. In another sense it is still future, so far as it will be realised in a spiritual order of being in the last day. Meanwhile, the process is going on upon earth. The manifestation of perfect

holiness presented to the world in the perfect self-sacrifice (ver. 30) has set up a standard which cannot be put out of sight. Under this aspect Christ's coming was a sentence of judgment."

The prince of this world is judged—"and in consequence, therefore, dethroned, deprived of the power he had so long usurped over men. Yet those who reject the deliverance offered them will remain slaves of Satan still"—WESLEY.

The prince of this world. The spirit of the world was concentrated in Satan, whom Christ conquered in the wilderness and on the cross. As to the title, "the prince of this world," comp. ch. 12. 31; 14. 30; see also Eph. 2. 2; 6. 12; 2 Cor. 4. 4. The title is common in Jewish writers. According to a remarkable tradition, God gave the whole world, except Israel, into the power of the angel of death. (Comp. Heb. 2. 14.)

12. **I have yet many things to say**—"concerning My passion, death, resurrection, and the consequences of it. These things we have, not in uncertain traditions, but in the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation. **But ye cannot bear them now**—both because of your littleness of faith, and your immoderate sorrow"—WESLEY.

13. **The Spirit of Truth.** The Holy Ghost is the living source of Divine revelation, and as such the Spirit of Truth. He makes truth inherent in believers, so that they grow in knowledge and grace. He bears many names—the Spirit of God; of the Father; of Christ; of the Lord; the Holy Ghost; the Spirit of Wisdom; of Power; of Adoption; of Life; of the earnest of eternal life. He is the Spirit by whom the truth finds expression, and is brought to man's spirit. (Ch. 14. 17; 15. 26; 1 John 4. 6.) The truth is that which the Spirit interprets and enforces.

When He is come. "It is universally allowed that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost dwell in all believers. And the internal agency of the Holy Ghost is generally admitted. That of the Father and the Son, as represented in this Gospel, deserves our deepest consideration. **All the truth**—'all evangelical truth'"—WESLEY.

Christianity touches the mental faculties. The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, who shall guide you into all truth, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." **He will shew you things to come.** The Epistles interpret the Gospels. Subsequent ages have confirmed both.

14. **He shall glorify Me.** The Redeemer has a lordship. The ages acknowledge Christ. All things are His. He is the gentle Jesus; but He is also the strong Son of God. To Him every knee shall bow.

15. **All things that the Father hath are Mine.** "Could any creature say this?"—WESLEY.

Christ claims to act in the Father's name. The superiority of the Father has reference to the human nature of Christ, who is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to that Father as touching His manhood.

16. **A little while, and ye shall not see Me**—"when I am buried. **And again, a little while, and ye shall see Me**—when I am risen—**because I go to My Father.** I die and rise again, in order to ascend to My Father"—WESLEY.

17, 18. **What is this that He saith?** They were perplexed, both about the apparent contradiction of not beholding and yet seeing, and also the departure to the Father.

19. **Jesus said to them**—"preventing their question"—WESLEY.

20. **Ye will weep and lament**—"when ye see Me dead—**but your sorrow will be turned into joy**—when ye see Me risen"—WESLEY.

"Not merely sorrow shall be succeeded by joy, but shall *become* joy. The withdrawal of the bodily presence of Christ shall be first a sorrow and then a joy. We have the same Greek construction of the rejected stone becoming the Head of the corner (Matt. 21. 42; Acts 4. 11), of the mustard sprout becoming a tree (Luke 13. 19), of the first Adam becoming a living soul (1 Cor. 15. 45)"—C. B.

22. **Ye now therefore have sorrow.** "This gives us no manner of authority to assert, all believers must come into a state of darkness. They never need lose either their peace or love, or the witness that they are the children of God. They never can lose these, but either through sin, or ignorance, or vehement temptation, or bodily disorder"—WESLEY.

23. **In that day.** "Not the forty days of His bodily presence between the resurrection and the ascension, but the many days of His spiritual presence from Pentecost onwards"—C. B.

23. **Ye shall not question Me about anything**—"which you do not now understand. You will not need to inquire of Me; for you will know all things clearly. **Whatsoever ye shall ask**—knowledge, love, or anything else—**He will give it.** Our Lord here gives us a *carte blanche*. Believer, write down what thou wilt. He had said (ch. 14. 13), 'I will do it,' where the discourse was of glorifying the Father through the Son. Here, speaking of the love of the Father to believers, He saith, 'He will give it'"—WESLEY.

24. **Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name**—"for they had asked Him directly for all they wanted"—WESLEY.

Jesus was not yet glorified.

25. **These things**—referring as some think to vers. 19–24; others to ch. 15.–16. 24.

Proverbs (R.V. *margin*, 'parables'). The word implies generally in Scripture and Oriental usage something dark and enigmatical.

26. **At that day ye shall ask**—"for true knowledge begets prayer. **And I say not, that I will pray.** This in nowise implies, that He will not: it means only, the Father Himself now loves you, not only because of My intercession, but also because of the faith and love which He hath wrought in you"—WESLEY.

27. **Himself.** Without My intercession.

28. "In ver. 27 it is the temporal mission of Christ from the Father that is meant (comp. ch. 17. 8); in ver. 28 the eternal generation of the Son is also included (comp. ch. 8. 42). The verse would almost form a creed. The Son, of one substance with the Father, was born into the world, suffered, and returned to the Father"—C. B.

29. **Plainly**—in plainness or openness.

30. **Thou knowest all things**—"even our hearts. Although no question is asked Thee, yet Thou answerest the thoughts of everyone. **By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.** They, as it were, echo back the words which He had spoken in ver. 27, implying, We believe in God; we believe also in Thee"—WESLEY.

31. **Do ye now believe?** Now means "at this stage of your course."

32. **Ye shall be scattered.** He saw the end from the beginning. **The Father is with Me.** Our Lord was always conscious of the Divine Presence.

33. **These things.** These farewell discourses. **Might have peace.** "Christ's ministry ends," says Dr. PLUMMER, "as His life began, with a message of peace" (Luke 2. 14). **I have overcome.** The pronoun is very emphatic. "In these last words He condenses the sum of the instruction which He had ministered to the disciples at the Last Supper"—NITZCH.

CHAPTER XVII.

EVEN in sacred things there are degrees of sacredness. And in entering the seventeenth chapter of S. John's Gospel, we are crossing the threshold of the Holy of Holies. Saintliest souls in all ages have bowed the head and taken off the shoes of their earthliness as they stepped upon this holy ground. Meyer calls it "the noblest and purest pearl of devotion in the New Testament." "Here," says DE WETTE, "all the parting discourses are summed up, and raised to the highest pitch of thought and feeling." It is beyond a doubt the sublimest part of the evangelical tradition, the pure expression of Christ's lofty consciousness and peace of God. Neither in the Scripture, nor in the literature of any nation, according to Luthardt, can there be found a composition which, in simplicity and depth, in grandeur and fervour, may be compared to this prayer. It could not be invented, but could proceed only from such a consciousness as the one which speaks here. But it could be preserved and reproduced by a personality so wholly devoted and conformed to the personality of Jesus as the Evangelist. Ewald writes of it as a prayer such as the world never heard, nor could hear. For Himself, He has little to ask, but as soon as His word takes the character of an intercession for His own, it becomes an irresistible stream of the most fervent love. Sentence rushes upon sentence with wonderful power, yet the repose is never disturbed. "If, in any human speech Divinity is manifest," says THOLUCK, "and sublimity is joined to condescending humility, it is in this prayer." "It is," remarks LUTHER, "verily an exceeding fervent, hearty prayer; a prayer wherein He discovereth, both unto us and to the Father, the abysses of His heart, and poureth forth its treasures." Spencer would never preach on this chapter; he declared that a true understanding of it mounted above the ordinary degree of faith which the Lord is wont to communicate to His people on their pilgrimage. The evening before his death, however, he caused it to be read to him three times in succession. Although the High Priestly Prayer is in the superlative degree, it does not stand alone. All the acts of life are linked by subtle and strong bonds. Special prayer is the outcome of a prayerful disposition. And in this, as in so much else, Jesus was made like unto His brethren. On other occasions we read that the Lord prayed. He opened and closed the day with the key of prayer. "In the morning, a great while before day, He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." "He continued all night in prayer to God." Prayer was known to be the habit of His life, for when the mothers brought the children they besought Him to lay His hands on them and pray. He began great enterprises and closed exhausting labours with prayer. After a night of prayer, He chose the Twelve; after a day of labour, He retired into the wilderness. He was praying when the Spirit descended upon Him at His baptism; He was praying when the fashion of His countenance was altered on the Transfiguration Mount. He who gave His Church the Lord's Prayer entered the agony on His knees, and hallowed the cross by His petitions. He uttered a thanksgiving when He pondered the mystery of rejection. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well pleasing in Thy sight." Westcott notes that S. John never speaks in his narrative of the Lord as "praying," as the other Evangelists do, but on one occasion he gives words of thanksgiving which imply a previous prayer, "Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou

hearest Me;" and on another occasion He gives a brief prayer, "Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." This is the true Lord's Prayer—the prayer which He Himself used, as distinguished from that which He taught His disciples. On other occasions we read that the Lord prayed (Matt. 14. 23; 19. 13; Mark 1. 35; Luke 3. 21; 5. 16; 9. 18, 28; 11. 1). But here the complete outline of what He said is preserved. It is a prayer for Himself, His apostles, and His Church to the end of time. The High Priestly Prayer some think was spoken in the Temple; others in the stillness of the night under the starry heaven, before the wondering disciples. There is no direct evidence to show where the prayer was uttered. But whether in the Temple, with which the noble history and the dearest hopes of the Jews were bound up; or the cathedral of nature, matters little. There would be a natural fitness in either. The prayer was probably spoken aloud. While praying to the Father He teaches the apostles. With eyes upraised to heaven Christ prays aloud, in order to the consolation and elevation of the disciples. He seeks His home above. He prays, as one has said, as the mighty Intercessor and Mediator, standing between earth and heaven, looking backward and forward, and comprehending all His present and future disciples in one holy and perfect fellowship with Himself and the eternal Father. All the circumstances of redemption proceeded according to a Divine law. The ages narrowed to the hour. There was neither delay nor haste.

1. "In this chapter our Lord prays—(1) for Himself (vers. 1–5); (2) for the apostles (vers. 6–19); and again (vers. 24–26); (3) for all believers (vers. 20–23); and (4) for the world (vers. 21–23). In this prayer He comprises all He had said from ch. 13. 31, and seals, as it were, all He had hitherto done, beholding all things past, present, and to come. This chapter contains the easiest words and the deepest sense of any in all the Scripture; yet is here no incoherent rhapsody, but the whole is closely and exactly connected"—WESLEY.

As this chapter is practically inexhaustible, we may add Dr. WESTCOTT'S analysis:—

The chapter falls into three main sections:—

1. The Son and the Father (vers. 1–5).
2. The Son and His immediate disciples (vers. 6–19).
3. The Son and the Church (vers. 20–26).

The subordinate divisions will be seen in the following analysis:—

1. The Son and the Father (vers. 1–5).

The Past as the Basis for the Future.

Prayer for fresh glory as the condition of the Father's glory (ver. 1).
Such was Christ's work on earth in its aim (ver. 2), method (ver. 3).
This had been accomplished (ver. 4). Christ therefore claims to resume His glory (ver. 5).

2. The Son and His immediate disciples (vers. 6–19).

The Revelation of the Father by the Son.

(1) The revelation given and accepted (vers. 6–8).
(2) The disciples watched over though left (vers. 9–11).
(3) The past work, and the future aim (vers. 12, 13).
(4) The conflict and the strength (vers. 14, 15).
(5) The issue (vers. 16–19).

3. The Son and the Church (vers. 20–26).

The Revelation of the Son to the Church and to the World.

(1) The unity of the Church, the conviction of the world.
By the faith of believers to come (vers. 20, 21).
By the glory of the disciples (vers. 22, 23).
(2) The progress of revelation.
By the contemplation of the glory of the Son (ver. 24).
By the revelation through the Son of the Father's name (vers. 25, 26).

Lifting up His eyes to heaven. Perhaps the prayer was spoken in the stillness of the night within the hearing of the wondering disciples. Christ prayed aloud that He might lift up the disciples to the throne of grace. S. John very seldom depicts the gestures or looks of our Lord, but this was an occasion of which the impression was indelible, and the *upward* look could not be passed over. A little later, when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, He fell on His face to the ground. He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; He shared our sorrows as well as our joys; He felt exultation and depression. When we think of God it is natural to look upward. Heaven is the abode of the Hearer of prayer and Giver of every good gift.

1. **Father.** "This simplicity of appellation highly became the Only-begotten Son of God; to which a believer then makes the nearest approach when he is fullest of love and humble confidence. **The hour is come**—the appointed time for it"—WESLEY.

The hour is come. The ages waited for Jesus Christ. In the fulness of time He appeared. The days of His ministry passed, and the hour of His suffering came. In our life, as in His, there are days, hours, sometimes moments, that decide destiny. They show what we are; they lead to salvation or condemnation. **Glorify Thy Son.** "The Son glorified the Father both before and after His own glorification. When He speaks to the Father, He does not style Himself Son of Man"—WESLEY.

Our Lord prayed first for the glory of God. In our daily prayer we say first of all, "Hallowed be Thy name." God's will is supreme. Hence, this Son, who always did the will of His Father, prayed, **Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee.**

2. **As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh.** "This answers to, 'Glorify Thy Son.' **That He may give eternal life,** etc.

This answers to, 'That Thy Son may glorify Thee.' **To all whom Thou hast given Him** —to all believers. This is a clear proof that Christ designed His sacrifice should avail for all; yea, that 'all flesh,' every man, should partake of everlasting life. For as the Father had 'given Him power over all flesh,' so He gave Himself a ransom for all"—WESLEY.

In this solemn hour our Lord did not pray for outward blessings for His disciples. He is concerned with the inward—the spiritual, the abiding—summed up in one word—**eternal life.** Not merely life in heaven, but that life here which will lead to heaven, and find its fulness there.

3. **To know**—"by loving, holy faith—**Thee the only true God**—the only Cause and End of all things; not excluding the Son and the Holy Ghost, no more than the Father is excluded from being Lord (1 Cor. 8. 6); but the false gods of the heathens. **And Jesus Christ** —as their Prophet, Priest, and King. **This is life eternal.** It is both the way to, and the essence of, everlasting happiness"—WESLEY.

Mark the connection between life and knowledge. All truth is of God. He who inspired the writers of the Bible made the world.

4. **I have finished the work.** "Thus have I glorified Thee, laying the foundation of Thy kingdom on earth"—WESLEY.

Christ could look back upon His life and say, "Accomplished." See the R.V. of ver. 4. Human lives are broken, disjointed, fragmentary; Christ's was complete.

5. **The glory which I had.** "He does not say 'received.' He always had it, till He emptied Himself of it in the days of His flesh" —WESLEY.

6. **I have manifested Thy name**—"all Thy attributes; and, in particular, Thy paternal relation to believers—**to the men whom Thou hast given Me**—the apostles; and so ver. 12. **They were Thine**—by creation, and by descent from Abraham. **And Thou hast given them Me**—by giving them faith in what I have spoken. (So. ver. 9)"—WESLEY.

He did not live for Himself. He says, **I manifest Thy name.** He was always doing the will of God. Christ's work is described in this phrase. He lifted up His eyes to God, and prayed for the Divine glory. Now He turns to His disciples, and prays for them. He had revealed to them the name of God; He had taught them that God was their Father. He had done this that they might be assured of the Divine favour, and become obedient to the supreme will. **Thine they were** by creation, by providential care, by redemption. They belonged to God, and He came into the world to bring them back to their lost home. God was seeking them before they sought Him. Reverently we may say, "God wants us." When we come to Him we are welcome. **They have kept Thy word.** This word "keep" means to guard watchfully, as one guards a prisoner. The only way to keep God's word is to obey it.

7. **Now they know that all things**—"which I have done and spoken—**are of Thee**—and, consequently, right and true"—WESLEY.

8. **They have received them**—"by faith" —WESLEY.

9. **I pray not for the world**—"not in these petitions, which are adapted to the state of believers only. He prays for the world at vers. 21 and 23—that they may believe, that they may know God has sent Him. This no more proves that our Lord did not pray for the world, both before and afterward, than His praying for the apostles alone (vers. 6-19), proves that He did not pray for 'them also which shall believe through their word' (ver. 20)"—WESLEY.

When our Lord says, **I pray not for the world,** He does not mean that the world is not to be prayed for, for He Himself prayed for His enemies who crucified Him, but now He is praying especially for His disciples. The New Testament represents Him as continuing His prayer in heaven. "He ever liveth to make intercession." There should be no full stop at the end of ver. 9. (See R.V.)

10. **All things that are Mine are Thine, and that are Thine are Mine.** "These are very high and strong expressions, too grand for any mere creature to use; as implying that all things whatsoever, inclusive of the Divine nature, perfections, and operations, are the common property of the Father and the Son. And this is the original ground of that peculiar property which both the Father and the Son have in the persons who were given to Christ, as Mediator; according to what is said, in the close of the verse, of His being **glorified by them** — namely, believing in Him, and so acknowledging His glory"—WESLEY.

"It were not so much if He had only said, **all Mine is Thine,** for that we may all say, that all we have is God's. But this is a *far* greater thing, that He inverts this and says, **all Thine is Mine.** This can no creature say of God"—LUTHER. The fact that Christ is **glorified in them** forms a second reason for His special prayer for them. As a church s the "glory" of its founder, so are faithful disciples the living monuments in which Christ's glory is seen. "Those shall have an interest in Christ's intercession, in and by whom He is glorified"—M. HENRY.

11. **I am no more in the world.** "The declaration of the grounds on which the prayer is urged is followed by the statement of the circumstances which made the prayer necessary. Christ leaves the world, the disciples remain in the world; Master and scholars must then be separated, so that the old connection will be broken. Christ goes to the Father; He enters therefore upon a new sphere of His mediatorial work, in which His mode of action will be changed"—WESTCOTT. **In the world.** "Not said of *place* alone, for He is still *here.*

The words are descriptive of *state*, the *state of men in the flesh;* sometimes viewed on its darker side, as overcoming men and bringing in spiritual death; sometimes, as here, used in the most general sense" — ALFORD. **Holy Father.** The expression occurs nowhere else. **Keep them through Thy name** — "Thy power, mercy, wisdom — **that they may be one**—with us, and with each other; one body, separate from the world. **As we are**—by resemblance to us, though not equality"—WESLEY.

12. **Those whom Thou hast given Me I have guarded, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.** "So one even of them whom God had given Him is lost. So far was even that decree from being unchangeable! **That the scripture might be fulfilled**—that is, whereby the scripture was fulfilled. **The son of perdition** signifies, one that deservedly perishes; as 'a son of death' (2 Sam. 12. 5), 'children of hell' (Matt. 23. 15), and 'children of wrath' (Eph. 2. 3), signify persons justly obnoxious to death, hell, wrath"—WESLEY.

Christ's continual watching over His disciples is expressed. The phrase **son of perdition** is used twice only in the New Testament, here of Judas, in 2 Thess. 2. 3 of "the man of sin." "Judas," WESTCOTT says, "was lost, but even the fall of Judas found a place in the whole scheme of Divine providence." "Judas," says THOLUCK, "was not an involuntary instrument of a Divine decree." And Dr. SCHAFF adds, "Judas lost himself. Even after the betrayal he might have been saved if he had in true penitence fled to the cross."

Ver. 13 shows that Christ is conscious of the effect which will be wrought by the reminiscence of this prayer. The prayer was uttered aloud that the disciples might draw strength from the words which they heard. "When believers confess their sins they should confess their *want of joy in the Lord*, as one of the saddest fruits of unbelief and carnality"—FLAVEL. "If we scan all the doctrines, all the institutions, all the precepts, all the promises of Christianity, will not each appear pregnant with matter of joy? will not each yield great reason, and strong obligation, to the duty of *rejoicing* evermore?"—BARROW. **In the world**—"that is, before I leave the world. **My joy**—the joy I feel at going to the Father"—WESLEY.

14. **I have given.** I in emphatic opposition to the world. **Thy word.** The revelation of God as a whole.

15. **That Thou wouldest take them out of the world** — "not yet. **But that Thou wouldest keep them from the evil one**—who reigns therein"—WESLEY.

The conflict is the condition of victory. As CALVIN says, "God wills that His people should do battle, but He permits them not to be wounded unto death." S. John especially dwells upon the personal character of the evil with which man has to contend. (1 John 2. 13 14.) Our Lord's ideal "is not freedom from work, but strength to do it; not freedom from suffering, but joy in an abiding sense of the Father's love; not absence from the world, but grace to make it better by our presence; not holy lives driven from the world, and living apart from it, but holy lives spent in the world and leavening it" — ELLICOTT. But whilst the disciples are on the earth they are in danger. (Read vers. 12–15.) They were assured of Christ's protection, but He did not shield them from the world's hatred. They were in the world, but they were not to be of the world. And so He prays they may be kept from all evil. Only God could keep them, but they could aid their own safety,—by union that they may be one; by consecration that they might be sanctified (vers. 16–21). In ancient story we find two famous characters who sought to pass safely by the Isle of the Sirens, whose song was so entrancing that the sailors who came within its sound were led to steer straight for their shore, where they were wrecked. Ulysses stuffed wax in the sailors' ears, and then had himself bound to the mast, while he sailed within sound of the bewitching strains. He then longed to rush to the shore of the tempters; but he was bound, and he could not make the sailors hear his cries. On the other hand, Orpheus took his lyre and made sweeter music, and sang more delightful songs, and thus overcame the song of the tempters. As the rising sun makes the stars fade away, so the Christian is kept from the evil by the greater attractions of Christ, by seeing His glory, by entering into His joy. That which Christ prayed for, we ought to strive for—knowledge and obedience. First know God, and then serve Him. We must know God's will before we can do it; knowledge is the eye to direct the foot of obedience. We find God by knowledge, but we enjoy Him by love. Let us live as if we could see the flash of the eye of God, that eye which is ever watchful, that never slumbers nor sleeps.

17. **Sanctify** — "consecrate them, by the anointing of Thy Spirit, to their office, and perfect them in holiness by means of Thy word"—WESLEY.

19. **I sanctify Myself**—"I devote Myself, as a victim, to be sacrificed"—WESLEY.

20. **For them who will believe**—"in all ages"—WESLEY.

The limitation stated in ver. 9 is at an end; through the Church He prays for the world (ver. 21).

21. **As Thou art in Me.** "This also is to be understood in a way of similitude, and not of sameness or equality. **That the world may believe.** Here Christ prays for the world. Observe the sum of His whole prayer—(1) receive Me into Thy own and My glory; (2) let My apostles share therein; (3) and all other believers; (4) and let all the world believe"—WESLEY.

22. **The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them**—"the glory of the Only-begotten shines in all the sons of God. How great is the majesty of Christians!"—WESLEY.

"The hosts of all those, who not until after His own death (ch. 12. 24) shall enter, through the preaching of the apostles, into the kingdom of God, rise before the consciousness of Christ. His desires for them are summed up in the single petition for their unity with Him and the Father. And this unity is infinitely more than mere *unanimity*, since it rests upon unity of spirit and life, and the perfect communion of all good things pertains to its manifestations; according to ver. 22, even the unity of the glory"—THOLUCK. "The eternal unity of believers with one another will produce such external results ('see how these Christians love one another'), that the world will be induced to believe. Christian unity and love (Matt. 7. 12; Luke 6. 31; 1 Cor. 13) is a moral miracle, a conquest of the resisting will of man, and therefore more convincing than a physical miracle, which is a conquest of unresisting nature. Hence the divisions and animosities of Christians are a perpetual stumbling-block to the world"—C. B.

23. **I in them**, etc. (Comp. the parable of the vine and the branches.) "(1) Union with Christ; (2) Union with the Father through Him; (3) Union with each other resulting from these"—M. HENRY. According to this prayer the unity of the Church means the conversion of the world.

24. "Here He returns to the apostles. **I will.** He asks as having a right to be heard, and prays, not as a servant, but a Son. **That they may behold My glory**—herein is the happiness of heaven (1 John 3. 2)"—WESLEY. **I will.** (Comp. 21. 22; Matt. 8. 3; 23. 37; 26. 39; Luke 12. 49.) **Behold My glory.** The scene of this vision is not defined. **The foundation of the world.** Our Lord thrice uses this expression—here, Luke 11. 50, and Matt. 25. 34. Two of those who heard it reproduced it. (1 Pet. 1. 20; Rev. 13. 8; 17. 8; comp. Eph. 1. 4; Heb. 4. 3; 9. 26.) "The words distinctly imply the personal pre-existence of Christ. The thought of an eternal love active in the depths of Divine Being presents, perhaps, as much as we can faintly apprehend of the doctrine of the essential Trinity"—C. B.

25, 26. At the close there is one more glance at the opposition between the world and the Church.

25. **Righteous Father.** "The admission of believers to God through Christ flows even from the justice of God"—WESLEY.

"The epithet harmonises with the appeal to the *justice* of God which follows, which is based on a simple statement of the facts. The world knew not God; Christ knew Him; the disciples knew that Christ was sent by Him. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—C. B.

26. **I have declared to them Thy name**—"Thy new best name of love. **That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me—and I**—that Thou and Thy love and I and My love, **may be in them**—that they may love Me with that love"—WESLEY.

I in them. "The last word of the last prayer corresponds with the last word of His discourse, 'I have overcome the world' (ch. 16. 33). He is Himself the source of victory and life"—WESTCOTT. "These last words of Christ's mediatorial prayer sum up its purpose. They are the thread which runs through all these farewell discourses. He is going away, and yet abides with them. His bodily presence passes away, His spiritual presence remains for ever; not seen with the eye without, but felt, as life and strength within. Having known Christ after the flesh; now they know Him so no more: they are in Christ, a new creation (2 Cor. 5. 16, 17)"—PLUMMER. "The last word of this sublime prayer is," as STIER says, "a better seal than any doxology or Amen." "How sublimely this prayer was realised in the history of the apostles, the Acts and the Epistles," says GEIKIE, "abundantly illustrate. It was their common glory to believe that nothing could separate them from the love of God in Christ. The contrast between the dejected, faint-hearted, materialising Galilean fishermen and peasants of the Gospels, and the heroic, spiritual confessors of Pentecost and after times, is itself a miracle, great beyond all others. The illumination of soul, the grandeur of conception, the loftiness of aim, and a transformation from a lower to an infinitely higher mental and moral condition, as complete as the change from early twilight to noon, can find their only solution in the admission that they must have received the miraculous spiritual enlightenment from above, which Jesus had promised to send them."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN the history of the Passion, as recorded by S. John, there are many points of connection with the other Gospels. Thoughtful readers will find it interesting to trace the resemblances and contrasts; and they will gain besides a sense of the reality and life-likeness of the Divine portrait. We give an outline of the relations as summarised by Dr. WESTCOTT:—

This last main division of the Gospel falls naturally into four principal sections:—

1. The betrayal (ch. 18. 1–11).
2. The double trial (ch. 18. 12–19. 16).
3. The end (ch. 19. 17–42).
4. The new life (ch. 20).

1. In comparing the narrative of S. John with the parallel narratives of the Synoptists, it must be observed generally that here, as everywhere, S. John fixes the attention of the reader upon the ideas which the several events bring out and illustrate. The Passion and Resurrection are for him revela-

tions of the Person of Christ. The objective fact is a "sign" of something which lies deeper. It is a superficial and inadequate treatment of his narrative to regard it as a historical supplement of the other narratives, or of the current oral narrative on which they were based. It does, it is true, become in part such a supplement, because it is a portrayal of the main spiritual aspects of the facts illustrated from the fulness of immediate knowledge, but the record is independent and complete in itself. It is a whole, and, like the rest of the Gospel, an interpretation of the inner meaning of the history which it contains. Thus, in the history of the Passion, three thoughts among others rise into clear prominence:—

(1) The voluntariness of Christ's sufferings:

Ch. 18. 4.	Ch. 18. 36.
,, 18. 2.	,, 19. 28.
,, 18. 11.	,, 19. 30.

(2) The fulfilment of a Divine plan in Christ's sufferings:

Ch. 18. 4.	Ch. 19. 11.
,, 18. 9.	,, 19. 24.
,, 18. 11.	,, 19. 28.

(3) The majesty which shines through Christ's sufferings:

Ch. 18. 6.	Ch. 19. 11.
,, 18. 20 ff.	,, 19. 26 f.
,, 18. 37.	,, 19. 36 f.

The narrative in this sense becomes a commentary on earlier words which pointed to the end, (1) ch. 10. 17, 18; (2) ch. 13. 1; (3) ch. 13. 31.

2. In several places the full meaning of S. John's narrative is first obtained by the help of words or incidents preserved by the Synoptists. His narrative assumes facts found in them, *e.g.* ch. 18. 11, 33, 40; 19. 41.

3. The main incidents recorded by more than one of the other Evangelists, which are omitted by S. John, are—

The agony (Matt., Mark, Luke).
The traitor's kiss (Matt., Mark, Luke).
The desertion by all (Matt., Mark). (Comp. John 16. 32.)
The examination before the Sanhedrim at night; the false witness; the adjuration; the great confession (Matt., Mark).
The mockery as Prophet (Matt., Mark, Luke).
The Council at daybreak (Matt., Mark, Luke).
The mockery after condemnation (Matt., Mark).
The impressment of Simon (Matt., Mark, Luke).
The reproaches of spectators (Matt., Mark, Luke) and of the robbers (Matt., Mark, Luke).
The darkness (Matt., Mark, Luke).
The cry from Isa. 22 (Matt., Mark).
The rending of the veil (Matt., Mark).
The confession of the centurion (Matt., Mark, Luke).

Other incidents omitted by S. John are recorded by single Evangelists.

S. MATTHEW.

Power over the hosts of heaven.
Pilate's wife's message.
Pilate's hand washing.
The self-condemnation of the Jews.
The earthquake.

S. MARK.

The flight of the young man.
Pilate's question as to the death of Christ.

S. LUKE.

The examination before Herod.
The lamentation of the women.
Three "words" from the cross (ch. 23. 34, 43, 46).
The repentance of one of the robbers.

4. THE MAIN INCIDENTS PECULIAR TO S. JOHN ARE:

The words of power at the arrest (ch. 18. 4–9).
The examination before Annas (ch. 18. 13–24).
The first conference of the Jews with Pilate, and Pilate's private examination (ch. 18. 28–37; 19. 9–11). (Comp. Matt. 27. 11; Mark 15. 2; Luke 23. 3.)

The first mockery and the Ecce Homo (ch. 19. 2–5).
Pilate's maintenance of his words (ch. 19. 21, 22)
The last charge (ch. 19. 25–27).
The thirst, "It is finished" (ch. 19. 28–30).
The piercing the side (ch. 19. 31–37).
The ministry of Nicodemus (ch. 19. 39).

5. In the narrative of incidents recorded elsewhere, S. John constantly adds details, often minute, and yet most significant — *e.g.* ch. 18. 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 26, 28; ch. 19. 14, 17, 19, 23, 41. In the midst of great differences of detail, the Synoptists and S. John offer many impressive resemblances as to the spirit and character of the proceedings; *e.g.*—(1) The activity of the high priests (*i.e.* the Sadducean hierarchy) as distinguished from the Pharisees.

(2) The course of the accusation:—civil charge: religious charge: personal influence.

(3) The silence of the Lord in His public accusations, with the significant exception (Matt. 26. 64).

(4) The tone of mockery.

(5) The character of Pilate: haughty, contemptuous, vacillating, selfish.

Vers. 1–11. THE BETRAYAL.—Jesus and the disciples stand over against Judas and the adversaries. The substance of this section is peculiar to S. John, though it presents many points of contact with the Synoptic narratives. The conflict which the other Evangelists record is here presupposed, and regarded in its issues. The victory follows the battle. The Lord acts freely, and with sovereign and protecting power towards His enemies and His disciples at the moment when He is given over for death. **It is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.** A man is immortal until his work is done. The Son of Man sustained Himself by the thought of the Divine purpose and the predestined hour.

1. **A garden**—"probably belonging to one of His friends. He might retire to this private place, not only for the advantage of secret devotion, but also that the people might not be alarmed at His apprehension; nor attempt, in the first sallies of their zeal, to rescue Him in a tumultuous manner. Cedron was (as the name signifies) a dark, shady valley, on the east side of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives; through which a little brook ran, which took its name from it. It was this brook which David, a type of Christ, went over, with the people weeping, in his flight from Absalom"—WESLEY.

The gardens of the Bible will well repay our entrance. There is the garden of Paradise,

which was situate in the midst of Eden. You will read of it in the Book of Genesis. It was, doubtless, a fairer place than we have ever seen. There was the King's Garden. You will read of it in the Book of Nehemiah; it was near the Pool of Siloam, and was formed by the meeting of two valleys. To the old Hebrew poets, a well-watered garden was a picture of fertility and prosperity. There was the Garden of Gethsemane, situated across the brook Cedron. There was the Garden of the Burial. In Joseph's garden, in a new tomb, our Lord was laid. Now we are in the Garden of Gethsemane. To Christian minds its inexhaustible associations are the offspring of a single event—the agony of the Son of God on the evening preceding His passion. We know, however, from the Evangelists (Luke and John) that our Lord ofttimes resorted thither with His disciples. As we cannot visit the spot, the next best thing is to see it through the eyes of others. Dr. GEIKIE thus describes the scenery as it is to-day: "In the steep, rocky part of the Cedron valley, near the tombs of the Jewish cemetery, there are no olive trees to be seen, but they begin to be numerous on the upper side of the little bridge, and there are some almond trees on Mount Moriah. The walls of the Temple enclosure proudly crown the eastern side of the hill, their colossal size still exciting the same astonishment as it once roused in the disciples, when they called aloud, 'Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings.' On the bridge, or near it, some lepers were standing or sitting on the ground, begging; hideous in their looks and their poverty. A water-seller or two also were standing at the wall, offering their doubtful beverage to passers-by. The bridge is the one passage from the east side of Jerusalem to Mount Olivet and Siloam; so that there are always some people passing. Sheep graze on the wretched growth near the tombs; their guardians, picturesque in their poverty, resting in some shady spot near. Asses with burdens of all kinds jog along over the sheets of rock, their drivers walking quietly behind the last one. The creatures never think of running, and there is only one possible path, so that it is not necessary to lead them. A church, known as the Chapel of the Tomb of the Virgin, stands within white walls on the eastern side of the bridge, and a short way down from it is a garden, to name which is enough—Gethsemane, 'the oil press,' the spot to which, or to some place near, our Lord betook Himself after the institution of the Last Supper on the night of His betrayal. Here, in the shadow of the trees of peace, amidst stillness, loneliness, and darkness, except for the light of the Passover moon, His soul was troubled even unto death. Here He endured His more than mortal agony, till calmness returned with the holy submission, that once and again rose from His inmost heart, 'Father, not My will, but Thine, be done.' Numerous olive trees still grow on the slopes and in the hollow, and of these the Franciscans have enclosed seven within a high wall, in the belief that they are the very trees under which our Saviour prayed. It is, however, impossible to tell the exact spot where Jesus knelt. At one time the garden was larger than at present, and contained several churches and chapels. The scene of the arrest of Christ was pointed out in the Middle Ages in what is now called the Chapel of the Sweat, and the traditions respecting other spots have varied, but only within narrow limits; for since the fourth century, at all events, the garden has always remained the same. The wall of Gethsemane, facing Jerusalem, is continuous, the entrance to the garden being by a small door at the eastern or Mount of Olives' side. Immediately outside this, you are shown the spot where Peter, James, and John are said to have slept during the agony, and the fragment of a pillar, a few paces to the south, is pointed to as the place where Judas betrayed his Master with a kiss. The seven olive trees are very old. Roses, pinks, and other flowers blossom. Olive oil from the trees of the garden is sold at a high price, and relics made from the stones of the olives are in great request."

The Arrest.—John takes us immediately after the High Priestly Prayer, out over the brook Cedron. In the garden of anguish and victory, the Second Adam began to make atonement for the sin which the first Adam committed in the garden of Paradise. Judas knew the place; and having sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, he led a mixed multitude of Roman soldiers, members of the Temple watch, servants, high priests, and elders, and curious onlookers, within the sacred enclosure. The soldiers had swords, and the servants of the Council, staves. Although it was the Easter full moon, they provided themselves with lanterns and torches; as if our Lord would *hide Himself*, or as if He would defend Himself. Strange that those who had seen Him call Lazarus from the grave did not fear to approach Him in anger! With a word of calm majesty, **Let us go forth**, He went to meet His foes. **Whom seek ye?** was His simple and sublime question. Adam had to be *sought* among the trees of Paradise; this Son of God declares Himself. And now a miracle of control causes them to fall backward. What a standing miracle was our Lord's personality! When He drew the veil that shrouded His majesty men trembled. The agony and prayer in Gethsemane are only implied in S. John's narrative. Their record is in Matt. 26. 37-46; Mark. 14. 32-42; Luke 22. 41-46. Humanly speaking, the calmness of Christ came from this solemn fellowship. He had said, "Not My will, but Thine, be done," and went forth without fear.

3. **A troop of soldiers**—"a cohort of Roman foot"—WESLEY.

6. **As soon as He said, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground.** How amazing is it, that they should renew the assault, after so sensible an experience both of His power and mercy! But probably the priests among them might persuade themselves and their attendants, that this also was done by Beelzebub; and that it was through the providence of God, not the indulgence of Jesus, that they received no further damage.

8. **If ye seek Me, let these** (My disciples) **go.** "It was an eminent instance of His power over the spirits of men, that they so far obeyed this word as not to seize even Peter, when he had cut off the ear of Malchus"—WESLEY.

The Interpreting Word.—**Let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, Of those that Thou hast given Me I lost not one.** The saying is quoted from Christ's prayer (ch. 17. 12). This was not the complete fulfilment of these words, but one instance of their fulfilment, and showing that they still refer to our bodily safety, as well as our spiritual salvation. Christ's words have many fulfilments; they are inexhaustible. The special mention of the soldiers and the Temple officers fixes attention on the combination of Gentile and Jew in this first stage of the Passion. He appeared defeated, but when "He lifts for an instant the mantle which screened His Divinity," they flee and fall before Him.

10. **Then Simon Peter.** "No other Evangelist names him: nor could they safely. But S. John, writing after his death, might do it without any such inconvenience"—WESLEY.

Simon Peter's sword.—Always impulsive, he struck now before he spoke, almost before he thought. Perhaps he wished by this blow to make good his vow, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." It was also his design to give a signal to rise in arms against the foe, but our Lord's kingdom is not of this world, and He will not use worldly weapons. The Jews among the company seem to have been foremost in the arrest. The incident of Simon and Malchus is described by all the Evangelists, but S. John alone mentions the names of Peter and Malchus. It is impossible to tell what position Malchus held. He was prominent in his action, and thus marked himself out for attack. Christ will not lay down the cup now He has taken it into His hands. The same image of a cup occurs in Matt. 20. 22; Mark 10. 38; and in connection with this scene (Matt. 26. 39; Mark 14. 36; Luke 22. 42). The image is also found in the Old Testament. (Ps. 75. 8; Ezek. 23. 31.) The cause of Christ is not to be defended by carnal weapons.

13. "Annas had been high priest before his son-in-law, Caiaphas. And though he had for some time resigned that office, yet they paid so much regard to his age and experience, that they brought Christ to Annas first. But we do not read of anything remarkable which passed at the house of Annas; for which reason, His being carried thither is omitted by the other Evangelists"—WESLEY.

Annas was a remarkable figure in the Jewish history of the time. He and his five sons held the high priesthood in succession. The relationship of Caiaphas to Annas is not mentioned by any writer except S. John. Annas and Caiaphas are agreed in opposition to Jesus the King.

17. **Art not thou also**—"as well as the other—**one of this man's disciples?** She does not appear to have asked with any design to hurt him"—WESLEY.

"John had hurried on to the scene where Christ was being examined, as at the cross (ch. 19. 26) he kept close to his Master, and in neither case was molested. Peter who followed afar off (Luke 22. 54), and that rather out of curiosity to see the end (Matt. 26. 58) than out of love, encountered temptation, and fell"—PLUMMER. "Peter's *love* took him as far as the palace, but his fear prevented him entering in"—CHRYSOSTOM.

20. **I spake openly**—"as to the manner. **Continually**—as to the time. **In the synagogue and Temple**—as to the place. **In secret have I said nothing**—no point of doctrine which I have not taught in public"—WESLEY.

"There is a strong emphasis on 'I.' Christ answers no questions about His disciples. He bears the brunt Himself alone. Moreover, He seems to contrast the openness of His proceedings with the secrecy of His enemies"—C. B.

21. **Why askest thou Me?**—"whom thou wilt not believe"—WESLEY.

22. **Answerest Thou the high priest so?**—"with so little reverence"—WESLEY.

24. **Now Annas had sent him to Caiaphas**—as is implied (ver. 15)—**bound**—being still bound (ver. 12).

28. **They went not into the palace themselves, lest they should be defiled**—"by going into a house which was not purged from leaven." (Deut. 16. 4.)

31. **It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.** The power of inflicting capital punishment had been taken from them that very year. So "the sceptre was departed from Judah," and transferred to the Romans.

32. **Signifying what death He should die**—"for crucifixion was not a Jewish, but a Roman punishment. So that had He not been condemned by the Roman governor, He could not have been crucified"—WESLEY.

The movement in taking Jesus from Annas to Caiaphas once more attracted attention to the stranger by the fire, and led to Peter's denial. This is one of the few incidents S.

John has in common with the other Evangelists. (See the parallel passages.) The Jewish or ecclesiastical trial is now ended, and the Roman or civil trial begun.

33–35. **Pilate.** His connection with Jesus has given him an earthly immortality. The ecclesiastical trial was conducted before Annas and Caiaphas; the civil trial before Pilate. Pontius Pilate was the sixth Roman governor, or, speaking more accurately, procurator of Judea, and held this office for ten years during the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 25–35). He is also mentioned by Tacitus in the famous passage, "The author of that name (Christiani) or sect was Christ, who was capitally punished under Tiberius by Pontius Pilate, the procurator." The procurator was generally a Roman knight, acting under the governor of a province as collector of the revenue, and judge in cases arising under it. But Pontius Pilate had full military and judicial authority in Judea, as being a small province attached to the larger Syria; he was responsible to the governor of Syria. Cæsarea was the regular abode of the Roman governors. The Passover brought Pilate to Jerusalem, as disturbances were most to be apprehended when the people were gathered from the country for the feast. **King of the Jews.** "Pilate's question," WESTCOTT says, "may mean either, 'Art Thou He who has just now become notorious under this title?' or, 'Dost Thou claim the title, as it is said?' The title itself would be likely to arrest Pilate's attention, whether he had heard it spoken of before in connection with the entry into Jerusalem, or only now from the Jews. And further, he would rightly conclude that the title, when thus put forward, would be fitted to call out any fanaticism which there might be in a political enthusiast. The full form which the accusation assumed is given in Luke 23. 2. (See also ch. 19. 12.) In each of the Four Gospels, the first words of Pilate to Jesus are the same, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?'"

36. **My kingdom is not of this world**—"is not an external, but a spiritual, kingdom. **That I might not be delivered to the Jews**—which Pilate had already attempted to do (ver. 31); and afterwards actually did (ch. 19. 16)" —WESLEY.

The Kingdom of Christ.—The possessive pronoun is emphasised: **My kingdom, My servants.** The Jews had a conception of a kingdom; the Sanhedrim had servants. So had Jesus, but the contrast is greater than the resemblance. Christ's kingdom is in the world, but not of it. It does not derive its origin or its support from earthly forces. (Comp. 8. 23; 15. 19; 17. 14–16; 1 John 2. 16; 4. 5.)

37. **Thou sayest**—the truth. **To this end was I born**—"speaking of His human origin: His Divine was above Pilate's comprehension. Yet it is intimated in the following words, **I came into the world that I might witness to the truth**—which was both declared to the Jews, and, in the process of His passion, to the princes of the Gentiles also. **Everyone that is of the truth**—that is a lover of it. **Heareth My voice**—an universal maxim. Every sincere lover of truth will hear Him, so as to understand and practise what He saith"—WESLEY.

38. **What is truth?**—"said Pilate, a courtier; perhaps meaning, What signifies truth? Is that a thing worth hazarding your life for? So he left Him presently, to plead with the Jews for Him, looking upon Him as an innocent, but weak, man"—WESLEY.

The Truth . . . **What is truth?** Pilate's question is general. Truth anywhere, he seems to say, is hard to find, difficult to determine. **What is truth?** This is the question of questions. Obey the truth thou knowest, and thou shalt know more and yet more.

Faultless.—**I find in Him no fault at all.**

39, 40. *Barabbas or Jesus.*—**Now Barabbas was a robber.**

CHAPTER XIX.

Vers. 1–16. THE TRIALS OF JESUS.—"Suffered under Pontius Pilate." This is one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed. We are now entering the Holy Place of the Gospels, and beholding the most wonderful thing in the history of the world. The Son of God is arraigned before the judgment-seat of a Roman. The immaculate Purity is charged with crimes. There are five trials of Jesus—(1) before Annas, a preliminary examination; (2) before Caiaphas and the Council; (3) before Pilate; (4) before Herod; (5) before Pilate again, the final trial recorded in this chapter. One of the famous paintings in the world, "The Ecce Homo," takes its subject from Pilate's words. The story of the trial of Jesus is found in Matt. 26. 57 to 27. 31; Mark 14. 53 to 15. 20; Luke 22. 54 to 23. 25; ch. 18. 13 to 19. 16. The mockery of Jesus by the servants and others took place in the court of Caiaphas' palace in the early hours of Friday morning. (See Matt. 26. 67, 68; Mark 14. 65; Luke 22. 63–65.) The Sanhedrim reassembled at daybreak, and condemned Jesus to death; but as they had no power to execute their sentence, they brought Him to Pilate. In the previous chapter, which must be read in connection with this, we have the record of Pilate's interview with the Jews, and private conference with Jesus. He publicly declared the innocence of Jesus, and sent Him to Herod. On His return, he made another attempt to release Him. At the moment the people were choosing Barabbas instead of Jesus, Pilate was warned through his wife's dream. This choice between Jesus and Barabbas led a poet to sing—

"Once to every man and nation comes a moment to decide
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side;

Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each
the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep
upon the right—
And the choice goes by for ever, 'twixt that dark-
ness and that light."

After this selection, Pilate made his fifth attempt to release Jesus by scourging instead of crucifixion. "S. John, combined with S. Luke, makes it clear that the scourging was inflicted as a separate punishment, in the hope that it would suffice, and not merely as the usual accompaniment of crucifixion"—C. B. The Jew, EDERSHEIM, tells us that the scourge of leather thongs was loaded with lead, or armed with spikes and bones, which lacerated back and chest and face, till the victim sometimes fell down before the judge, a bleeding mass of torn flesh. "Thus, He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed." The soldiers also mocked Him, and with the tough twigs of a thorny plant, twisted into a mock laurel wreath, like that worn at times by the Cæsars, they placed this crown of thorns upon His temples. And taking a cast-off soldier's mantle, they flung it around Him in imitation of the purple robe worn by kings. These acts of mockery they interpreted by words of mockery; He all the time maintaining a majestic silence. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth."

"With the soldiers, straitly bound,
Forth the Saviour fareth;
Over all His holy form,
Bleeding wounds He beareth.
He a crown of woven thorns,
King of Glory, weareth,
And each one, with bended knee,
Fresher taunts prepareth.

They Thy mild and tender flesh,
O Redeemer, beating,
To the column bind Thee fast,
For the scourge preparing;
Thus the ransom of our peace
Cruel stripes are tearing,
As the streams that flow therefrom
Fully are declaring.

After passed He through the street,
As the morn grew colder,
And the heavy, bitter cross
Bare He on His shoulder.
Thronged the windows and the doors
Many a rude beholder;
But He found no comforter
There, and no upholder."

Thus sang a sweet singer of the twelfth century, who died and left no name.

7. **By our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God**—"which they understood in the highest sense, and therefore accounted blasphemy"—WESLEY.

8. **He was the more afraid.** "He seems to have been afraid before of shedding innocent blood"—WESLEY.

9. **Whence art Thou?**—"that is, Whose son art Thou?"—WESLEY.

11. **Thou couldest have no power over Me**—"for I have done nothing to expose Me to the power of any magistrate. **Therefore he that delivered Me to thee**—namely, Caiaphas, knowing this, is more blamable than thou"—WESLEY.

13. **Pilate sat down on the judgment-seat**—"which was then without the palace. **In a place called**, in Greek, **the Pavement**—on account of a beautiful piece of mosaic work, with which the floor was adorned. **But in Hebrew, Gabbatha**—or the high place, because it stood on an eminence, so that the judge, sitting on his throne, might be seen and heard by a considerable number of people"—WESLEY.

14. **It was the preparation of the Passover.** "For this reason both the Jews and Pilate were desirous to bring the matter to a conclusion. Every Friday was called the preparation; namely, for the Sabbath. And as often as the Passover fell on a Friday, that day was called the preparation of the Passover"—WESLEY.

Vers. 17–30. JESUS CRUCIFIED.—"The record of the last scene of the passion contains very much that is peculiar to S. John: The challenging of the title (vers. 20–22), the last bequest (vers. 25–27), two words (vers. 28–30), the piercing of the side (vers. 31–37), the ministry of Nicodemus (ver. 39 f.). For a time at least S. John was an eye-witness (vers. 26–35).

"The narrative falls into the following sections:—

1. The Crucifixion (vers. 17–22).
2. The two groups of bystanders (vers. 23–27).
3. The fulfilment (vers. 28–30).
4. The two requests (vers. 31–42).

"Generally, it will be observed that S. John dwells on the fulfilment of the old covenant, on prophecies and types (vers. 24–28, 36, 37), and on the majesty of the Lord in suffering. In all the will of God and the will of Christ is seen to be accomplished. In especial, S. John seems to insist on details (ver. 29) which tended to identify the Lord with the paschal lamb, both as offered and as consumed"—WESTCOTT.

Taking our station with the beloved disciple, as near as possible to the person of the suffering Saviour, we join the procession as it takes its departure from the palace of the high priest. Jesus no longer wears the purple robe in which He had been mocked. The cross to which He was to be nailed had been prepared. It was probably a tree, with limbs of a proper size and shape to adapt it to the purpose. S. Peter styles it a tree (1 Pet. 2. 24), and it repeatedly receives the same designation from the historian Luke (Acts 5. 30; 10. 39; 13. 29). It is laid on the Condemned, and the procession starts for the place of execution. Suddenly its progress is arrested. The Saviour sinks beneath the burden that has been laid on Him. No severity of the soldiers can cause Him to rise beneath it. It is not obstinacy, it is exhaustion.

"One Simon—a Jew, from Cyrene—who is met in the way, is compelled to take the cross and bear it after Him. Jesus seems to have borne the cross as far as the city gate. It was as they were coming out (Matt. 27. 32) that they met Simon the Cyrenian coming in from the country (Mark 15. 21)"—MACDONALD. A close comparison of the several Evangelists has led some to think that our Lord never loosed His cross, Simon merely lifting one end. On which, DR. LANGE beautifully says, "Here, as always, the Saviour bears the heaviest part of the burden, while the lightest part rests on him who follows after Christ." An imaginative writer—General WALLACE—thus describes the scene: "He was nearly dead. Every few steps He staggered, as if He would fall. A stained gown, badly torn, hung from His shoulders over a seamless under-tunic. His bare feet left red splotches upon the stones. An inscription on a board was tied to His neck. A crown of thorns had been crushed hard down upon His head, making cruel wounds, from which streams of blood, now dry and blackened, had run over His face and neck. The long hair, tangled in the thorns, was clotted thick. The skin, where it could be seen, was ghastly white. His hands were tied before Him. Back somewhere in the city, He had fallen exhausted, under the transverse of His cross, which, as a condemned person, custom required Him to bear to the place of execution; now, a countryman carried the burden in His stead. Four soldiers went with Him as a guard against the mob, who sometimes, nevertheless, broke through and struck Him with sticks, and spit upon Him. Yet no sound escaped Him, neither remonstrance nor groan." Why could not Christ bear His own cross, who was able to bear the sins of the whole world when hanging upon the cross? How could death conquer the Lord of Life? Probably the cross was very heavy. He was much weakened with His long watching and agony of the night before. He was made like unto us in the possession of the infirmities incident to complete humanity. He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Thus, in company with soldiers, priests, and others,—a curious crowd,—His mother, with other faithful women, He went along the Way of Sorrow. There is a tradition that Veronica, a pious lady of Jerusalem, was moved with pity on beholding the bloody and perspiring face of our Lord when on the way to crucifixion, and manifested her sympathy by giving Him her head-cloth to wipe off the perspiration. And in response to her kindness, He returned the cloth with His features imprinted on it. There is another well-known tradition of the Wandering Jew, who, as Jesus with the cross passed his place of business, and leaned for rest against his porch, harshly bade Him move on. On this account his remorse condemned him to wander up and down the earth, and never find rest till Jesus shall come again. Traditions narrate many incidents in the sad procession, but only one such incident is recorded in the Gospel history. S. Luke tells us that among the vast multitude of people who followed Jesus were many women. They beat upon their breasts and uttered cries of sorrow. He stilled them with the words, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me." And then He predicted days of grief. Many who listened, lived to suffer the horrors of the time when powerful Rome besieged the city and destroyed the Temple.

17. **Bearing His cross** — "not the whole cross, for that was too large and heavy, but the transverse beam of it, to which His hands were afterwards fastened. This they used to make the person to be executed carry"—WESLEY.

The place called Golgotha. Golgotha is a Hebrew word, meaning a skull. From its Latin equivalent—*calvaria*—comes our English word Calvary. The place was so named because it was a small knoll in the shape of a skull. We often compare a hill to a head. "The exact site is unknown. But we know that it was (1) apparently a well-known spot, (2) outside the gate (comp. Heb. 13. 12), but (3) near the city (ch. 19. 20), (4) on a thoroughfare leading into the country (Luke 23. 26), and (5) contained a garden or orchard (ch. 19. 41)" — MACLEAR. An ancient tradition from the fourth century places Golgotha a short distance north of Zion, within the present wall, where has been built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Modern research inclines to a site upon the knoll containing the cave called the "Grotto of Jeremiah." It is outside of the north wall of the city, but near to it, about one hundred yards distant. It is well that the sacred spot should be unknown. It is too holy to be desecrated by idolatrous susperstition. The Apostles and Evangelists barely allude to the places of our Lord's birth, death, and resurrection; they fixed their eyes upon the great facts themselves, and upon the ever-living Christ in heaven. **With Him two others.** Christ was crucified between two robbers—one penitent, one impenitent. At first both reviled Him, but one's heart was softened, and he sought forgiveness. For him Christ opened the kingdom of heaven. One was saved in the last hour, that none may despair; one only, that none might presume.

19. **Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.** "Undoubtedly these were the very words, although the other Evangelists do not express them at large"—WESLEY.

20. **It was written in Latin** — "for the majesty of the Roman empire. **In Hebrew**—because it was the language of the nation. **And in Greek**—for the information of the Hellenists, who spoke that language, and came in great numbers to the feast"—WESLEY.

22. **What I have written I have written** —"that shall stand"—WESLEY.

Pilate's word, written in the three languages, was probably thus:

> The Aramaic—Jesus, the Nazarene, King of the Jews.
> The Greek—This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.
> The Latin—The King of the Jews.

According to the reading of Revised Version the Latin stood second, *i.e.* the national dialect, the official dialect, the common dialect. The three world-languages owned Christ.

Pilate wrote a title in the three world-languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. And thus Christ received the world's unconscious homage. In His hour of apparent defeat, men hailed Him King. Pilate, like Caiaphas, became a prophet of truth.

23. **The vesture**—"the upper garment"—WESLEY.

24. **They parted My garments among them.** "No circumstances of David's life bore any resemblance to this, or to several other passages in the twenty-second Psalm. So that in this scripture, as in some others, the prophet seems to have been thrown into a preternatural ecstasy, wherein, personating the Messiah, he spoke barely what the Spirit dictated, without any regard to himself"—WESLEY.

Our Lord's worldly possessions fell into the hands of His executioners. They parted His garments among them. But the seamless robe they did not sever. From the earliest times that seamless robe has been regarded as a symbol of the unity of His Church.

25. **His mother's sister.** "But we do not read she had any brother. She was her father's heir, and as such transmitted the right of the kingdom of David to Jesus. **Mary, the wife of Cleophas** — called likewise Alphæus, the father, as Mary was the mother, of James and Joses and Simon and Judas"—WESLEY.

27. **Behold thy mother**—"to whom thou art now to perform the part of a son, in My place: a peculiar honour which Christ conferred on him. **From that hour**—from the time of our Lord's death"—WESLEY.

While He suffered, the women stood beholding; amongst them His own mother. He committed her to the care of S. John:—

> "Weeping stood His mother, sighing
> By the cross, where Jesus, dying,
> Hung aloft on Calvary:
> Through her soul, in sorrow moaning,
> Bowed in grief, in spirit groaning,
> Pierced the sword in misery."

LONGFELLOW says: "Even He that died for us upon the cross, in the last hour, in the unutterable agony of death, was mindful of His mother, as if to teach us that this holy love should be our last worldly thought, the last point of earth from which the soul should take its flight to heaven."

29. **A stalk of hyssop**—"which in those countries grows exceeding large and strong"—WESLEY.

30. **It is finished**—"My suffering; the purchase of man's redemption. **He delivered up His spirit**—to God (Matt. 27. 50)"—WESLEY.

Many things connected with the crucifixion the Evangelist assumes to be already familiar. Of the Seven Words on the Cross we find one in Matthew, three in Luke, three in John—

> "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."
> "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."
> "Woman, behold thy son."
> "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
> "I thirst."
> "It is finished."
> "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

The cross, once the sign of ignominy and disgrace, is now the symbol of honour, the sign-manual of Christendom. The cry, **It is finished!** may have ruptured some of the vessels of His heart, for no sooner had it been uttered than He bowed His head upon His breast, and yielded His life a ransom for many. "Finished," as LANGE says, 'was His holy life; with His life His struggle, with His struggle His work, with His work the redemption, with the redemption the foundation of the new world. It was His farewell to earth. He had found rest at last in His own heaven, His Father's home." **It is finished.** The life and the ministry; His task and our salvation were now complete.

31. **Lest the bodies should remain on the cross on the Sabbath**—"which they would have accounted a profanation of any Sabbath, but of that in particular. **For that Sabbath was a great day**—being not only a Sabbath, but the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, from whence they reckoned the weeks to Pentecost; and also the day for presenting and offering the sheaf of new corn: so that it was a triple solemnity"—WESLEY.

34. **Forthwith there came out blood and water.** "It was strange, seeing He was dead, that blood should come out; more strange that water also; and most strange of all that both should come out immediately, at one time and yet distinctly. It was pure and true water as well as pure and true blood. The asseveration of the beholder and testifier of it shows both the truth and greatness of the miracle and mystery"—WESLEY.

35. **His testimony is true**—"valid, unexceptionable. **And he knoweth** — and his conscience beareth him witness that he testifieth this for no other end than **that ye may believe**"—WESLEY.

36. **A bone of it shall not be broken.** "This was orignally spoken of the paschal lamb, an eniment type of Christ"—WESLEY.

37. **They shall look on Him whom they have pierced** — "He was 'pierced' by a soldier's spear. They who have occasioned His sufferings by their sins (and who has not?) 'shall' either 'look upon Him' in this world with penitential sorrow; or with terror when

He cometh in the clouds of heaven. (Rev. 1. 7)"—WESLEY.

38, 39. **Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate. And Nicodemus also came**—"acknowledging Christ, when even His chosen disciples forsook Him. In that extremity Joseph was no longer afraid, Nicodemus no longer ashamed"—WESLEY.

"The Synoptists tell us that Joseph of Arimathea was rich, a member of the Sanhedrim, a good and just man, who had not consented to the Sanhedrim's counsel and crime, one who, like Simeon and Anna, watched for the kingdom of God, and had become a disciple of Christ. Nicodemus also was a member of the Sanhedrim (ch. 3. 1), and his acquaintance with Joseph is thus explained. And it is S. Mark who tells us that Joseph was one of the Sanhedrim; S. John who brings him into contact with Nicodemus. It would seem as if Joseph's unusual courage had inspired Nicodemus also. We are not told whether or no Nicodemus had consented to the counsel and deed of them"—C. B. "We read of none of the apostles at Christ's funeral; fear had put them to flight; but Joseph and Nicodemus appeared boldly. If God strengthen the weak, and leave the strong to the prevalency of their own fears, the weak shall be as David, and the strong as tow"—BURKITT.

41. **In the place where He was crucified.** "There was a garden in the same tract of land; but the cross did not stand in the garden"—WESLEY.

The record of the first sin is associated with a garden. In a garden He began His passion, from a garden He rose. He changed the valley of the shadow of death into a garden.

42. **Because of the preparation**—"that is, they chose the rather to lay Him in that sepulchre which was nigh, because it was the day before the Sabbath, which also was drawing to an end; so that they had no time to carry Him far"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XX.

Vers. 1–18. JESUS RISEN. — *Importance of the Resurrection.*—Without the resurrection of our Lord it has been said the Christian Church is inconceivable. That the enemies of Christianity have made their assault upon it we know too well. And yet a keen German critic says: "Nothing stands more historically certain than that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared again to His followers, or than that their seeing Him thus again was the beginning of a higher faith, and of all their Christian work in the world. It is equally certain that they thus saw Him, not as a common man, or as a shade or ghost risen from the grave, but as the one only Son of God—already more than man at once in nature and power; and that all who thus beheld Him recognised at once, and instinctively, His unique, Divine dignity, and firmly believed in it thenceforth. The Twelve and others had, indeed, learned to look on Him even in life as the true messianic King and the Son of God, but from the moment of His reappearing they recognised more clearly and fully the Divine side of His nature, and saw in Him the conqueror of death. Yet the two pictures of Him thus fixed in their minds were in their essence identical. That former familiar presence of the earthly Christ, and this higher vision of Him, with its depth of emotion and ecstatic joy, were so interrelated that, even in the first days or weeks after His death, they could never have seen in Him the heavenly Messiah, if they had not first known Him so well as the earthly." And the English Arnold is not one whit behind the German Ewald. "This truth that the Lord has risen," says ARNOLD, "which was received by those who first heard it with wonder at least equal to their joy, has been repeated to us so often, from our earliest childhood, that we hear it without its exciting in us any strong sensation whatever. It rests, as it were, quietly in our minds, neither disputed nor doubted, nor yet truly believed. It is like a fact of common history; a part of our knowledge when we are reminded of it, but one which we rarely have occasion to draw forth from the storehouse of our memory. We are not aware of its importance, of how much is wrapped up in it to perish, if this corner-stone of our faith could by any means be moved. We have not noticed the peculiar manner in which it is spoken of by the apostles; and how different it is from all the other miracles recorded in Scripture. For they might stand or fall with no consequence to our eternal hopes, so long as this single one remains sure; but if this one could fail us, all the rest would profit us nothing. If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins; and they who have died in the faith of Christians have ventured their souls upon nothing, and have died to rise again no more. That vague belief in our immortality, with the expression of which we are so familiar, will do well enough for our careless and prosperous hours, when nothing assails it; but it is too weak for a season of real trial. It has been truly observed, that those ancient writers who have written most eloquently and beautifully of their hope of an eternal life, appear to have found little real comfort from it, when the evils of this world pressed them hardly. The natural arguments in favour of an eternal existence may be met with other reasons on the contrary side; and in a matter of such moment, when we practically feel its importance, a mere preponderance of probability on one side more than the other is far from sufficient to satisfy us. But the word of Jesus, confirmed by His deeds, sets our anxiety to rest. He was dead and is alive, and He has promised that they who live and believe in

Him shall be with Him where He is, that they may see and partake of His glory."

Died, Rose, and Revived.—It will add to the interest of our present study if we find the links in the chain of events which bind together the important articles of our Creed: "Jesus Christ our Lord, who was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead." As one has said: "It is quite impossible that so astounding an event, coming upon various portions of the body of disciples from various quarters and in various forms, should not have been related by four independent witnesses in the scattered and fragmentary way in which we now find it. In the depth beneath this varied surface of narration rests the great central fact of the resurrection itself, unmoved and immovable." The Rev. J. J. HALCOMBE, in his work on the Four Gospels, thus presents a connected narrative:—

Jesus is buried (John 19. 41, 42; Luke 23. 53, 54; Matt. 27. 60; Mark 15. 46). (Space forbids our quoting the passages. But they should be read. It is an important study in Christian evidences. In no other way can we see so clearly what measures were adopted to prevent deception, and how broadly based is the proof of the resurrection of Christ our Lord and Saviour.)

The sepulchre is closed (Matt. 27. 60; Mark 15. 46).

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sit by the sepulchre (Matt. 27. 61; Mark 15. 47).

The women from Galilee prepare spices and ointments (Luke 23. 55, 56).

The sepulchre is sealed and watched (Matt. 27. 62–66).

Later on the Sabbath day Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses visit the sepulchre (Matt. 28. 1).

When the Sabbath was past, the two Marys and Salome buy spices (Mark 16. 1).

The stone rolled away from the sepulchre (Matt. 28. 2–4).

On the morning of the first day, while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalene comes alone to the sepulchre (John 20. 1).

At early dawn she is joined by the women from Galilee, and after sunrise by the mother of James (Luke 23. 56; 24; Mark 16. 2).

The stone is found to be rolled back (Mark 16. 3, 4; Luke 24. 2).

An angel announces the resurrection, and invites the women to enter the sepulchre (Matt. 28. 5, 6).

Entering into the sepulchre in company with the angel, a second angel appears to them (Mark 16. 5; Luke 24. 3, 4).

The women are affrighted (Mark 16. 5; Luke 24. 5).

The angels address the women (Mark 16. 6, 7; Matt. 28. 7; Luke 24. 5–7).

Most of the women flee (Mark 16. 8).

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary obey the angel's command and haste to Peter and John (Matt. 28. 8; John 20. 2–9).

Peter and John leave the tomb, but Mary remains (John 20. 10–17; Mark 16. 9).

Being joined by Mary Magdalene, the other women remember Christ's words and tell the whole body of disciples (Luke 24. 8, 9; Matt. 28. 9, 10; Luke 24. 9, 11; Mark 16. 10, 11; John 20. 18).

S. Luke's testimony concerning Peter (Luke 24.12).

The soldiers and the chief priests (Matt. 28. 11–15).

The journey to Emmaus (Mark 16. 12; Luke 24. 13–33).

The two disciples report (Mark 16. 13).

They join the Eleven (Luke 24. 33–35).

Christ's first appearance to the disciples, Thomas being absent (Luke 24. 36–43; John 20. 19–25).

Another appearance, Thomas present (John 20. 26–29).

Many signs are recorded (John 20. 30–31).

3. **Peter went out**—"of the city"—WESLEY.

6, 7. **Peter seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin folded up.** "The angels, who ministered to Him when He rose, undoubtedly folded up the napkin and linen clothes"—WESLEY.

8. **He saw**—"that the body was not there. **And believed**—that they had taken it away, as Mary said"—WESLEY.

9. **For as yet**—"they had no thought of His rising again"—WESLEY.

10. **They went home**—"not seeing what they could do further"—WESLEY.

11. **But Mary stood**—"with more constancy"—WESLEY.

16. **Jesus saith to her, Mary**—"with His usual voice and accent"—WESLEY.

17. **Touch Me not**—"or rather, Do not cling to Me (for she held Him by the feet, Matt. 28. 9); detain Me not now. You will have other opportunities of conversing with Me. **For I am not ascended to My Father**—I have not yet left the world. **But go** immediately **to My brethren.** Thus does He intimate, in the strongest manner, the forgiveness of their fault, even without ever mentioning it. These exquisite touches, which everywhere abound in the evangelical writings, show how perfectly Christ knew our frame. **I ascend**—He anticipates it in His thoughts, and so speaks of it as a thing already present—**to My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God.** This uncommon expression shows that the Only-begotten Son has all kind of fellowship with God. And a fellowship with God the Father, some way resembling His own, He bestows upon His brethren. Yet He does not say, 'our' God; for no creature can be raised to an equality with Him; but 'My' God, 'and your God': intimating that the Father is His in a singular and incommunicable manner; and ours, through Him, in such a kind as a creature is capable of"—WESLEY.

Lord of the Dead and Living.—No attempt is made to describe the *Resurrection.* No one saw Him rise. They saw Him after He had risen. No attempt is made to describe the *Creation.* "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." No attempt is made to describe the *Incarnation.* "He was made flesh, and dwelt among us." We might contend that the same power that gives life can restore it. But the reverent New Testament reveals the miracle without defining it, and then proceeds

to teach that death is conquered. Death is robbed of its sting, now Christ has risen. (Read 1 Cor. 15. 20–28; 1 Thess. 4. 13–18.) If we die unto sin and live unto righteousness, we shall rise from the grave and ascend into heaven. "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep" (1 Cor. 15. 20). Death hath no dominion over Him: it shall not always have dominion over us.

Thomas convinced (vers. 19–31).—The details of the section (vers. 19–23) are peculiar to S. John—the closed doors, the fear of the Jews, the absence of S. Thomas, the mission, the promise; but the fact of the appearance to the assembled disciples on the evening of the first Easter day is recorded by S. Luke and S. Mark.

S. Mark.	S. Luke.
And afterward He was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.	And as they spake He Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit, and He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

S. Mark recounts and emphasises the rebuking of their unbelief. S. Luke touches it more gently, but gives the reason for the justness of the rebuke. He tells the story of the Emmaus journey, and shows that these travellers had already borne their Easter testimony to the disciples. They had evidence on which to base their faith. This was probably the fifth appearance on that Easter day. Our want of knowledge of all the details makes it difficult, perhaps impossible to state, the precise order of all the occurrences. But minor differences, with substantial agreement, give an air of reality that verbal agreement does not always possess.

1. To Mary of Magdala our Lord first appeared. **She supposed Him to be the gardener, and in an agony of appeal said, Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary.** She turned and said to the disciples, **I have seen the Lord.**

2. Nor was her testimony unsupported. Jesus met the other women also and said to them, "All hail!" Terror mingled with their emotion as they clasped His feet. "Fear not," He said to them, "go, bid My brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see Me."

3. The third appearance of Jesus was to Peter. The details are wholly unknown to us.

4. He appeared to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus.

5. To the ten disciples assembled with closed doors. S. Thomas was absent.

6. A week later our Lord appeared to the disciples when S. Thomas was present.

7. To seven of the apostles by the Sea of Galilee in connection with the draught of fishes, and the morning meal.

8. On a mountain in Galilee.

9. To S. James. S. Paul mentions this in 1 Cor. 15.

10. From Jerusalem to Bethany He accompanied His disciples, and vanished out of their sight.

One characteristic, as GEIKIE, following Ewald, observes, is common to all the appearances recounted: they never pass outside the purely spiritual bounds we instinctively associate with the mysterious existence on which Jesus had entered. Even when most closely touching the material and earthly, He is always seen speaking and acting only as a Spirit, coming suddenly, revealing Himself in an imperceptibly increasing completeness, which culminates at last in some unmistakable sign, and presently vanishes as suddenly as He appeared. To some He made Himself known, as to Mary and the women, by a single word, or by brief sentences, the voice carrying instant conviction with it; to others, in a lengthened communion, as with the disciples going to Emmaus, kindling their souls by the higher sense He gave to the Scriptures, and by a repetition of the symbolic breaking of bread, which, on the last night, He had enjoined on the Eleven; to others again, as to S. Thomas, by an outward material proof from the wounds of His person; and to still others, by joining them in their simple repast, as with the disciples on the shore of the Lake of Galilee. The ten disciples gathered in silence and seclusion for fear of the Jews; were alarmed by their Lord's appearing; comforted by His "peace be unto you"; assured by a sight of His wounded hands and pierced side; and enriched through the spirit of inspiration and help He breathed upon them; their doubts vanished, their fear subsided, and faith took possession of them.

21. **Peace be unto you.** "This is the foundation of the mission of a true gospel minister,—peace in his own soul (2 Cor. 4. 1). **As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you.** Christ was the Apostle of the Father (Heb. 3. 1); S. Peter and the rest, the apostles of Christ"—WESLEY.

22. **He breathed on them**—"new life and

vigour—**and saith**, As ye receive this breath out of My mouth, so **receive ye** the Spirit out of My fulness. **The Holy Ghost**—influencing you in a peculiar manner, to fit you for your great embassy. This was an earnest of Pentecost"—WESLEY.

23. **Whose soever sins ye remit.** "According to the tenor of the gospel; that is, supposing them to repent and believe. **They are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain** (supposing them to remain impenitent), **they are retained**—so far is plain. But here arises a difficulty. Are not the sins of one who truly repents, and unfeignedly believes in Christ, 'remitted' without sacerdotal absolution; and are not the sins of one who does not repent or believe 'retained' even with it? What, then, does this commission imply? Can it imply any more than (1) a power of declaring with authority the Christian terms of pardon? whose sins are remitted, and whose retained? as in our daily form of absolution; and (2) a power of inflicting and remitting ecclesiastical censures? that is, of excluding from and readmitting into a Christian congregation"—WESLEY.

26. **After eight days**—"on the next Sunday"—WESLEY.

28. **And Thomas said, My Lord and my God.** "The disciples had said, We have seen the Lord. S. Thomas now not only acknowledges Him to be the Lord, as he had done before, and to be risen, as his fellow-disciples had affirmed, but also confesses His Godhead; and that more explicitly than any other had yet done. *And all this he did without thrusting his hand into His side*"—WESLEY.

The character of S. Thomas, as revealed in the few notices in the Gospel of S. John, is that of "a man slow to believe, seeing all the difficulties of a case, subject to despondency, viewing things on the darkest side, and yet full of ardent love for his Master." This feature of his character has been caught in these later ages. In the famous statue of him by Thorwaldsen, in the church at Copenhagen, he stands, the thoughtful, meditative man, with the rule in his hand for the due measuring of evidence and argument. Amongst the last words that Dr. Arnold repeated before his own sudden death was the blessing of Christ on the faith of S. Thomas. In the New Testament we hear of S. Thomas only twice again, once on the Sea of Galilee with the eleven disciples, where he is ranked next after S. Peter (ch. 21. 2), and again in the assembly of the apostles after the Ascension (Acts 1. 13). Legends make him a missionary in Persia and Judea, and a martyr to conviction.

30. **Jesus wrought many miracles, which are not written in this book**—"of S. John; nor indeed of the other Evangelists"—WESLEY.

31. **But these things are written that ye may believe**—"that ye may be confirmed in believing. Faith cometh sometime by reading, though ordinarily by hearing"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER XXI.

"This chapter is evidently an appendix to the Gospel, which is completed by ch. 20. It is impossible to suppose that it was the original design of the Evangelist to add the incidents of ch. 21 after ch. 20. 30, 31, which verses form a solemn close to his record of the great history of the conflict of faith and unbelief in the life of Christ; and the general scope of the contents of this chapter is distinct from the development of the plans which is declared to be completed in ch. 20. The manifestation of the Lord, which is given in detail in it, is not designed to create faith in the fact of His resurrection, but to illustrate His action in the society; He guides and supports and assigns their parts to His disciples. On the other hand, it is equally clear that ch. 21. 1–23, was written by the author of the Gospel. The style and the general character of the language alike lead to this conclusion; and there is no evidence to show that the Gospel was published before the appendix was added to it. The occasion of the addition is probably to be found in the circulation of the saying of the Lord as to John (ch. 21. 23). The clear exposition of this saying carried with it naturally a recital of the circumstances under which it was spoken.

"The contents of the chapter are peculiar to S. John. The narrative falls into two main divisions:—

1. The Lord and the body of disciples. Their work: His gift (vers. 1–14).
2. The Lord and individual disciples. His determination of their work (vers. 15–23).

"The two last verses (24, 25) contain an identification of the writer of the Gospel, and a renewed testimony (comp. ch. 20. 30) to the infinite multiplicity of Christ's works"—WESTCOTT.

2. **There were together**—"at home, in one house"—WESLEY.

4. **They knew not that it was Jesus**—"probably their eyes were holden"—WESLEY.

6. **They were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.** "This was not only a demonstration of the power of our Lord, but a kind supply for them and their families, and such as might be of service to them when they waited afterward in Jerusalem. It was likewise an emblem of the great success which should attend them as 'fishers of men'"—WESLEY.

7. **Peter girt on his upper coat (for he was stripped of it before)**—"reverencing the presence of his Lord—**and threw himself into the sea**—to swim to Him immediately. The love of Christ draws men through fire and water"—WESLEY.

We have only the record of eleven appearances during the forty days. He did not remain with the disciples all the time. A change had passed upon Him. But He did not remain away altogether. He had not for-

gotten them. As Dr. ROBERT TUCK has said, "The forty days in the resurrection-body was Christ's great effort to help the disciples to realise that He was a *spiritual* Messiah, a *spiritual* Saviour. The contrast between relations with Christ, seen as a fellow-man, and Christ unseen, apprehended only by thought and love, was too vast and too abrupt. So He stayed on earth those forty days, always present, but sometimes seen and sometimes unseen. Those disciples felt that any moment He might come into the sphere of their vision, and so they were helped to realise that He was always close, near; and they were prepared for the time when they would no longer have any sensible helps and manifestations." Dr. ARNOLD said: "I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidences of those who have written about them; and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the mind of a fair inquirer, than that Christ died and rose again from the dead." Of this supreme fact the apostles and holy women were witnesses. That they were true witnesses is proven not only from their character, but also from the fact that they had nothing to gain and everything to lose by the testimony, if it were false.

1. They based all their hopes upon the resurrection.
2. This faith was in direct opposition to their previous belief and worldly interests.
3. They had every opportunity to convince themselves of its truth.
4. They induced thousands of the enemies of Christ to believe in it.
5. Their lives were transformed by this faith.
6. They suffered for it.
7. They died for it.
8. The Christian Church was built upon this foundation.
9. A change in the Sabbath day arose from this belief.

After His resurrection, our Lord appeared to His disciples occasionally, unexpectedly, and in a way somewhat unearthly, though yet really and corporeally. The word **manifested** marks the appearance as depending on the Lord's will. He was so pleased to reveal Himself. The place of appearance was the Sea of Tiberias, a name not occurring elsewhere in the Gospels. The disciples had returned to their old life. **Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth.** But for S. Peter's decision they would have remained in moody idleness. The world is divided into leaders and followers. Some suggest, others execute. The cure for despondency is work. **They went forth, and entered into the boat, and that night they took nothing.** The night season is the most favourable time for catching fish. Yet there were unsuccessful nights; such an one was this. A symbol of the utter failure of the fishers of men without Christ. In life generally toil is often unsuccessful; "night" brings "nothing." Festive joy and hard work alternated in the life of these disciples; they alternate in ours. "Night" brought "nothing"; "morning" brought "Jesus." **When day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach.** Interpreters at all times have pointed to the significant contrast in the positions of the Lord and the disciples, He on the firm ground and they on the restless waters. It is perhaps vain to give any simply natural explanation of the failure of the disciples to recognise Christ. Perhaps there had been some considerable interval since the last manifestation, and having agreed to betake themselves to their secular employment, they would be unprepared to expect Him. After the resurrection He was known as He pleased, and not necessarily at once (ch. 20. 4, *et seq.*; Luke 24. 31). A word of inquiry; a command to resume their labour; then a miraculous abundance: such are the steps of this wondrous narrative. Alone they labour in vain; with Christ, labour has a sufficient reward. But it was the old toil, with the old net, in the old waters. That sea is a symbol of our life. Christ is always near, though not always recognised. Labour without God's blessing is labour in vain. S. John, by a certain sympathy with Christ, first discerned His presence; Simon Peter, in his spirited, decided manner, first rushed to Him. On the shore they found a fire; and when the net was brought to land, they counted the marvellous haul, one hundred and fifty and three. The significant differences between the circumstances of the miraculous draught of fishes at the beginning of the Lord's ministry, and of this after the resurrection, may be noted.

LUKE 5.	JOHN 21.
He said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.	He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find.
Master, we toiled all night and took nothing; but at Thy word I will let down the nets.	That night they took nothing.
They enclosed a great multitude of fishes.	They cast, and were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.
Their nets were breaking.	For all there were so many, the net was not rent.
They filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.	Then other disciples came in the little boat, dragging the net full of fishes.
But Simon Peter fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.	When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he cast himself into the sea.

After the miracle and the revelation they sat down to the prepared meal. Whether the provision was miraculous or not is not declared. The first impression would be that it was miraculous. But there are degrees in the miraculous. And He who could provide an ass by simply sending a message could easily have obtained a meal by what men call natural means. For natural is in another sense supernatural. These fishers of men were in the

hands of that God who holdeth the winds in the hollow of His hands, and whose paths are in the seas. They learnt that they were held in perfect safety. In the Church of S. Nazaro, Florence, there is an epitaph on the tomb of a soldier, fit for the whole race: "Johannes Divultius, who never rested, rests — hush." Our dead friends are alive with Christ; they have *risen:* one day they too will *appear.* And in heaven they and we shall sit down together at a table prepared by God. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more."

12. **Come ye and dine**—"our Lord needed not food. **And none presumed**—to ask a needless question"—WESLEY.

14. **The third time**—"that He appeared to so many of the apostles together"—WESLEY.

15. **Simon, son of Jonah.** "The appellation Christ had given him when he made that glorious confession (Matt. 16), the remembrance of which might make him more deeply sensible of his late denial of Him whom he had so confessed. **Lovest thou Me.** Thrice our Lord asks him, who had denied Him thrice. **More than these**—thy fellow-disciples—**do?** Peter thought so once (Matt. 26. 33); but he now answers only, **I love Thee,** without adding, 'more than these.' **Thou knowest.** He had now learned by sad experience that Jesus knew his heart. **My lambs**—the weakest and tenderest of the flock"—WESLEY.

17. **Because He said the third time**—"as if He did not believe him"—WESLEY.

18. **When thou art old.** "He lived about thirty-six years after this. **Another shall gird thee.** They were tied to the cross till the nails were driven in. **And shall carry thee**—with the cross—**where thou wouldest not**—according to nature; to the place where the cross was set up"—WESLEY.

19. **By what death he should glorify God.** "It is not only by acting but chiefly by suffering that the saints glorify God. **Follow Me**—showing hereby likewise what death he should die"—WESLEY.

20. **Peter turning** — "as he was walking after Christ—**seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following Him.** There is a peculiar spirit and tenderness in this plain passage. Christ orders S. Peter to follow Him in token of his readiness to be crucified in His cause. S. John stays not for the call; he rises and follows Him too, but says not one word of his own love or zeal. He chose that the action only should speak this; and even when he records the circumstance, he tells us not what that action meant, but with great simplicity relates the fact only. If here and there a generous heart sees and emulates it, be it so; but he is not solicitous that men should admire it. It was addressed to his beloved Master, and it was enough that He understood it"—WESLEY.

22. **If I will that he tarry** — "without dying—**till I come**—to judgment. Certainly he did tarry till Christ came to destroy Jerusalem. And who can tell when or how he died? **What is it to thee**—who art to follow Me long before"—WESLEY.

23. **The brethren**—that is, the Christians. Our Lord Himself taught them that appellation. (Ch. 20. 17.) **Yet Jesus did not say to him that he should not die**—not expressly. And S. John himself, at the time of writing his Gospel, seems not to have known clearly whether he should die or not.

The Denier Restored.

QUESTIONS.	ANSWERS.	COMMANDS.
Lovest thou Me more than these?	Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.	Feed My lambs.
Lovest thou Me?	Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.	Tend My sheep.
Lovest Thou Me?	Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.	Feed My sheep.

"Feed," as distinguished from the word which follows, "tend," expresses the providing with food. "Tend"—to be shepherd of—My sheep. The lambs require to be fed; the sheep require to be guided. A true teacher neglects neither. The thrice-repeated denial is here met by the thrice-repeated assurance of devotion. And this devotion was devotion unto death, resistance even unto blood.

24. **This is the disciple who testified**—"being still alive after he had wrote. **And we know that his testimony is true.** The Church added these words to S. John's Gospel, as Tertius did those to S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (ch. 16. 22)"—WESLEY.

25. **If they were to be written particularly**—"every fact, and all the circumstances of it. **I suppose.** This expression, which softens the hyperbole, shows that S. John wrote this verse"—WESLEY.

"If it be asked why the Gospels are not larger, it may be briefly answered—It was not because they had exhausted their subject; but (1) it was not needful to write more, (2) it was not possible to write all; (3) it was not advisable to write much"—M. HENRY. "Though but little," says SCHAFF, "has been written on the life of Christ by the Evangelists, that little is of more account than all the literature of the world, and has been more productive of books, as well as thoughts and deeds, than any number of biographies of sages and saints of ancient and modern times. The Gospels and the Bible generally rise like Mount Ararat high above the flood of literature; they are the sacred library for all nations, the literary sanctuary for scholars and the covenant people; they combine word and work, letter and spirit, earth and heaven, time and eternity."

THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of the Acts of the Apostles scarcely requires an introduction. No unprejudiced reader can fail to recognise in it the work of a well-informed and intelligent eye-witness of many of the scenes which it describes. And this impression is deepened by study of the political and social condition of the various races which acknowledged the sway of the Roman emperor during the first century of Christianity.

Internal evidence of various kinds proves it to have been written by the author of the Third Gospel, and to have been intended as a continuation of that narrative, and ancient and uncontradicted tradition ascribes both books to S. Luke, whom S. Paul mentions in three of his Epistles as a beloved associate and fellow-labourer. They are both dedicated to the same person, to whose name in the Gospel an epithet is applied which intimates a comparatively high position, in social if not in political life, the same epithet which is applied to Felix in the letter of Claudius Lysias and in the oration of Tertullus, and to Festus by S. Paul. Of course, it will not be understood that the books were written for Theophilus only, but for the entire Church of Jews and Gentiles.

The subject of the Acts of the Apostles is well described in Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*. It is "the fulfilment of the promise of the Father by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the results of that outpouring by the dispersion of the gospel among Jews and Gentiles." The principle involved in the Saviour's command to His apostles to preach the gospel among all nations, but to begin at Jerusalem, runs through the entire narrative. The author first shows us the little band of the disciples waiting for the coming of their Guide and Comforter, evidencing their faith in the promise of His Advent by electing one of their brethren to take the place of Judas Iscariot, employing the brief interval of peace in filling up the ranks of the apostles, that they might be ready to move at once to the attack when the promised Captain should come among them. He shows us how He came, and how, in the midst of an outburst of wonder and gratitude, the preaching of the gospel began.

The results of the faithful ministry of the apostles, accompanied by this new Spiritual Agency, were seen first in the conversion of large numbers of their fellow-countrymen, S. Peter occupying the most prominent position in this part of the narrative, and opening the door of faith, first to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. In due time, however, another agent appears upon the scene, specially qualified by his intellectual character as well as by his broad culture and his providential training, to present the truth to the civilised nations of Western Asia and of Europe; and the historian dwells with evident delight on the miraculous conversion, the labours, the sufferings, and the success of the Apostle Paul. He shows how he founded churches, in spite of opposition and persecution, in many of the Asiatic provinces, overcoming difficulties, which might well have seemed insuperable, by a rare union of courage with tact and prudence; how he crossed into Macedonia and went forward into Greece, gaining yet more signal success in Europe than he had won in Asia, and how his long-cherished purpose of visiting Italy and preaching at Rome was fulfilled in a manner he would not have chosen, by his being sent there as a prisoner in chains. The narrative leaves him there, as if to remind us that it was no part of the historian's intention to present a complete biography of S. Paul, but simply the beginning of a history of the growth of the Christian Church.

The principal sources of the following notes on the Acts of the Apostles—apart from Mr. Wesley's Notes, which are incorporated entire, and the well-known Wesleyan commentaries consulted throughout this work—are Lange, Conybeare and Howson, the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, and Webster and Wilkinson's Greek Testament.

ABBREVIATIONS.—B. (Benson), C. (Clarke), M. H. (Matthew Henry), L. (Lange), C. H. Conybeare and Howson), C. B. (Cambridge Bible), W. W. (Webster and Wilkinson).

MR. WESLEY'S ANALYSIS. THE PARTS OF IT ARE SEVEN:—

I. Pentecost, with its antecedents, chs. 1, 2.

II. Transactions with the Jews, in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria, chs. 3–9.

III. Transactions at Cæsarea, and the reception of the Gentiles, chs. 10, 11.

IV. The First Course of S. Barnabas and S. Paul among the Gentiles, chs. 13, 14.

V. The Embassy to, and Council of Jerusalem, concerning the liberty of the Gentiles, ch. 15.

VI. The Second Course of S. Paul, chs. 16–19.

VII. The Third as far as Rome, chs. 19–28.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1–14. CONNECTION WITH FORMER HISTORY—THE GREAT PROMISE RENEWED—THE ASCENSION. — 1. "In that important season which reached from the resurrection of Christ to His ascension the former treatise ends, and this begins; this describing the acts of the Holy Ghost by the apostles, as that does the acts of Jesus Christ. **Of all things**—in a summary manner—**which Jesus began to do, until the day**—that is, of all things which Jesus did from the beginning till that day"—WESLEY.

"This book professes to be the second part of the Gospel of S. Luke, so that the Acts of the Apostles is nothing else than a continuance of the life of our Lord. The experiences of the disciples and first churches are only seen in a true and sacred light when they are understood as the operations of the exalted Lord, and of the Spirit promised and sent by Him"—L. Theophilus, for whose information both this and "the former treatise" were written, was evidently a Gentile Christian. (Luke 1. 3.)

2. **After having given commandment.** "In the third verse S. Luke expresses in general terms what Christ said to His apostles during those 'forty days.' But in the fourth and following verses he declares what He said on the day of His ascension. He had brought his former account down to that day. And from that day begins the Acts of the Apostles"—WESLEY.

The Son did not return to the bosom of the Father until He had secured the progress of His work on earth, by leaving to His chosen apostles the command to preach the gospel and the promise of the Holy Spirit. (Mark 16. 19; Luke 9. 51; 24. 51; ch. 1. 9; 1 Tim. 3. 16; Matt. 28. 19; Mark 16. 15; John 20. 21; ch. 10. 41, 42.)

3. **Being seen of them forty days**—"that is, many times during that space—**and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God**—which was the sum of all His discourses with them before His passion also"—WESLEY.

Many infallible proofs — "proofs that amounted to a demonstration and could not possibly deceive them, for by speaking to, by walking and by eating with them, He gave them a certain indication that He lived; His being seen and handled by them was a sure evidence that He had a true and natural body, and His permitting Thomas to view the scars of His feet and hands, and put his hand into His side, was a certain token that the body which was raised was the same that was crucified and pierced by the soldier's lance"—B. (Mark 16. 14; Luke 24. 36; John 20. 19, 26; 21. 1, 14; 1 Cor. 15. 5.)

4. **Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard from Me.** "When He was with them a little before, as it is recorded"—WESLEY. (Luke 24. 49.)

The last command of our Lord to His disciples was that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait there for the gift of the Holy Ghost. This cost them self-denial, for, according to their natural feelings, they would rather have avoided Jerusalem. But it was the will of God that the Law should go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, that where the enmity of man against the Lord's Anointed broke forth most violently there grace should show itself yet more mightily, and that through the outpouring of the Spirit, through the conversion of thousands, and through many miracles, the name of Christ should triumph most gloriously. (Luke 24. 43, 49; John 14. 16, 26, 27; 15. 26; 16. 7; ch. 2. 33.)

5. **Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.** "And so are all true believers, to the end of the world. But the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost also are here promised"—WESLEY.

Not many days hence. He does not tell them how many, because He would have them to keep themselves every day in a state of mind fit to receive it—a disposition of humility, desire, and expectation. It was a great honour which Christ did John the Baptist, in not only quoting his words but making this great blessing to be the accomplishment of them. Thus He "confirmed the word of His servants" (Isa. 44. 26). (Matt. 3. 11; ch. 11. 16; 19. 4; Joel 3. 18; ch. 2. 4; 11. 15.)

6. **Dost Thou at this time**—"at the time Thou now speakest of, 'not many days hence'—**restore the kingdom to Israel?** They still seemed to dream of an outward, temporal kingdom, in which the Jews should have dominion over all nations. It seems they came in a body, having before concerted the design, to ask when this kingdom would come"—WESLEY.

"They seem to have expected that when the Spirit was in so extraordinary a manner poured out, and the world, according to Christ's prediction, was convinced of sin, of righteousness,

and of judgment, the whole nation of the Jews would own Him for their Messiah, would shake off its subjection to the Romans, and would rise to very extensive and perhaps universal dominion"—B. (Matt. 24. 3; Isa. 1. 26; Dan. 7. 27; Amos 9. 11.)

7. **The times or the seasons.** "'Times,' in the language of the Scripture, denote a longer, 'seasons,' a shorter space. **Which the Father hath put in His own power.** To be revealed, when and to whom it pleaseth Him"—WESLEY.

So the R.V. "His own authority." "Christ is parting from them, and parts in love, and yet He gives them this rebuke, which is intended as a caution to His Church in all ages, to take heed of splitting upon the rock which was fatal to our first parents, an inordinate desire of forbidden knowledge"—M. H. (Matt. 24. 36; Mark 13. 32; 1 Thess. 5. 1.)

8. **But ye shall receive power—and shall be witnesses to Me**—"that is, ye shall be empowered to witness My gospel, both by your preaching and suffering"—WESLEY.

"Their impatience the Lord kindly puts to rest with the word, It is not your business to know, and to their duty He points with the encouraging promise, 'But ye shall receive the Holy Ghost.' Thus they themselves help forward the time and the hour of the Messiah's kingdom on earth. There is no better remedy for distempered speculations than active work in spiritual and secular things"—L. **In Jerusalem, in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.** The Master intimates His will in reference to the order in which the glad tidings shall reach Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles—and the history illustrates the prediction. (Luke 24. 48, 49; John 15. 27; ch. 1. 22; 2. 32.)

9. **When He had spoken these things,** "He blessed them" (Luke 24. 51), and **while they beheld**—had their eyes fixed upon Him, receiving His blessing—**He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.** "He began His ascension in the sight of His disciples; they saw Him go up toward heaven, and had actually their eyes upon Him, with so much care and intention of mind that they could not be deceived. He finished it out of their sight, in a cloud. If we wish to know what became of Him then, we may find (Dan. 7. 13)—'One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him'"—M. H. (Luke 24. 51; John 6. 62.)

10. **While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up**—as though expecting some visible result of His entrance would immediately appear—**two men, in white apparel,** doubtless recognised by the apostles as angels. The white apparel was emblematic of purity and happiness. (Matt. 28. 3; Mark 16. 5; Luke 24. 4; John 20. 12; ch. 10. 3.)

11. **Ye men of Galilee**—a title of honour now, since He that was called a Galilean was exalted to the throne of heaven—**why stand ye gazing?** Religious contemplation and joy are never to make us forgetful of religious duty. **Shall so come in like manner**—"that is, visible in a cloud, in His own person, with the same body, and with such majesty and glory as you have now seen Him ascend with"—B. (Ch. 2. 7; 13. 31; Dan. 7. 13; Matt. 24. 30; Mark 13. 26; Luke 21. 27; John 14. 3; 1 Thess. 1. 10; 4. 16; 2 Thess. 1. 10; Rev. 1. 7.)

12. **A Sabbath day's journey.** "The Jews generally fix this to two thousand cubits, which is not a mile"—WESLEY.

"God had not thus limited them, but they limited themselves. And thus far it is a rule to us, not to journey on the Sabbath any more than in order to the Sabbath work"—M. H. (Luke 24. 52.)

13. **They went up into the upper room.** "The upper rooms, so frequently mentioned in Scripture, were chambers in the highest part of the house, set apart by the Jews for private prayer. These, on account of their being so retired and convenient, the apostles now used for all the offices of religion"—WESLEY. (Ch. 9. 37, 39; 20. 8; Matt. 10. 2-4; Luke 6. 15, 16; Jude 1.)

14. **His brethren**—"His near kinsmen, who, for some time, did not believe; it seems, not till near His death"—WESLEY.

These all continued in prayer and supplication. Their faith in the promise did not prevent, but suggest, the most earnest prayer for its fulfilment. **With the women,** formerly mentioned as attending at the cross, and being early at the sepulchre. **And Mary the mother of Jesus.** Mentioned here the last time in the Scriptures,—not receiving homage, but joining other disciples in prayer. (Ch. 2. 1, 46; Luke 23. 49, 55; 24. 10; Matt. 13. 55.)

Vers. 15-26. MATTHIAS APPOINTED IN THE PLACE OF JUDAS.—15. **The number of persons together**—"who were together in the upper room—**were an hundred and twenty.** But He had undoubtedly many more in other places; of whom more than five hundred saw Him at once after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15. 6)"—WESLEY. (Rev. 3. 4.)

16. **"Men, brethren"** — WESLEY. (R.V. "Brethren.") **This scripture must needs have been fulfilled.** S. Peter does not say that David has spoken of Judas, but that the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David has prophesied of Judas. In the 69th and the 109th Psalms David described his own sufferings, and denounced vengeance on his own enemies, but under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost he employed words which find their fullest accomplishment in the sufferings of the Redeemer, and in the punishment of the traitor, whose expulsion from office and whose horrible end was foreshadowed in the destruction of those who had betrayed David. (Ps. 41. 9; John 13. 18; Luke 22. 47; John 18. 3.)

17, 18. **This man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity**—"that is, a field was purchased with the reward of his iniquity; though very possibly Judas might design the purchase. **And falling down on his face.** It seems the rope broke before, or as, he died"—WESLEY.

S. Matthew mentions one single incident in the fate of the suicide. S. Luke completes the terrible story. (Matt. 10. 4; Luke 6. 16; ch. 1. 25; 12. 25; 20. 24; 21. 19; Matt. 27. 5; Matt. 26. 15; 2 Pet. 2. 15.)

19. **In their own tongue.** "This expression, 'that is the field of blood,' S. Luke seems to have added to the words of S. Peter, for the use of Theophilus and other readers who did not understand Hebrew"—WESLEY.

The name which was shortly afterwards given to the field attests the notoriety of the circumstances connected with it.

20. **His bishopric**—(that is, "his apostleship"—WESLEY; R.V. "office"). The quotations are from two different psalms, and in the former the plural is changed into the singular in order to point out its application more distinctly. The latter is evidently intended to introduce the proposal which was now to be made. Note that his habitation was to be desolate, so that no man should dwell therein, but not so his office. God will not allow His work to suffer eventually through the unfaithfulness of those who are entrusted with it. (Ps. 69. 25; 109. 8.)

21. **All the time that the Lord Jesus was going in and out**—"that is, conversing familiarly—**over us**—as our Master"—WESLEY.

The R.V. retains the translation of the A.V., "among us," but gives the other meaning in the margin. The ambiguity is perhaps intentional. Only one requisite is named in those who were fitted for the apostolic office, constant intercourse with the disciples during the whole of the ministry of the Lord Jesus. This was not only because the apostles were specially witnesses of Jesus, and ought therefore to be able to speak from a long and familiar acquaintance with Him; it was also because a man who had attached himself to Jesus and His disciples during the whole of His public life must have had strong convictions of the truth, and great fidelity to principle, in virtue of which a special office in the Church might with confidence be entrusted to him.

22. **To be a witness with us of His resurrection**—"and of the circumstances which preceded and followed it"—WESLEY.

The witness of the resurrection was the peculiar theme of the apostle's ministry. It is the basis of argument and appeal in the recorded speeches of S. Peter and S. Paul, and it is described as the special subject of the powerful testimony of all the apostles in the primitive Church at Jerusalem. Indeed, this great miracle was the crowning and indispensable attestation of the claims their Master made, and gave Divine authority to their ministry. (Mark 1. 1; John 15. 27; ch. 1. 8, 9; 4. 33.)

23. **And they appointed two.** "So far as the faithful could go by consulting together, but no farther. Therefore here commenced the proper use of the lot, whereby a matter of importance, which cannot be determined by any ordinary method, is committed to the Divine decision"—WESLEY.

Probably the number of men from whom such a choice could be made was not large, and the whole assembly agreed in the fitness of these two. (Ch. 15. 22.)

24. This earnest prayer of the assembled disciples appears to have been addressed especially to their ascended Master, of whom, even in His humiliation, we read that He needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. It confessed their lack of wisdom, and it acknowledged the right of the Head of the Church to appoint His own apostles. So also S. Paul's appointment to the same office was "not by man." (1 Sam. 16. 7; 1 Chron. 28. 9; 29. 17; Jer. 11. 20; 17. 10; ch. 15. 8; Rev. 2. 23.)

25. **Fell**—by his transgression, some time before his death. **To go to his own place**—"that which his crimes had deserved, and which he had chosen for himself, far from the other apostles, in the region of death"—WESLEY. (Ch. 1. 17.)

26. **The lot fell upon Matthias.** "The transaction itself—that is, the filling up of the place of Judas in the apostolic circle by Matthias—has been censured as rash, and contrary to the will of God; for S. Paul was already fixed upon to supply the place of Judas, though called at a later period. But this opinion is entirely unfounded. We find no indication by which God made known His displeasure of the choice; for that we hear nothing of the deeds of Matthias proves as little as the like circumstances show with regard to any of the Twelve. And S. Paul never gave himself out as one of the Twelve; on the contrary, he distinguishes himself from them (1 Cor. 15. 5), he belonged not to them; for he was, by virtue of his calling, the Apostle of the Gentiles"—L. (Gal. 2. 9.)

CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1–13. THE PROMISE FULFILLED—AMAZEMENT OF THE PEOPLE.—1. "At the Pentecost of Sinai in the Old Testament, and the Pentecost of Jerusalem in the New, were the two grand manifestations of God, the legal and the evangelical; the one from the mountain, and the other from heaven; the terrible and the merciful one. **They were all with one accord in one place.** So here was a conjunction of company, minds, and place; the whole hundred and twenty being present"—WESLEY.

"As our Lord was crucified at one of the great Jewish feasts, it was fit that He should be

glorified at another. And this of Pentecost was chosen with peculiar propriety, as next succeeding that of the Passover, at which He suffered; and also, as it was celebrated in commemoration of the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, and as the first-fruits were then offered and anointed. (Ex. 19. 1-11; Lev. 23. 17.) As further reasons why it was proper that this time should be chosen, it may be observed — (1) That as great multitudes of people were wont to assemble at Jerusalem at all the Jewish feasts, so it is probable that the peculiar solemnity of this feast, the general expectation of the Messiah that now prevailed amongst them, and the length of the days (as it was about the middle of summer) would bring greater numbers than usual thither on this occasion. This would make the miracle more public, and cause the fame of it to be spread the sooner and farther, which would contribute much to the propagation of the gospel among all nations. (2) As this feast of the Pentecost happened on the first day of the week, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit on this day, added to the resurrection of Christ taking place on it, greater honour was put upon the day, and it was more manifestly confirmed to be the Christian Sabbath. This directs us, in observing it, to give God praise, particularly for these two great blessings"—B.

All with one accord in one place. "We cannot forget how often, while their Master was with them, there were strifes among them which should be greatest; but now all these strifes were at an end, we hear no more of them; what they had received already of the Holy Ghost, when Christ breathed on them, had in a good measure rectified the mistakes upon which those contests were grounded, and had disposed them to holy love. They had prayed more together of late than usual (Acts 1. 14), and that made them love one another better. By His grace He thus prepared them for the gift of the Holy Ghost; for that blessed Dove comes not where there is noise and clamour, but moves upon the face of the still waters, not the rugged ones. Would we have the Spirit poured upon us from on high, let us be all of one accord, and notwithstanding variety of sentiments and interests, as no doubt there was among those disciples, let us agree to love one another; for where brethren dwell together in unity, there it is that the Lord commands His blessing"—M. H. (Lev. 23. 15; Deut. 16. 9; ch. 20. 16; 1. 14.)

2. **And suddenly there was a sound from heaven.** "So will the Son of Man come to judgment. **And it filled all the house**—that is, all that part of the Temple—**where they were sitting**"—WESLEY.

"Many expositors have supposed that the house where the disciples met belonged to the Temple, namely, that it was one of the thirty rooms in the adjoining buildings of the Temple mentioned by Josephus. But there is no positive ground for the supposition. It is not to be imagined that the disciples, without exciting attention, could have been able to meet together in any part of the Temple in such numbers, and as an exclusive society, unmixed with other Israelites"—L. (Ch. 4. 31.)

3. **And there appeared distinct tongues, as of fire**—"that is, small flames of fire. This is all which the phrase, 'tongues of fire,' means in the language of the LXX. Yet it might intimate God's touching their tongues, as it were (together with their hearts), with Divine fire: His giving them such words as were active and penetrating, even as flaming fire"—WESLEY.

The R.V. translates, "tongues parting asunder," in the *margin*, "parting among them," or "distributing themselves." "Scintillations, coruscations, or flashes of fire, were probably at first frequent through every part of the room where they were sitting; at last these flashes became defined, and a lambent flame, in the form of a cloven tongue, became stationary on the head of each disciple; a proof that the Spirit of God had made each His temple and residence. That unusual appearances of fire were considered emblems of the presence and influence of God both the Scriptures and the Jewish writings amply prove"—C.

4. **And they began to speak with other tongues.** "The miracle was not in the ears of the hearers (as some have unaccountably supposed), but in the mouth of the speakers. And this family praising God together, with the tongues of all the world, was an earnest that the whole world should in due time praise God in their various tongues. **As the Spirit gave them utterance.** Moses, the type of the Law, was of a slow tongue; but the gospel speaks with a fiery and flaming one"—WESLEY.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost—that is, all the hundred and twenty, as appears from ver. 1. "At the time of this wonderful appearance the whole company were replenished with both the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, not only in order to their own salvation, but also and especially to qualify them to be Christ's witnesses to mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, according to His promise. **And began to speak with other tongues**—to speak languages of which they had been before entirely ignorant. They did not speak now and then a word of another tongue, or stammer out some broken sentences, but spoke each language as readily, properly, and elegantly as if it had been their mother-tongue. They spake not from any previous thought, but **as the Spirit gave them utterance**; He furnished them with the matter as well as the language"—B. (Ch. 1. 5; Mark 16. 17; ch. 10. 46; 19. 6; 1 Cor. 12. 10, 28, 30; 13. 1; 14. 2, etc.)

5. **And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews**—"gathered from all parts, by the peculiar providence of God"—WESLEY.

Devout men, disposed to religion, and that

had the fear of God before their eyes. **From every nation under heaven.** "The expression is hyperbolical, noting that there were some from most of the then known parts of the world; as much as ever Tyre was, or London is, the rendezvous of trading people from all parts, Jerusalem at that time was of religious people from all parts"—M. H.

6. **The multitude came together, and were confounded.** "The motions of their minds were swift and various"—WESLEY.

The R.V. "When this sound was heard," referring to ver. 2.

9. **Judea.** "The dialect of which greatly differed from that of Galilee. **Asia**, the country strictly so called"—WESLEY.

Not the continent of Asia, nor what we commonly understand as Asia Minor, but the Roman province embracing the western part of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital.

10. **Roman sojourners.** "Born at Rome, but now living at Jerusalem. These seem to have come to Jerusalem after those who are above-mentioned. All of them were partly Jews by birth, and partly proselytes"—WESLEY.

11. **Cretans.** "One island seems to be mentioned for all. **The wonderful works of God**—probably those which related to the miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, together with the effusion of His Spirit, as a fulfilment of His promises, and the glorious dispensations of gospel grace"—WESLEY.

"They heard them both praise God for these great things, and instruct the people concerning these things **in their own tongue**, according as they perceived the language of their hearers, or those that inquired of them, to be. Now, though perhaps, by dwelling some time at Jerusalem, they were got to be so much masters of the Jewish tongue as that they could have understood the meaning of the disciples if they had spoken that language, yet (1) this was more strange, and helped to convince their judgment that this doctrine was of God; for tongues were for a sign to them that believed not (1 Cor. 14. 22); (2) it was more kind, and helped to engage their affections. And this is to us a plain intimation of the mind and will of God that the Scriptures should be read and public worship performed in the vulgar tongue of the nations"—M. H.

12. **They were all amazed**—"all the devout men"—WESLEY.

13. **But others mocking.** "The world begins with mocking, thence proceeds to cavilling (ch. 4. 7); to threats (ch. 4. 17); to imprisoning (ch. 5. 18); to blows (ch. 5. 40); to slaughter (ch. 7. 58). These mockers appear to have been some of the natives of Judea, and inhabitants of Jerusalem (who understood only the dialect of the country), by the apostle's immediately directing his discourse to them in the next verse. **They are full of sweet wine**—so the Greek word properly signifies: there was no new wine so early in the year as Pentecost. Thus natural men are wont to ascribe supernatural things to mere natural causes; and many times as impudently and unskilfully as in the present case"—WESLEY.

"Not that they were so absurd as to think that wine in the head would enable men to speak languages they never learned; but these, being native Jews, knew not, as the others did, that these were really the languages of other nations, and therefore took what they said to be gibberish and nonsense, such as drunkards sometimes talk"—M. H. Note the word, "mocking."

Vers. 14–47. "THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON AND ITS SUCCESS"—WESLEY.

14. **Then Peter standing up**—"all the gestures, all the words, of S. Peter show the utmost sobriety—**lifted up his voice**—with cheerfulness and boldness—**and said to them.** This discourse has three parts, each of which (vers. 14, 22, 29) begins with the same appellation, **Men**; only to the last part he prefixes with more familiarity the additional word, **Brethren. Men of Judea**—that is, ye that were born in Judea. S. Peter spoke in Hebrew, which they all understood"—WESLEY.

Peter, standing up with the eleven, "who were then in company with him, and who doubtless also, all or at least most of them, addressed the people, some in one language and others in another, speaking by turns, or even all together in different parts of the assembly. S. Peter, however, it appears, spoke first, and, addressing himself to the native Jews, undoubtedly spoke in the language of the country, the Chaldæo-Syriac. It is probable that others, in other languages, uttered similar truths; and certainly it was not by S. Peter's preaching only, but that of all or most of the hundred and twenty, that three thousand souls were that day converted and added to the Church. But S. Peter's sermon is recorded to be an evidence for him that he was thoroughly recovered from his fall, and restored to the Divine favour"—B.

15. **It is but the third hour of the day**—"that is, nine in the morning. And on the solemn festivals the Jews rarely ate or drank anything till noon"—WESLEY. (1 Thess. 5. 17.)

"S. Peter begins with the jeering remarks of some of the spectators, denies and refutes their slanderous supposition by pointing them to the early hour of the day; for the third hour was the first hour of prayer, corresponding to the morning sacrifice; and before this, especially on a feast day, durst no Israelite taste anything. The mildness and moderation with which S. Peter deals with the observation is worthy of remark, and is as noble as it is prudent, dealing with it as the actual though erroneous impression of the people, and not as wicked mockery and blasphemy, spoken against their better knowledge"—L.

16. **But this is that which was spoken by**

the prophet—"but there is another and better way of accounting for this"—WESLEY.

17. "The times of the Messiah are frequently called **the last days**, the gospel being the last dispensation of Divine grace. **I will pour out of My Spirit**—not on the day of Pentecost only—**upon all flesh**—on persons of every age, sex, and rank. **And your young men shall see visions.** In young men the outward senses are most vigorous, and the bodily strength is entire, whereby they are best qualified to sustain the shock which usually attends the visions of God. In old men the internal senses are most vigorous, suited to Divine dreams. Not that the old are wholly excluded from the former, nor the young from the latter"—WESLEY.

"A bare denial does not suffice for an answer, and would fail to make any favourable impression. In order to convince, we must not only say No, but also Yes, and be able to testify a truth. And this S. Peter does. He explains that the fact at which they wondered was nothing else than the fulfilment of the Divine promise made by the prophet Joel"—L. (Isa. 44. 3; Ezek. 11. 19; 36. 27; Joel 2. 28, 29; Zech. 12. 10; John 7. 38.)

18. **And upon My servants**—"on those who are literally in a state of servitude"—WESLEY.

"These words are quoted to show that under the gospel dispensation neither bond nor free, male nor female, is excluded from sharing in the gifts and graces of the Spirit"—C. (Ch. 21. 4, 9, 10; 1 Cor. 12. 10, 28; 14. 1.)

19. **And I will show prodigies in heaven above, and signs on earth beneath.** "Great revelations of grace are usually attended with great judgments on those who reject it. 'In heaven'—treated of (ver. 20). 'On earth'—described in this verse. Such signs were those mentioned (ver. 22) before the passion of Christ; which are so mentioned as to include those at the very time of the passion and resurrection, at the destruction of Jerusalem, and at the end of the world. Terrible indeed were those prodigies in particular which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem: such as the flaming sword hanging over the city, and the fiery comet, pointing down upon it for a year; the light that shone upon the Temple and the altar in the night, as if it had been noonday; the opening of the great and heavy gate of the Temple without hands; the voice heard from the most holy place, 'Let us depart hence'; the admonition of Jesus, the son of Ananus, crying for seven years together, 'Woe, woe, woe'; the vision of contending armies in the air, and of intrenchments thrown up against a city there represented; the terrible thunders and lightnings, and dreadful earthquakes, which every one considered as portending some great evil;—all which, through the singular providence of God, are particularly recorded by Josephus. **Blood** — war and slaughter. **Fire** — burnings of houses and towns, involving all in clouds of **smoke**"—WESLEY.

"The prophecy of Joel was primarily fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, but also looked onwards to its destruction by the Romans, and ultimately to the end of the world itself. S. Peter has good reason for not ending his quotation at ver. 18, but adding also what follows; he places intentionally, as the background of his picture, the Divine judgments, indeed the final judgment, in order to display the fate of the enemies of God, and thus more impressively to point souls to Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Deliverer"—L. (Joel 2. 30, 31.)

20. **The moon shall be turned into blood**—"a bloody colour—**before the day of the Lord**—eminently, the last day; though not excluding any other day or season, wherein the Lord shall manifest His glory, in taking vengeance of His adversaries"—WESLEY. (Matt. 24. 29; Mark 13. 24; Luke 21. 25.)

21. **But whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord.** "This expression implies the whole of religion, and particularly prayer uttered in faith. **Shall be saved**—from all those plagues; from sin and hell"—WESLEY.

"Of course the promise is of universal application, yet it had a special fulfilment at the destruction of Jerusalem. That all the Christians did escape, not one of them perishing in these devastations, stands attested by most respectable authority"—C. (Rom. 10. 13.)

22. **Approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.** "Observe the amazing stress which S. Peter laid upon Christ's miracles—(1) the matter of fact cannot be denied; they were done 'in the midst of you'—in the midst of your country, your city, your solemn assemblies; 'as ye yourselves also know,' you have been eye-witnesses of His miracles, and I appeal to yourselves; (2) the inference from them cannot be disputed—if He did these miracles, certainly God approved of Him, showed Him to be, what He declared Himself to be, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world"—B. We recognise one reason for the command to "begin at Jerusalem." (John 3. 2; 14. 10, 11; ch. 10. 38; Heb. 2. 4.)

23. **Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.** "The apostle here anticipates an objection, Why did God suffer such a Person to be so treated; did He not know what wicked men intended to do; and had He not power to prevent it? Yea, He knew all that those wicked men intended to do. And He had power to blast all their designs in a moment. But He did not exert that power, because He 'so loved the world'; because it was the determinate counsel of His love to redeem mankind from eternal death by the death of His only-begotten Son"—WESLEY.

By wicked hands (R.V. "by the hand of lawless men"—or "men without the law"). "S. Peter places the sufferings of Jesus in a twofold light, the human and the Divine. On the human side he represents them as a complicated act, in which different persons co-operated; the chief persons to whom the guilt belongs are the Israelites; the instrumental persons, by whose hands the crucifixion was performed, are the Gentiles who have not the Law (of Moses), that is to say the Romans, not only the Roman soldiers but also the Roman governor; and lastly, there is in the word **delivered**, at least an allusion to the treason of Judas. But the apostle, in saying to all his hearers without distinction, **ye have slain Him**, whereas, without doubt, there were many who were not present when Jesus suffered several weeks before, evidently affirms that the crucifixion of Jesus was an act of the nation as such, and involved national guilt. But in order to answer the natural inquiry, How could this have happened if Jesus was such a man of God? S. Peter adverts to the Divine side of the transaction. God not only knew all this, but also had predetermined it"—L. (Matt. 26. 24; Luke 22. 22; 24. 44; ch. 3. 18; 4. 28; 5. 30.)

24. **Having loosed the pains of death.** "The word properly means, the pains of a woman in travail. **As it was not possible that He should be held under it.** Because the Scripture must needs be fulfilled"—WESLEY.

"Though S. Peter's declaration concerning the death of Christ is rich in meaning, yet it is expressed in few words. On the other hand, he treats of the resurrection of Jesus in not less than nine verses, from which it is evident that it was this which he held it to be his chief task to testify. What S. Peter says of the resurrection has a twofold character—(1) he bears simple witness to it, in his own name, and in that of the apostles, who were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of their Master's resurrection-life; (2) he views the resurrection of Christ in the light of prophecy, as a fact which was predicted by David, and must be fulfilled in Jesus. The expression 'it was not possible' has been variously interpreted; but the chief thing affirmed, and according to the context the only thing, is that Jesus could not possibly be overcome of death, because it was prophesied, and the Divine promise must be fulfilled. This, however, does not exclude the idea that the victorious power and fulness of life of the Anointed of God is the internal ground both of the promise and its fulfilment"—L. (Ch. 2. 32; 3. 15; 4. 10; 10. 40; 13. 30, 34; 17. 31; Rom. 4. 24; 8. 11; 1 Cor. 6. 14; 15. 15; 2 Cor. 4. 14; Gal. 1. 1; Eph. 1. 20; Col. 2. 12; 1 Thess. 1. 10; Heb. 13. 20; 1 Pet. 1. 21.)

25. **For David speaketh concerning Him**—viz. Ps. 16. 8—(R.V. **I beheld the Lord**, etc.). The entire quotation is from the LXX. version. S. Peter argues that it could not be of himself that the Psalmist spake, for they had evidence that the words could not be truly said of him; but that, having regard to God's promise, he spake of Him who was to be born from his line, as identified with himself.

26. **My tongue was glad.** "In the psalm it is 'My glory rejoiceth,' for our tongue is our glory, the faculty of speech is an honour to us"—B. (Comp. the Prayer-Book version of Ps. 108. 1, "I will give praise with the best member that I have.")

27. **Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades**—"the invisible world. But it does not appear that ever our Lord went into hell. His soul, when it was separated from the body, did not go thither, but to Paradise (Luke 23. 43). The meaning is, Thou wilt not leave My soul in its separate state, not suffer My body to be corrupted"—WESLEY.

And when we say in the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into hell," we mean that the death of Christ was a real death, that the body and soul were separated, the body going into the sepulchre, the soul to the abode of separate spirits, called Hades, or the invisible world.

28. **Thou hast made known to Me the ways of life**—"that is, Thou hast raised Me from the dead." **Thou wilt fill Me with joy by Thy countenance**—"when I ascend to Thy right hand"—WESLEY.

29. **The patriarch**, "a more honourable title than king"—WESLEY.

Let me freely speak unto you—"Let it be no offence to you if I tell you that David cannot be understood here as speaking of himself." **That he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.** "And as no one ever pretended that he was risen, therefore he could not say of himself that he should not see corruption"—B. (1 Kings 2. 10; ch. 13. 36.)

30, 31. **Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins** (R.V., following the best manuscripts, **He would set one upon His throne; he, foreseeing this, spake of the resurrection of the Christ**, etc.). (2 Sam. 7. 12, 13; Ps. 132. 11; Luke 1. 32, 69; Rom. 1. 3; 2 Tim. 2. 8.) "S. Peter argues thus: It is plain David did not speak this of himself; therefore he spake of Christ's rising. But how does that promise of a kingdom imply His resurrection? Because He did not receive it before He died, and because His kingdom was to endure for ever"—WESLEY. (2 Sam. 7. 13; Ps. 16. 10; ch. 13. 35.)

32. **We all are witnesses.** The reference is especially to the Eleven, with whom S. Peter stood up (ch. 1. 14), though not to the exclusion of many others who were present. (Ch. 2. 24; 1. 8.)

33. **Being exalted by the right hand of God.** "'By the right hand'—that is,

as were saved—"from their sins; from the guilt and power of them"—WESLEY. (R.V. translates "those that were being saved.") (Luke 2. 52; ch. 4. 33; Rom. 14. 18; ch. 5. 14; 11. 24.)

In this remarkable passage we have a striking description of the primitive Church—(1) The members of it were regular in their attendance on holy ordinances; they were constant in their attendance on the preaching of the word, frequently received the Lord's Supper, continued instant in prayer, social and public as well as private, and abounded in praise and thanksgiving; (2) their charity was as eminent as their piety—they were peculiarly loving and kind to one another, suffering no one to want what another had; (3) God owned them for His people, giving daily tokens of His presence, and bearing testimony to the word of His grace, so that multitudes, both of men and women, were added to the society of the faithful.

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1–10. THE MIRACULOUS CURE OF THE LAME MAN.—1. **The ninth hour.** "The Jews divided the time from sunrise to sunset into twelve hours, which were, consequently, of unequal length at different times of the year, as the days were longer or shorter. The third hour, therefore, was nine in the morning; the ninth, three in the afternoon; but not exactly. For the third was the middle space between sunrise and noon; which, if the sun rose at five (the earliest hour of its rising in that climate), was half an hour after eight; if at seven (the latest hour of its rising there), was half an hour after nine. The chief hours of prayer were the third and ninth; at which seasons the morning and evening sacrifices were offered, and incense (a kind of emblem representing prayer) burnt on the golden altar"—WESLEY.

What is said in the previous chapter of the whole Church, that they continued daily in the Temple, is here seen in a stated instance. The two apostles repair from the city to the Temple at the hour of prayer. (Ch. 2. 46; Ps. 55. 17.)

2. **At the gate of the Temple called Beautiful.** "This gate was added by Herod the Great, between the Court of the Gentiles and that of Israel. It was thirty cubits high, and fifteen broad, and made of Corinthian brass, more pompous in its workmanship and splendour than those that were covered with silver and gold"—WESLEY. (Ch. 14. 8; John 9. 8.)

4. **Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John**—"that is, looking steadfastly at him, feeling doubtless a strong emotion of soul, which intimated to him that the Divine power would be exerted in a miracle"—B.

6. **Then said Peter, Silver and gold have I none.** "How unlike his supposed successor! Can the bishop of Rome either say or do the same?"—WESLEY.

This, we may observe, was after the estates were sold (ch. 2. 45), and shows how far the apostles were from enriching themselves by the treasures which passed through their hands. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**—"by the power of Him who, in contempt, is called Jesus of Nazareth"—B. (Ch. 4. 10.) **Rise up and walk** (R.V. "Walk").

7. **And lifted him up.** "A sign, intimating the supernatural help he should receive, if he exerted himself as he was commanded. When God by His word enjoins us to rise, and to walk in the ways of His commandments, if we mix faith with that word, and rely upon the power of it, He will give us His Spirit, to take us by the hand and lift us up. If we set ourselves to do what we can, in dependence on the Divine aid, God has promised grace to enable us to do what of ourselves we cannot"—B. **His feet and ancle bones received strength.** "Which would not have been the case if he had not attempted to rise"—B.

8. **Entered with them into the Temple.** Into the Court of Israel, to offer the first-fruits of his thanksgivings, sometimes **walking** and sometimes **leaping**, for joy, and to show that he was perfectly healed. **And praising God**—"in a rapture of astonishment and thankfulness. This man, being but newly cured, was in this excess of joy and thankfulness; all true converts walk and praise God, but young converts perhaps leap more, as it were, in His praises"—B. (Isa. 35. 6.)

9, 10. **All the people saw—and knew.** "They were not so perverse as to make any doubt whether he was the same man that had sat begging, as the Pharisees had questioned concerning the blind man that Christ cured (John 9. 18), for they saw him walking and praising God, and probably took notice of a change in his mind; for he was now as loud in praising God as he had used to be in begging relief. **And they were filled with wonder and amazement.** This effect appears to have been produced by the late effusion of the Spirit; the people, at least those in Jerusalem, were more affected with the miracles which the apostles wrought than they had been with those of the same kind performed by Christ Himself"—B. (Like John 9. 8.)

Vers. 11–26. PETER'S SERMON IN THE TEMPLE. —11. **As he held Peter and John** (R.V.)—full of gratitude for the great blessing he had received through their instrumentality—**the people ran together**—some to gratify their curiosity, others with a desire to hear them—**in the porch called Solomon's**—a covered entrance to the Court of Israel, said to be a remnant of the original temple of Solomon. Jesus walked there, and spoke to a less patient audience than S. Peter had. (John 10. 23, etc.)

12. **Peter answered the people**—who were

running together, and inquiring into the circumstances of the fact.

13. **The God of our fathers.** "This was wisely introduced in the beginning of his discourse, that it might appear they taught no new religion, inconsistent with that of Moses, and were far from having the least design to divert their regards from the God of Israel. **Hath glorified His Son**—by this miracle. **Whom ye delivered up**—when God had given Him to you, and when ye ought to have received Him as a most precious treasure, and to have preserved Him with all your power"—WESLEY.

His servant Jesus (R.V. *margin*, "Child"). (Ch. 5. 30; John 7. 39; 12. 16; 17. 1; Matt. 27. 2, 20; Mark 15. 11; Luke 23. 18, 20, 21; John 18. 40; 19. 15; ch. 13. 28.)

14. **Ye renounced the Holy One** (R.V. "The Holy and Righteous One")—whom God had marked out as such. **And the Just One**—"even in the judgment of Pilate"—WESLEY. (Ps. 16. 10; Mark 1. 24; Luke 1. 35; ch. 2. 27; 4. 27; 7. 52; 22. 14.)

15. **And killed the Prince of Life** (*margin*, "Author"). "Even Him who had life in Himself, and was appointed to be the Author of life, spiritual and eternal, to His followers. You did at once a wicked and a foolish thing, in taking away His life who would have been your Life and Saviour, and in supposing you could conquer and extinguish in death the Prince of Life"—B. **Whereof we are witnesses.** The apostles were specially appointed to be witnesses of the resurrection. (Heb. 2. 10; 5. 9; 1 John 5. 11; ch. 2. 24, 32.)

16. **His name**—"Himself; His power and love. **The faith which is by Him**—of which He is the Giver, as well as the Object"—WESLEY.

Through faith in His name. "A confidence in Him, a dependence on Him, a believing application to Him, and expectation from Him. Dr. Lightfoot suggests that faith is twice named in this verse, because of the apostle's faith in doing this miracle, and the cripple's faith in receiving it; but I suppose it relates chiefly, if not only, to the former; they that wrought this miracle by faith derived power from Christ to work it, and therefore returned all the glory to Him. By this true and just account of the miracle, S. Peter both confirmed the great gospel truth they were to preach to the world—that Jesus Christ is the great Healer and Saviour, and recommended the great gospel duty of faith in Him, as the only way of receiving benefit by Him"—B. (Matt. 9. 22; ch. 4. 10; 14. 9.)

17. **And now, brethren**—"a word full of courtesy and compassion—**I wot**—he speaks to their heart—**that through ignorance ye did it**—which lessened, though it could not take away, the guilt. **As did also your rulers**—the prejudice lying from the authority of the chief priests and elders he here removes, but with great tenderness. He does not call them 'our,' but 'your,' rulers; for as the Jewish dispensation ceased at the death of Christ, consequently so did the authority of its rulers"—WESLEY.

"This was the language of S. Peter's charity, and it teaches us to make the best of those whom we desire to make better; not to aggravate, but, as far as may be, to extenuate their faults and sins. Perhaps S. Peter perceived, by the countenances of his hearers, that they were struck with great horror at being informed that they had murdered the Messiah, the Prince of Life, and that they were ready to sink down in distress; and therefore he saw it needful to mitigate a little the charge he had made against them, that they might not utterly despair. And in speaking as he did, he only followed the example of his Master, who prayed for His murderers and pleaded 'they know not what they do'"—B. (Luke 23. 34; John 16. 3; ch. 13. 27; 1 Cor. 2. 8; 1 Tim. 1. 13.)

18. **But God**—"who was not ignorant, permitted this which He had foretold, to bring good out of it"—WESLEY.

"Though this was no extenuation of their guilt, yet it was an encouragement to them to repent, and to hope for mercy: first, because God's gracious designs were carried on by it, as Joseph reminded his brethren (Gen. 50. 19, 20), and especially because the sufferings and death of Christ were the ground for that display of mercy He now encouraged them to hope for"—B. (Luke 24. 44; ch. 26. 22; Ps. 22; Isa. 50. 6; 53. 5, etc.; Dan. 9. 26; 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.)

19. **Be converted**—"be turned from sin and Satan unto God. (See Acts 26. 20.) But this term, so common in modern writings, very rarely occurs in Scripture; perhaps not once in the sense we now use it—for an entire change from vice to holiness. **That the times of refreshing**—wherein God largely bestows His refreshing grace—**may come**—to you also. To others they will assuredly come, whether ye repent or not"—WESLEY.

So the R.V. "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." "A glorious model how to preach repentance in an apostolic manner. We are always in danger of running into extremes, and either exciting in people too soon and too hastily the hope of forgiveness of sins, or demanding too much from them before we assure them of forgiveness. The apostles teach us the true medium"—L. "Times of refreshing"—S. Peter apprehended that the conversion of the Jews, as a people, would be attended with some extraordinary scene of prosperity and joy, and would open a speedy way to Christ's descent from heaven, in order to the restitution of all things. (Ch. 2. 38.)

20. **And He may send.** "The apostles generally speak of our Lord's second coming as

being just at hand. **Who was before appointed** — before the foundation of the world"—WESLEY.

R.V. "And that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus" —"1. You shall have Christ in His spiritual presence in and by His Spirit accompanying His word. 2. The apostle meant that God would send Christ to destroy the unbelieving and persecuting Jews, and so deliver His true servants, and give them a quiet possession of the gospel, which would be a time of refreshing to all that received it. 3. There is a reference to the conversion of the Jews, which when it takes place will be a time of refreshing indeed both to them and to the whole Church"—B.

21. **Whom the heavens must receive.** "You must not expect Him to appear immediately; He has ascended to heaven, and remains there. **Till the times of the restitution of all things.** The apostle here comprises at once the whole course of the times of the New Testament, between our Lord's ascension and His coming in glory. The most eminent of these are the apostolic age, and that of the spotless Church, which will consist of all the Jews and Gentiles united, after all persecutions and apostasies are at an end"—WESLEY.

All His holy prophets. (The R.V. omits "all"). (Ch. 1. 11; Matt. 17. 11; Luke 1. 70.)

22. **For Moses indeed said** ("the first of these prophets whose writings are preserved")—**The Lord shall raise you up a prophet like unto me**—"and that in many particulars. Moses instituted the Jewish Church; Christ instituted the Christian. With the prophesying of Moses was soon joined the effect, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; with the prophesying of Christ that grand effect, the deliverance of His people from sin and death. Those who could not bear the voice of God yet desired to hear that of Moses; much more do those who are wearied with the Law desire to hear the voice of Christ. Moses spake to the people all and only those things which God had commanded him; so did Christ. But though He was like Moses, yet was He infinitely superior to him in person as well as in office"—WESLEY.

The R.V., however, gives in the *margin*, instead of "like unto me," the rendering "as He raised up me." (Deut. 18. 15, 18, 19; ch. 7. 37.)

23. **Every soul, who will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.** "One cannot imagine a more masterly address than this, to warn the Jews of the dreadful consequence of their infidelity, in the very words of their favourite prophet, out of a pretended zeal for whom they rejected Christ"—WESLEY.

24. **Yea, and all the prophets** — "that succeeded Moses, particularly **from Samuel, have likewise foretold of these days**—the days of the Messiah"—WESLEY.

25. **Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant**—"that is, heirs of the prophecies. To you properly, as the first heirs, belong the prophecies and the covenant"—WESLEY.

The R.V. also "sons of the prophets." Those of the later ages of the Jewish Church might fitly be called "the children of the prophets," because they heard the voices of the prophets, which were read in their synagogues every Sabbath day. (Ch. 13. 27.) More distinctly still were they "children of the covenant," for God's covenant was made with **Abraham and his seed.** (Ch. 2. 39; Rom. 9. 4, 8; 15. 8; Gal. 3. 26; Gen. 12. 3; 18. 15; 22. 18; 26. 4; 28. 14; Gal. 3. 8.)

26. **Unto you first.** "The apostle says God sent Christ to the Jews first, because the personal ministry of Christ was confined to them; and after His resurrection, though He was to be preached by His apostles to all nations, yet they were to begin at Jerusalem (Luke 24. 47); and when they went to other nations, they always first preached to the Jews whom they found there"—B. **God having raised up His Son Jesus.** (R.V. translates "having raised His Servant," and omits the name.) S. Peter repeats the title which he gave to his Master in ver. 13, and in both cases refers to Isa. 42. 1, which was a recognised prophecy of the Messiah. **To bless you, by turning you from your iniquities**—"which is the great gospel blessing"—WESLEY. (Matt. 10. 5; 15. 24; Luke 24. 47; ch. 13. 32, 33, 46; ver. 22; Matt. 1. 21.)

CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1-12. BEGINNING OF PERSECUTION—FIRST ARREST OF PETER AND JOHN.—1. **And as they were speaking to the people, the priests came upon them.** "So wisely did God order that they should first bear a full testimony to the truth in the Temple, and then in the great Council; to which they could have had no access had they not been brought before it as criminals"—WESLEY.

"The priests"—those whose duty it was at the time to take charge of the Temple services, and who probably took offence at the multitudes assembled in the Temple court. **The captain of the Temple** had charge of the guard of priests and Levites who watched the Temple at night. He was apparently a civil as well as a religious officer, for we find he went with the officers to make the second arrest of the apostles. (Luke 24. 4; ch. 5. 24.)

2. **The priests being grieved**—"that the name of Jesus was preached to the people. Especially they were offended at the doctrine of His resurrection; for as they had put Him to death, His rising again proved Him to be the 'Just One,' and so brought His blood upon their heads. The priests were grieved, lest their office and Temple services should decline, and Christianity take root, through

the preaching of the apostles, and their power of working miracles. **The captain of the Temple**—being concerned to prevent all sedition and disorder. **The Sadducees** — being displeased at the overturning all their doctrines; particularly with regard to the resurrection"—WESLEY.

For "grieved" the R.V. has "sore troubled." (Matt. 22. 23; ch. 23. 8.)

3. **It was now eventide.** "As S. Peter and S. John went up to the Temple at three in the afternoon the expression here makes it probable that some considerable time was spent in preaching to the people. Consequently, what we have in the former chapter is only an abstract, or a specimen, of the discourses delivered on the occasion; which is probably generally the case as to the speeches recorded by the sacred historians as well as others"—B.

4. **Howbeit many believed. The number of the men**—"besides women and children—**was about five thousand**—so many did our Lord now feed at once with the bread from heaven!"—WESLEY.

The R.V. "The number of the men came to be about five thousand," including of course the three thousand converted at Pentecost. But, in the five thousand, women and children were not reckoned; the word "men" is emphatic.

5, 6. A meeting of the Sanhedrim, who are described by their proper titles—**rulers, and elders, and scribes**—"who were eminent for power, for wisdom, and for learning"—and some of them by their names. **Annas**—"who had been **the high priest — and Caiaphas**—who was so then"—WESLEY.

Annas and Caiaphas are mentioned together as high priests when John commenced his ministry. (Luke 3. 2.) At both times Caiaphas was the actual high priest, but his father-in-law Annas, having previously filled the office for several years, still retained the name and much of the authority. (Luke 3. 2; John 11. 49; 18. 13.)

7. **Set them in the midst.** The Sanhedrim sat in a circle. **By what name**—"by what authority—**have ye done this**? They seem to speak ambiguously on purpose"—WESLEY.

"The special point of inquiry, in reference to the miracle, was the power by which the apostles had acted, the person whom they had named, and on whom they had relied. Of course the rulers knew very well that the apostles preached Jesus, and the resurrection of the dead, and the healing of the sick, through Jesus. They ask them to tease them, and to see if they could get anything out of them that looked criminal"—M. H.

8, 9. **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost.** "That moment. God moves His instruments, not when they please, but just when He sees it needful. **Ye rulers**—he gives them the honour due to their office"—WESLEY.

"On two different occasions, recorded in Matt. 10. 9 and in Luke 21. 14, Jesus had promised to His disciples that in their trial before rulers and in the synagogues, the Holy Spirit would speak in them and through them, so that it was unnecessary for them to be careful how or what they should speak—yea, that their adversaries would not be able to resist or answer their wisdom and eloquence. Here, for the first time, the promise was fulfilled. Precisely at the moment when it was necessary and important—'then,' S. Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost; that is, the Holy Spirit, who since Pentecost had dwelt in him and the other disciples, was now poured more fully into his mind and heart, so that he was able to defend himself, and to bear testimony for Jesus, not only fearlessly and joyously, but also with wisdom and in the most suitable manner. **If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man** (R.V.). As regards the miracle, S. Peter in his answer testifies that it was a good deed and not an evil deed which he and S. John had performed, that the impotent man was actually healed, made whole, 'saved,' for which he appeals to the man himself who was present, that the power of healing and salvation rested in Jesus Christ the Crucified and Risen One—yea, that salvation for all men under the whole heaven is given only in Jesus Christ"—L.

10. **Be it known to you all.** "Probably the herald of God proclaimed this with a loud voice. **Whom God hath raised from the dead**—they knew in their own consciences that it was so; and though they had hired the soldiers to tell a most senseless and incredible tale to the contrary (Matt. 28. 12–15), yet it is observable they did not, so far as we can learn, dare to plead it before S. Peter and S. John"—WESLEY. (Ch. 3. 6, 16; 2. 24.)

11. **The stone set at nought of you the builders** (R.V.). This passage, from Ps. 118, was first quoted by our Lord (Matt. 21. 42). S. Peter inserts the emphatic "you" as an interpretation and comment on the prophecy. (Ps. 118. 22; Isa. 28. 16; Matt. 21. 42.)

12. **There is no other name whereby we must be saved.** "The apostle uses a beautiful gradation from the temporal deliverance which had been wrought for the poor cripple, by the power of Christ, to that of a much nobler and more important kind, which is wrought by Christ for impotent and sinful souls. He therein follows the admirable custom of his great Lord and Master, who continually took occasion from earthly, to speak of spiritual things"—WESLEY. (Matt. 1. 21; ch. 10. 43; 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6.)

13. **"Illiterate and uneducated men.** Even by such men (though not by such only) hath God in all ages caused His word to be preached before the world"—WESLEY.

The boldness of Peter and John. "The word implies freedom and readiness of speech, such as would not be expected from the un-

learned. Christ's speeches had produced a similar impression in Jerusalem. (John 7. 15.) **They took knowledge of them,** etc. When they understood that they had been with Jesus, had been conversant with Him, and trained up under Him, they knew what to impute their boldness to—nay, their boldness in Divine things was enough to show with whom they had associated, and from whom they had had their education"—B. (Matt. 11. 25; 1 Cor. 1. 27.)

Vers. 15-22. THE ATTEMPT TO SILENCE THE APOSTLES.—15, 16, 17. **A notable miracle. We cannot deny it, yet that it spread no further.** That faith is not an affair of mathematical evidence and demonstration, but of the heart and will, is evident from the result of this judicial transaction. The cured cripple stood as a visible proof, an unexceptionable witness. That his healing was effected by the apostles, in the name of Jesus, no one questioned. Nothing was wanting to an intellectual conviction in the members of the Sanhedrim. Yet they resisted, and endeavoured to put down, all preaching or speaking of Jesus. (John 11. 47; ch. 3. 9, 10.)

17. **But that it spread no further.** "For they look upon it as a mere gangrene. So do all the world upon genuine Christianity. **Let us severely threaten them.** Great men, ye do nothing. They have a greater than you to flee to"—WESLEY.

"See how the malice of hell fights against the counsels of heaven. God will have the knowledge of Christ to spread over the whole world; but the chief priests would have it spread no further; at which He that sits in heaven laughs"—B.

18. **"They charged them not to speak**—privately. **Nor teach**—publicly"—WESLEY.

"We do not find that they gave them any reason why the doctrine of Christ must be suppressed; they did not say it was either false or dangerous, or of any ill tendency; and they were ashamed to own the true reason, namely, that it testified against their hypocrisy and wickedness"—B. (Ch. 5. 40.)

19. **"Whether it be just to obey you rather than God, judge ye.** Was it not by the same Spirit that Socrates, when they were condemning him to death for teaching the people, said, 'O ye Athenians, I embrace and love you; but I will *obey God rather than you.* And if you would spare my life on condition I should cease to teach my fellow-citizens, I would die a thousand times rather than accept the proposal'"—WESLEY. (Ch. 5. 29.)

21. **Finding nothing how they might punish them.** "Not thinking it proper, under all the circumstances, to proceed to any further extremities at that time, since they could find nothing in their conduct for which they could punish them with any show of reason. **Because of the people,** who had been eye-witnesses of the miracle, and whose resentment they feared"—B. **They all glorified God.** "So much wiser were the people than those who were over them!"—WESLEY. (Matt. 21. 26; Luke 20. 6, 19; 32. 2; ch. 5. 26; 3. 7, 8.)

22. **For the man was above forty years old.** "The disease was of long standing, and therefore the more inveterate; but all difficulties, small or great, yield equally to the sovereign power of God. It is as easy with God to convert a sinner of forty or fourscore, as one of ten years old"—C. "To one who looked upon the circumstances with a physician's eye, as Luke would, this feature would be most noticeable"—C. B.

Vers. 23-37. THE CHURCH AT PRAYER—RENEWED BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.—23. **And being let go, they went to their own company**—"who probably were at this time met together, praying for them"—B. (Ch. 12. 12.)

24. **When they heard that**—"a Divine inspiration coming upon all who were present, in an extraordinary manner—**they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said**"—B. "The sense is, Lord, Thou hast all power. And Thy word is fulfilled. Men do rage against Thee; but it is in vain"—WESLEY. (2 Kings 19. 15.)

25. **Who by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David Thy servant, didst say** (R.V.) (Ps. 2. 1.)

27. **Whom Thou hast anointed.** "To be King of Israel"—WESLEY. (Matt. 26. 3; Luke 22. 2; 23. 1-8; 1. 13; 4. 18; John 10. 36.)

28. "The sense is, But they could do no more than Thou wast pleased to permit, according to Thy *determinate counsel,* to save mankind by the sufferings of Thy Son. And what was needful for this end Thou did'st *before determine* to permit to be done"—WESLEY. (Ch. 2. 23; 3. 18).

The number of circumstances in this single prophecy enumerated as fulfilled is very remarkable.

29. **With all boldness.** (Vers. 13, 31; ch. 9. 27; 13. 46; 14. 3; 19. 8; 26. 26; 28. 31; Eph. 6. 19.)

30. **While Thou stretchest forth Thy hand to heal** (R.V.) "Exertest Thy power"—WESLEY. (Ch. 2. 43; 5. 12; 3. 6, 16; ver. 29.)

"This is the first Christian Church prayer that we know. The worshippers relied upon the omnipotence of God, who made heaven and earth. They pleaded the Divine promise concerning the establishment of the kingdom of His Son. They show the genuine Christian spirit, nothing of revenge or carnal zeal, nothing about the destruction of their enemies. As Christ came not to judge the world but to save it, so the apostles and believers are not inflamed with the judicial and fiery zeal of Elias, but with warm love to souls, who are to be rescued by their words and deeds, and brought to salvation in Christ"—L. "It must be

remembered that the word Child as applied to the Lord Jesus in vers. 27 and 30 is in the R.V. more accurately Servant; it is the same word which in ver. 25 is applied to David. The reference is to Christ, not in His eternal Sonship, but in His official character"—C. B.

31. **The place was shaken.** "This earthquake was an evidence of the presence of God, and a most direct answer to their prayer, so far as the prayer concerned themselves. The earthquake proclaimed the 'stretched-out arm of God'"—C. **And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost**—"afresh"—WESLEY.

"One communication of the Holy Spirit always makes way and disposes for another. Neither apostle nor private Christian can subsist in the Divine life without frequent influences from on high. Had these disciples depended on their pentecostal grace, they might have sunk now under the terror and menaces of their combined and powerful foes. God gives for the time being, but no stock for futurity, because He will keep all His followers continually dependent on Himself"—C. **And spake with boldness.** "So their petition was granted"—WESLEY. (Ch. 2. 2, 4; 16. 26; ver. 29.)

32. **And the multitude of them that believed** — "Every individual person"—WESLEY.

Were of one heart and one soul. "Their love, their hopes, their passions joined. **And not so much as one**—in so great a multitude this was a necessary consequence of that union of heart — **said that ought of the things which he had was his own.** It is impossible any one should, while all were of one soul. So long as that truly Christian love continued, they could not but have all things common"—WESLEY.

"Each was as welcome to participate in them as the original proprietor could be, being, in those new bonds of Christian fellowship, as dear to him as himself"—B. (Ch. 5. 12; Rom. 15. 5, 6; 2 Cor. 13. 11; Phil. 1. 27; 2. 2; 1 Pet. 3. 8; ch. 2. 44.)

33. **Gave the apostles their witness** (R.V.). **And great grace**—"a large measure of the inward power of the Holy Ghost"—WESLEY.

Was upon them all. "Directing all their thoughts, words, and actions"—WESLEY.

The power of the apostles' ministry is specially mentioned as given in answer to the prayer in ver. 29. (Ch. 1. 8, 22; 2. 47.)

34. **Neither was there any one among them that wanted.** "We may observe, this is added as the proof that 'great grace was upon them all.' And it was the immediate, necessary consequence of it; yea, and must be, to the end of the world. In all ages and nations, the same cause, the same degree of grace, could not but, in like circumstances, produce the same effect. **For whosoever were possessors of houses or lands sold them**—not that there was any particular command for this; but there was great grace and great love; of which this was the natural fruit"—WESLEY.

"The words do certainly seem to import that all the possessors of land in the Church sold something, but not that they disposed of their entire possessions; it is not even mentioned that anyone disposed of all that he had"—L. (Ch. 2. 45.)

35. **And distribution was made.** "At first by the apostles themselves, afterwards by them whom they appointed"—WESLEY.

36, 37. **A son of consolation.** "Not only on account of his so largely assisting the poor with his fortune, but also of those peculiar gifts of the Spirit, whereby he was so well qualified both to comfort and to exhort"—WESLEY.

Having land — ("an estate" — WESLEY; R.V. "a field"). "Probably of considerable value. It is not unlikely that it was in Cyprus. Being a Levite he had no portion, no distinct inheritance, in Israel"—WESLEY.

"It is worthy of remark that the two apostles of the Gentiles, though of Jewish extraction, were both born in Gentile countries, S. Paul in Cilicia, S. Barnabas in Cyprus. This gave them many advantages; served to remove prejudices from the heathens, and gave them no doubt much facility in the Greek tongue, without which they could have done but little in Asia Minor, nor in most parts of the Roman empire where they travelled"—C. (Vers. 34, 35; ch. 5. 1, 2.)

CHAPTER V.

Vers. 1-11. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA. — 1. **But a certain man named Ananias.** "It is certain, not a believer; for all that believed 'were of one heart and of one soul.' Probably, not baptized; but intending now to offer himself for baptism"—WESLEY.

2. **And bringing a certain part.** "As if it had been the whole: perhaps, saying that it was so"—WESLEY. (Ch. 4. 37.)

3. **To lie to the Holy Ghost**—"who is in us—**and to keep back.** Here was the first instance of it. This was the first attempt to bring propriety of goods into the Christian Church"—WESLEY. (Num. 30. 2; Deut. 23. 21; Eccl. 5. 4; Luke 22. 3.)

4. "**While it remained, did it not remain thine?** It is true whosoever among the Christians, not one excepted, 'had houses or lands, sold them, and laid the price at the feet of the apostles'; but it was in his own choice to be a Christian or not, and consequently either to sell his land or to keep it. **And when it was sold, was it not in thy power?** For it does not appear that he professed himself a Christian when he sold it. **Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart**—so profanely to dissemble on so solemn an occasion? **Thou hast not lied to men only, but to God also.** Hence the Godhead of the Holy Ghost evidently

appears; since lying to Him (ver. 3) is lying to God"—WESLEY.

It may be remarked that few commentators have agreed with Mr. Wesley that the action of Ananias was the first attempt to bring propriety of goods, or private property, into the Church. To most of them it has appeared that the language of S. Peter in ver. 4. clearly asserts that the personal rights of individuals over their property were recognised by the authorities of the Church as distinctly as by the law of the land. "Ananias and Sapphira were evidently persons who professed faith in Christ, with the rest of the disciples. While all were making sacrifices for the present necessity they came forward among the rest, pretending to bring *all* the money they had got for a possession (of what kind we know not), which they had sold. A part of this price, however, they kept back, thinking probably that, as the whole was their own, they had a right to do with it as they pleased; and so they had—they were under no necessity to sell their possession; but the act of selling it for the ostensible purpose of bringing it into the common stock left them no further control over it, or property in it; and their pretence, that the money which they brought was the whole produce of the sale, was a direct lie in itself, and an attempt to deceive the Holy Spirit, under whose influence they pretended to act. This constituted the iniquity of their sin"—C. **Why hath Satan filled thine heart?** "Here we see S. Peter, under the infallible guidance of the Spirit of Truth, bearing testimony to the agency of Satan in exciting men to wickedness. **To lie unto the Holy Ghost**—that is, that thou shouldest attempt to impose upon the Spirit of God, namely, the Spirit with which the apostles were endued. **Whiles it remained, was it not thine own?** It evidently appears from hence that no Christian converts were obliged to sell their estates"—B. "What S. Peter says is important with reference to the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. He refers the action of Ananias and Sapphira wholly to the Holy Ghost. He judges the deed, not from the standpoint of the apostles as individuals, or of the Church as a human fellowship; their sin is a sin against the Holy Ghost, a *crimen læsæ majestatis* against Him. Accordingly, both the personality and the Divinity of the Holy Ghost are testified. He is described as a Person whom we may 'tempt,' that is, put to the proof, and whom we may seek to deceive by falsehood; and He is described as a Divine Person when S. Peter says, **Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God**"—L. "The question of S. Peter, Why hath Satan filled thine heart? contains more than one truth in reference to Satan. First of all, the existence and reality of Satan—that is to say, of the Evil Spirit, who is the Prince of Darkness, is throughout undeniably to be understood. It cannot here be considered a mere allegory; the matter was too serious, and the speech of the apostle is much too impressive, severe, and direct for that. Again, there is here a proof that evil does not exist and grow isolated in the human breast, but is connected and interwoven with the kingdom of evil in the invisible world. And precisely the worst sins—the subtlest hypocrisy, where evil clothes itself in the holiest garments of light—are the operations of Satan. Further, the vehement and strong expression of the Apostle Peter supposes that there exist different degrees of the influence and working of Satan, from the smallest temptation to the filling of the heart, that is, entirely and completely taking possession of it, which is the terrible contrast to being 'filled with the Spirit.' And, lastly, the freedom of the will, and the responsibility of man, even in relation to the powerful promptings of the devil, are indirectly yet unmistakably expressed. For S. Peter says, Why hath Satan filled thine heart? And the reason which he seeks is evidently not in Satan, but in Ananias. The question has undeniably this meaning, Why hast thou consented that Satan should fill thine heart? The apostle indirectly testifies that man may resist the devil, and that man is responsible if he give himself up to Satanic influence"—L.

5. **And Ananias fell down and expired.** "And this severity was not only just, considering that complication of vainglory, covetousness, fraud, and impiety, which this action contained; but it was also wise and gracious, as it would effectually deter any others from following his example. It was likewise a convincing proof of the upright conduct of the apostles, in managing the sums with which they were entrusted, and in general of their Divine mission. For none can imagine that S. Peter would have had the assurance to pronounce, and much less the power to execute such a sentence, if he had been guilty himself of a fraud of the same kind; or had been belying the Holy Ghost in the whole of his pretensions to be under His immediate direction"—WESLEY. (Vers. 10, 11.)

6. **The young men**—belonging to the disciples then present—**wound him up** (R.V. "wrapped him round"). (John 19. 40.)

7. **About the space of three hours.** "How precious a space! The woman had a longer time for repentance"—WESLEY.

8. **If ye sold the land for so much**—"Naming the sum"—WESLEY.

"The woman had not only longer time for consideration, but S. Peter, by a more pointed question, gave her a much better opportunity for reflection, and for giving glory to God"—L. **Yea, for so much.** "Ananias and his wife had agreed to tell the same story; and the bargain being private, they thought they might safely affirm what they did. It is lamentable to see those relations, who should quicken one another to that which is good, hardening one another in that which is evil"—B.

10. **Then fell she down straightway.** "There are many instances of sudden death, which are not to be looked upon as the punishment of gross sins; it may be intended as a favour to some, that a quick passage is granted them. The deaths here mentioned were, doubtless, in judgment"—B.

11. **The Church.** "This is the first time it is mentioned. And here is a native specimen of a New Testament Church; which is, a company of men, called by the gospel, grafted into Christ by baptism, animated by love, united by all kind of fellowship, and disciplined by the death of Ananias and Sapphira"—WESLEY.

The word Church occurs in ch. 2. 47 in A.V., but the best MSS. omit the word, and it is omitted in the R.V. (Ver. 5; ch. 2. 43; 19. 17.)

Vers. 12–16. INFLUENCE ON THE CHURCH—PURITY AND PROGRESS.—12, 13. **And by the hands of the apostles were many signs.** "Now the gospel power returned to its proper channel, which is that of grace and goodness"—B. **And they were all**—"all the believers. **None of the rest**—no formalists or hypocrites. **Durst join themselves**—in an outward show only, like Ananias and Sapphira"—WESLEY. (Ch. 2. 43, 47; 14. 3; 19. 11; Rom. 15. 19; 2 Cor. 12. 12; Heb. 2. 4; ch. 3. 11; 4. 21, 32; John 9. 22; 12. 42; 19. 38.)

14. "But so much **the more were** true believers added, because the unbelievers kept at a distance"—WESLEY.

15. **Insomuch that they brought the sick into the streets**—"because, it is probable, the priests would not allow them to bring them into the Temple to Solomon's Porch—**that at the least the shadow of Peter.** They had faith to believe that this would be the means of healing them; and it is probable that they were not disappointed, but that some, at least, were thus healed, as the woman mentioned in the gospel was, by touching Christ's garment"—B. (Matt. 9. 21; 14. 36; ch. 19. 12.)

16. **The cities round about Jerusalem** (R.V.). "The opportunity was given the apostles, both of convincing people's judgments, by these miracles, of the heavenly origin of the doctrine they preached, and also of engaging people's affections both to them and it, by giving them specimens of its manifest beneficial tendency"—B. "The miraculous punishment had done its work, both in the Church and on those without. The Church was admonished to watchfulness, and warned not to grieve the Holy Ghost. And the people received the conviction that a man must submit himself, with his whole heart, to the rule of the Spirit, if he would join the Church; that a mere external fellowship, for appearance sake, avails nothing. Yet, in spite of the example of punishment, **believers were the more added to the Lord.** Thus it does not happen as false prudence fears, which preserves nothing of the seriousness and severity of Church discipline, lest it should frighten people away. No! Discipline well kept will improve matters. By pruning, God promotes the growth of the tree of the Church"—L. The miracles of healing were the special fulfilment of the Master's promise. (Mark 16. 17, 18; John 14. 12.)

Vers. 17–32. THE TWELVE APPREHENDED—RELEASED BY AN ANGEL—AND APPEARING VOLUNTARILY BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM.—17. **The high priest and the sect of the Sadducees.** "A goodly company for the priest! He and these deniers of any angel or resurrection **were filled with zeal**—angry, bitter, persecuting zeal"—WESLEY.

R.V. "jealousy," A.V. "indignation." "As the preaching of the apostles had its centre point in the testimony of the resurrection of Jesus, it naturally followed that it was the Sadducees who were stirred up to the most active opposition"—L.

18. **Put them in the common prison**—"where the vilest malefactors were lodged"—WESLEY. (Luke 21. 12.)

19. **But the angel of the Lord**—in spite of locks and bars, and without giving any alarm to keepers or to other prisoners. (Ch. 12. 7; 16. 26.)

20. **The words of this life**—"that is, 'these words of life,' words which show the way to life everlasting"—WESLEY.

Comp. ch. 13. 26—"the words of this salvation." "In this charge given them observe—(1) *Where they must preach*—In the Temple; it is not for the preachers of Christ's gospel to retire into corners as long as they have an opportunity of preaching in the great congregation. (2) *To whom they must preach*—Speak to the people—not to princes or rulers only, but to the people, who are in general more willing to be taught, and whose souls are equally precious; to all the people, for all are alike concerned. (3) *How they must preach*—Stand and speak—not only publicly, that all may hear, but boldly and resolutely; stand up and speak, as those who resolve to stand to it, to live and die by it. (4) *What they must preach*—All the words of this life. The gospel is concerning matters of life and death. They must preach all the 'words of this life,' and not conceal any for fear of offending. Christ's witnesses are sworn to speak the whole truth"—M. H. (John 6. 68; 17. 3; 1 John 5. 11.)

21. **And when they heard that.** "It must have been a satisfaction to them to receive fresh orders from Heaven; otherwise they might have questioned whether, since they had now received their liberty, they should preach as publicly as they had done, Christ having said, 'When they persecute you in one city, flee to another.' But as soon as they knew the will of God, they took the first opportunity of obeying it"—B. **But the high priest came, and called the Council.** The expressions imply a formal meeting of the entire Sanhedrim, probably convened previously. (Ch. 4. 5, 6.)

23. "**We found the prison shut.** The angel probably had shut the doors again"—WESLEY.

24. "**They doubted what this should be** (A.V. and R.V. 'whereunto this should grow'). They were even at their wits' end; the world in persecuting the children of God entangle themselves in numberless difficulties"—WESLEY. (Luke 24. 4; ch. 4. 1.)

26. **Then went the captain. Without violence.** "This symptom of the voice of the people is remarkable. The guard supposed it possible that the people would have stoned them if they used violence. The popular favour towards the apostles without doubt reached its highest point. This is explainable from the numerous benefits conferred on whole families by the healing of the sick, as well as by this last occurrence—that the apostles, imprisoned the day before, were delivered without human aid"—L. (Matt. 21. 26.)

28. **Did we not strictly command you not to teach?** "See the poor cunning of the enemies of the gospel. They make laws and interdicts at their pleasure, which those who obey God cannot but break; and then take occasion thereby to censure and punish the innocent as guilty"—WESLEY.

Ye would bring the blood of this Man upon us—"an artful and invidious word. The apostles did not desire to accuse any man. They simply declared the naked truth"—WESLEY.

The high priest designedly alludes to Jesus without mentioning Him; he speaks of "this Name" and "this Man," as if it were incompatible with his dignity even to name Jesus. Yet his language intimates a secret disturbance of conscience, a fear of the fulfilment of their own imprecation. (Matt. 23. 35; 27. 25; ch. 4. 18; 2. 23, 26; 3. 15; 7. 52.)

29. **Then Peter**—"in the name or all the apostles—**said.** He does not now give them the titles of honour which he did before (ch. 4. 8), but enters directly upon the subject, and justifies what he had done. This is, as it were, a continuation of that discourse, but with an increase of severity"—WESLEY. (Ch. 4. 19.)

30. **The God of our fathers.** "It was well to introduce this, that the Council might see that they preached no strange god"—C. **Hath raised up Jesus**—"of the seed of David, according to the promises made to our fathers"—WESLEY.

Whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree (R.V.). "The apostles intimate that the guilt of the crucifixion was as truly upon the Jews as if the acts had been done by their own hands and not by those of the Roman soldiers"—L. (Ch. 3. 13, 15; 22. 14; 10. 39; 13. 29; Gal. 3. 13; 1 Pet. 2. 24.)

31. **Him hath God exalted**—"from the grave to heaven—**to give repentance**—whereby Jesus is received as a Prince—**and forgiveness of sins**—whereby He is received as a Saviour. Hence some infer, that repentance and faith are as much gifts as forgiveness of sins. Not so; for man co-operates in the former, but not in the latter. God alone forgives sins"—WESLEY.

"Observe, we cannot have Christ to be our Saviour, unless we be willing to take Him for our Ruler. We cannot be redeemed and healed by Him unless we give up ourselves to be governed by Him"—B. (Ch. 2. 33, 36; Phil. 2. 9; Heb. 2. 10; 12. 2; ch. 3. 13; Matt. 1. 21; Luke 24. 47; ch. 3. 26; 13. 38; Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14.)

32. **And we are witnesses** (R.V.). "And if we should be silent, as you would have us be, we should be false to a trust of the greatest possible importance"—B. **And also the Holy Ghost**—"a much greater witness"—WESLEY.

The appeal is to the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, which so many of the believers received. (John 15. 26, 27; ch. 2. 4; 10. 44.)

Vers. 33-42. SPEECH OF GAMALIEL — THE APOSTLES BEATEN AND DISMISSED.—33. **They were cut to the heart**—literally, "they were sawn asunder," namely, with anger and indignation. "When a sermon was preached to the people to this purpose they were 'pierced to the heart' (ch. 2. 37), namely, with remorse and godly sorrow. Thus the same gospel is to some 'a savour of life unto life,' and to others 'of death unto death'"—B. (Ch. 2. 37; 7. 54.)

34. **But a certain Pharisee.** "And, as such, believing the resurrection of the dead. **A doctor,** or 'teacher,' **of the Law**—that is, a scribe, and, indeed, one of the highest rank—**had in honour by all the people**—except the Sadducees. **Rising up in the Council.** So God can raise defenders of His servants whensoever and wheresoever He pleases"—WESLEY.

"The interference of Gamaliel may be ascribed, under Divine providence, to the jealousy which existed between the Pharisees and Sadducees, to which S. Paul afterwards owed his preservation. Gamaliel is said to have been the son of good old Simeon, mentioned Luke 2. 25, and the person at whose feet S. Paul was brought up"—B. (Ch. 22. 3.)

36. **Before these days.** "He prudently mentions the facts first, and then makes the inference"—WESLEY.

"Josephus mentions Theudas, a leader of an insurrection (*Antiq.* 20. 5), but this happened fourteen or fifteen years after Gamaliel's speech. There were probably two persons of the same name, as there were four Simons within forty years, and three Judases within ten years, all leaders of insurrections"—W. W.

37. **In the days of the enrolment** (R.V.). "The false prophet and the true. (1) The former *rises up* of his own accord, like Theudas and Judas; the latter is raised up by God. (2) The former draws away the people after him; the latter leads them to the Lord. (3) The former falls as a wandering star; the latter

will shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever"—L.

38. **Let them alone.** "In a cause which is manifestly good, we should immediately join. In a cause, on the other hand, which is manifestly evil, we should immediately oppose. But in a sudden, new, doubtful occurrence, this advice is eminently useful. **If this counsel or this work.** He seems to correct himself, as if it were some sudden work rather than a counsel or design. And so it was; for the apostles had no counsel, plan, or design of their own; but were mere instruments in the hand of God; working just as He led them, from day to day"—WESLEY. (Prov. 21. 30; Isa. 8. 10; Matt. 15. 13.)

39. **If it is of God** (R.V.), which does not appear to me impossible, **ye cannot overthrow it.** (Luke 21. 15; 1 Cor. 1. 25; ch. 7. 51; 9. 5; 23. 9.)

40. **And beaten them.** Doubtless the scourging was suggested as a compromise, when the majority of the Council agreed in the view taken by Gamaliel. Compare the proposal of Pilate, when he "found no fault in this Man." (Ch. 4. 18; Matt. 10. 17; 23. 34; Mark 13. 9.)

41. **Rejoicing to suffer shame.** "This is a sure mark of the truth—joy in affliction, such as is true, deep, pure"—WESLEY.

Scourging was a common punishment among the Jews, but was regarded as peculiarly disgraceful. The apostles remembered their Master's command, "Rejoice in that day" (Matt. 5. 12). (Rom. 5. 3; 2 Cor. 12. 10; Phil. 1. 29; Heb. 10. 34; Jas. 1. 2; 1 Pet. 4. 13, 16.)

42. **And every day in the Temple, and at home** (R.V.) **they preached Jesus Christ.** They not only preached concerning Him, but preached Him; they preached "not themselves but Christ Jesus the Lord," as the one Saviour of lost sinners. (Ch. 2. 46; 4. 20, 29.)

CHAPTER VI.

Vers. 1–7. COMPLAINT ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE POOR FUNDS—DEACONS APPOINTED.

—1. **In these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews** (R.V.). "Here was the first breach made on those who were before 'of one heart, and of one soul.' Partiality crept in unawares on some, and murmuring on others. Ah, Lord, how short a time did pure, genuine, undefiled Christianity remain in the world! O the depth! How unsearchable are Thy counsels! Marvellous are Thy ways, O King of saints! The Hellenists were Jews born out of Palestine. They were so called because they used the Greek as their mother tongue"—WESLEY. (Ch. 2. 41; 4. 4; 5. 14; ver. 7; ch. 9. 26; 11. 20; 4. 33.)

"In this partiality of the Hebrews, and murmuring of the Hellenists, were the seeds of a general persecution sown. Did God ever, in any age or country, withdraw His restraining providence, and let loose the world upon the Christians, till there was a cause among themselves? Is not an open, general persecution always both penal and medicinal? a punishment of those that will not accept of milder reproofs, as well as a medicine to heal their sickness? and at the same time a means both of purifying and strengthening those whose heart is still right with God?"—WESLEY.

2. **Then the Twelve.** "By the readiness of the apostles to take measures to remedy what was complained of we may infer that cause for complaint had been shown. This may easily have come to pass without any fault on the part of the Twelve, simply from the sudden growth of the number of Christians"—C. B. **Called the multitude of the disciples**—it was important that the whole Church should be satisfied. **Forsake the word of God** (R.V.). The word in the original is a strong form, and indicates that the whole time of the Twelve was being spent on this disbursement. By *tables* is meant the bench or counter at which the money was distributed. (See Matt. 21. 12.) "In the first Church the primary business of apostles, evangelists, and bishops was to preach the word of God; the secondary, to take a kind of paternal care (the Church being then like a family) for the food, especially of the poor, the strangers, and the widows. Afterwards the deacons of both sexes were constituted for this latter business; and whatever time they had to spare from this they employed in works of spiritual mercy. But their proper office was to take care of the poor. And when some of them afterwards preached the gospel, they did this, not by virtue of their deaconship, but of another commission, that of evangelists, which they probably received, not before but after they were appointed deacons. And it is not unlikely that others were chosen deacons, or stewards, in their room, when any of these commenced evangelists"—WESLEY. (Ex. 18. 17.)

3. **Of good report**—"that there may be no room to suspect them of partiality or injustice. **Full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom.** For it is not a light matter to dispense even the temporal goods of the Church. To do even this well, a large measure both of the gifts and grace of God is requisite. **Whom we will set over this business.** It would have been happy for the Church had its ordinary ministers in every age taken the same care to act in concert with the people committed to their charge, which the apostles themselves, extraordinary as their office was, did on this and other occasions"—WESLEY. (Deut. 1. 13; ch. 1. 21; 16. 2; 1 Tim. 3. 7.)

4. **We will constantly attend to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.** "This is doubtless the proper business of a Christian bishop—to speak to God, in prayer; to men,

in preaching His word, as ambassadors for Christ"—WESLEY.

"By these two the kingdom of Christ must be advanced, and additions made to it; we must prophesy upon the dry bones, and then pray for a Spirit of life from God to enter into them. The apostles were endued with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, tongues and miracles; and yet that which they gave themselves continually to was preaching and praying, by which they might edify the Church"—M. H. (Ch. 2. 42.)

5. And they chose—"it seems seven Hellenists (Grecian Jews), as their names show. **And Nicolas a proselyte**—to whom the proselytes would the more readily apply"—WESLEY.

"We may observe the generous and brotherly feeling of the whole multitude, conceding so much to the complainants"—W. W. (Ch. 11. 24; 8. 5, 26; 21. 8; Rev. 2. 6, 15.)

6. They laid their hands on them. "Both that they might express their solemn appointment to the office, and confer upon them such extraordinary gifts as would qualify them more abundantly for the full discharge of it"—B. (Ch. 1. 24; 8. 17; 9. 17; 13. 3; 1 Tim. 4. 14; 5. 22; 2 Tim. 1. 6.)

7. And the word of God grew—"the hindrances being removed"—WESLEY.

And a great company of the priests. "From Ezra 2. 36-39 it appears that 4289 priests returned from Babylon, the number of whom was at this time much increased. This was the most remarkable class of converts, as the priests were naturally the most opposed to the new dispensation"—W. W. (Ch. 12. 24; 19. 20; Col. 1. 6; John 12. 42.)

Vers. 8–15. ENERGY AND USEFULNESS OF S. STEPHEN: HIS ARREST.—8. **Great wonders and miracles among the people**—"openly in the sight of all. Our Lord promised that the signs of miracles should not only follow them that preached but them that believed"—B. (Mark 16. 17.)

9. There arose certain of the synagogue, which is called. "It was one and the same synagogue which consisted of these several nations. Saul of Cilicia was doubtless a member of it; whence it is not at all improbable that Gamaliel presided over it. **Libertines**—so they were called whose fathers were once slaves, and afterwards made free. This was the case of many Jews who had been taken captive by the Romans"—WESLEY.

Disputing with Stephen—"arguing with him concerning his doctrine, with a view to prevent the success of his preaching"—B.

10. The wisdom and the Spirit—"that is, the Spirit of wisdom, which spake by him. They thought they only disputed with S. Stephen, but they were disputing with the Spirit of God in him, for whom they were an unequal match. Then was fulfilled that promise, 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist' (Luke 21. 15)"—B. (Ch. 5. 39; Ex. 4. 12; Isa. 54. 17.)

11. They suborned men. They had recourse to a mean and dishonest fraud. **Blasphemous words against Moses and against God.** The particular words to which this false construction was applied are given in ver. 14. (1 Kings 21. 10, 13; Matt. 26. 59, 60.)

12. They stirred up the people. Here for the first time we find the people united with the elders and scribes in enmity against the Church of Jesus. It was told them that the glory of the Temple was spoken against, which was the one thing most sacred to them, both on grounds of patriotism and religion; and the people were easily roused to fury.

14. We have heard him say—"so they might. But yet the consequence they drew would not follow"—WESLEY.

What the tenor of S. Stephen's language must have been may be gathered from ch. 7. 48: "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Perhaps, also, he had repeated some of his Master's sayings, such as His declaration to the woman of Samaria—"The hour cometh when, neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father"; or His solemn prediction to His disciples—"There shall not be left one stone upon another"—and tried to teach the spirituality of true worship, and the universality of the new dispensation. (Ch. 25. 8; Dan. 9. 26.)

15. As the face of an angel—"covered with supernatural lustre. They reckoned his preaching of Jesus to be the Christ was destroying Moses and the Law; and God bears witness to him, with the same glory as He did to Moses, when He gave the Law by him"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER VII.

Vers. 1–53. S. STEPHEN'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM.—2. **And he said.** "S. Stephen had been accused of blasphemy against Moses, and even against God; and of speaking against the Temple and the Law, threatening that Jesus would destroy the one, and change the other. In answer to this accusation, rehearsing, as it were, the articles of his historical creed, he speaks of God with high reverence, and a grateful sense of a long series of acts of goodness to the Israelites; and of Moses with great respect, on account of his important and honourable employments under God; of the Temple with regard, as being built to the honour of God—yet not with such superstition as the Jews, putting them in mind that no Temple could comprehend God; and he was going on, no doubt, when he was interrupted by their clamour, to speak to the last point, the destruction of the Temple, and the change of the Law by Christ. **Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken.** The sum of his discourse is this: I acknowledge the glory of God revealed to the fathers (ver. 2); the calling of Moses

(ver. 34, etc.); the dignity of the Law (vers. 8, 38, 44); the holiness of 'this place' (vers. 7, 45, 47). And indeed the Law is more ancient than the Temple; the promise more ancient than the Law. For God showed Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their children freely (vers. 2, etc., 9, etc., 17, etc., 32, 34, 45); and they showed faith and obedience to God (vers. 4, 20, etc., 23); particularly by their regard for the Law (ver. 8); and the promised land (ver. 16). Meantime, God never confined His presence to this one place, or to the observers of the Law. For He hath been acceptably worshipped before the Law was given or the Temple built, and out of this land (vers. 2, 9, 33, 44). And that our fathers and their posterity were not tied down to this land, their various sojournings (vers. 4, etc., 14, 29, 44) and exile (ver. 43) show. But you and your fathers have always been evil (ver. 9); have withstood Moses (vers. 25, etc., 39, etc.); have despised the land (ver. 39); forsaken God (ver. 40, etc.); superstitiously honoured the Temple (ver. 48); resisted God and His Spirit (ver. 50); killed the prophets and the Messiah Himself (ver. 51); and kept not the Law for which ye contend (ver. 53). Therefore God is not bound to you, much less to you alone. And truly this solemn testimony of S. Stephen is most worthy of his character, as 'a man full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, and power'; in which, though he does not advance so many regular propositions contradictory to those of his adversaries, yet he closely and nervously answers them all. Nor can we doubt but he would, from these premises, have drawn inferences touching the destruction of the Temple, the abrogation of the Mosaic Law, the punishment of that rebellious people, and, above all, touching Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, had not his discourse been interrupted by the clamours of the multitude stopping their ears and rushing upon him. **Men, brethren, and fathers**—all who are here present, whether ye are my equals in years, or of more advanced age. The word which in this and in many other places is rendered 'men' is a mere expletive. **The God of glory**—the glorious God—**appeared to Abraham before he dwelt in Haran**—therefore Abraham knew God long before he was in this land"—WESLEY. (Ch. 22. 1.)

3. **Which I will show thee.** "Abraham knew not whither he went"—WESLEY. (Gen. 12. 1.)

4. **After his father was dead.** "While Terah lived, Abraham lived partly with him, partly in Canaan; but after he died, altogether in Canaan"—WESLEY.

This is Bengel's suggestion, made with the view of reconciling S. Stephen's statement with the chronology in the Book of Genesis. It may perhaps be added, that the fullest confidence in the inspiration of Holy Scripture does not make it necessary to believe that S. Stephen was absolutely accurate in every detail of this long and unprepared speech. The facts on which he relied were universally admitted; and the argument from them was irresistible. (Gen. 11. 31; 12. 4, 5.)

5. **No, not to set his foot on.** "For the field mentioned (ver. 16) he did not receive by a Divine donation, but bought it; even thereby showing that he was a stranger in the land"—WESLEY.

Yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession—"which promise Abraham firmly believed that God would fulfil; his faith triumphed over all seeming difficulties, and he confidently trusted in the power, love, and faithfulness of God"—B. (Gen. 12. 7; 13. 15; 15. 3, 18; 17. 8; 26. 3.)

6. **That his seed should sojourn in a strange land.** "When God had brought Abraham into this country, He did not keep him and his posterity here till the time when they were to enter upon the possession of it; on the contrary, God informed him in vision that his seed should be strangers in a foreign land, where they would be made slaves, and treated with great cruelty; and that these events, with the circumstances preparatory to them, should extend themselves to the full period of four hundred years"—B. (Gen. 15. 13, 16; Ex. 12. 40; Gal. 3. 17.)

7. **They shall serve Me.** "Not the Egyptians"—WESLEY.

In this place—"in this land, erecting a temple for the performance of My worship here"—B. "The words are not in the promise given to Abraham, but are apparently taken from Ex. 3. 12, where they refer to Sinai. S. Stephen's object may have been to intimate that which is laid to his charge, concerning the highest worship of God being no longer restricted to the Temple and Jerusalem, is nothing more than they were taught by a study of their own history"—C. B.

8. **And so he begat Isaac.** "After the covenant was given, of which circumcision was the seal"—WESLEY.

The twelve patriarchs—"the twelve sons of Jacob, so called because each became the head of a family or tribe"—WESLEY. (Gen. 17. 9–11; 21. 2–4; 25. 26; 29. 31, etc.; 30. 5, etc.; 35. 18, 23.)

9. **Sold Joseph into Egypt**—"where he became a slave. **But God was with him**—though he was not in this land"—WESLEY. (Gen. 37. 4, 11, 28; Ps. 105. 17; Gen. 39. 2, 21, 23.)

10. **And delivered him out of all his afflictions.** "From what S. Stephen relates of the story of Joseph, it was natural for the members of the Council to infer that the greatest favourites of Heaven might suffer by the envy of those who are called the Israel of God; and might be exalted by Him, after being rejected by them; a thought worthy of their consideration with respect to Jesus"—B. (Gen. 41, 37; 42. 6.)

11. **Now there came a dearth**—"according to the prediction of Joseph"—B. (Gen. 41. 54.)

12. **Sent our fathers first**—"without Benjamin"—WESLEY. (Gen 42. 1.)

13. **And at the second time. Joseph's kindred** (R.V. "Joseph's race"). (Gen. 45. 4, 16.)

14. **Seventy-five souls.** "So the seventy interpreters (whom S. Stephen follows), one son and a grandson of Manasseh and three children of Ephraim being added to the seventy persons mentioned in Gen. 46. 27"—WESLEY. (Gen. 45. 9, 27; 46. 27; Deut. 10. 22.)

15. **So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died**—"after being supported there about seventeen years, by the filial gratitude of his son Joseph"—B. (Gen. 46. 5; 49. 33; Ex. 1. 6.)

16. **And were carried over into Sychem** (R.V. and WESLEY, "Shechem"). "It seems that S. Stephen, rapidly running over so many circumstances of history, has no leisure (nor was it needful where they were so well known) to recite them all distinctly. Therefore he here contracts into one two different sepulchres, places, and purchases, so as, in the former history, to name the buyer, omitting the seller; in the latter, to name the seller, omitting the buyer. Abraham bought a burying-place of the children of Heth. (Gen. 23. 3–18.) There Jacob was buried. Jacob bought a field of the children of Hamor. There Joseph was buried. You see here how S. Stephen contracts these two purchases into one. This concise manner of speaking, strange as it seems to us, was common among the Hebrews; particularly when, in a case notoriously known, the speaker mentioned but part of the story, and left the rest, which would have interrupted the current of his discourse, to be supplied in the mind of the hearer. **And laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought.** The first land which these strangers bought was for a sepulchre. They sought for a country in heaven. Perhaps the whole sentence might be rendered thus: So Jacob went down into Egypt and died, he and our fathers, and were carried over to Shechem, and laid by the sons (that is, descendants) of Hamor the father of Shechem, in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money"—WESLEY.

A sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem (R.V. "A price in silver of the sons of Hamor in Shechem"). (Ex. 13. 19; Josh. 24. 32; Gen. 23. 16; 35. 19.)

17. **When the time of the promise.** Concerning the multiplication of Abraham's seed. (Gen. 15. 5, 6, 13; Ex. 1. 7–9; Ps. 105. 24, 25.)

18. **Another king**—"probably of another family"—WESLEY.

19. **Cast out their young children** (R.V. "That they should cast out their babes"; WESLEY, "Exposed"). "Cast out to perish by hunger or wild beasts"—WESLEY. (Ex. 1. 22.)

20. **In which time**—"a sad but a seasonable time"—WESLEY.

Moses. Exceeding fair (literally, "fair unto God," R.V. *margin*). So Nineveh was "an exceeding great city" (Jonah 3. 3)—literally, "great unto God." (Ex. 2. 2; Heb. 11. 23.)

21. **Pharaoh's daughter took him up.** "By which means, being designed for a kingdom, he had all those advantages of education which he could not have had if he had not been exposed"—WESLEY. (Ex. 2. 3–10.)

22. **In all the wisdom of the Egyptians**—"which was then celebrated in all the world, and for many ages afterwards"—WESLEY.

"Geography, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, natural history, physic, and hieroglyphics, are all mentioned by ancient writers as branches of Egyptian literature"—B. **And mighty in words**—"deep, solid, weighty, though not of a ready utterance"—WESLEY. (Luke 24. 19.)

23. **It came into his heart**—"probably by an impulse from God"—WESLEY. (Ex. 2. 11, 12.)

24. **Seeing one wronged**—"probably by one of the task-masters"—WESLEY.

25. **They understood it not**—"such was their stupidity and sloth, which made him afterwards unwilling to go to them"—WESLEY.

This incident is narrated in detail in preparation for the rebuke in ver. 51.

26. **He showed himself**—"of his own accord unexpectedly"—WESLEY. (Ex. 2. 13.)

27. **Who appointed thee?** "Under the pretence of the want of a call by man, the instruments of God are often rejected"—WESLEY. (Luke 12. 14; ch. 4. 7.)

29. **Was a stranger in the land of Madian**—at the north-east point of the Red Sea. (Ex. 2. 15, 22; 4. 20; 18. 34.)

30. **An angel of the Lord** (WESLEY, "The angel of the Lord"; R.V. "An angel," omitting "of the Lord"). "The Son of God, as appears from His styling Himself Jehovah. **In a flame of fire**—signifying the majesty of God then present"—WESLEY. (Ex. 3. 2.)

32. **The God of thy fathers.** (Matt. 22. 32; Heb. 11. 16.)

33. **Then said the Lord, Loose thy shoes** (WESLEY and R.V.). "An ancient token of reverence"—WESLEY.

For the place is holy ground. "The holiness of places depends on the peculiar presence of God there"—WESLEY. (Ex. 3. 5; Josh. 5. 15.)

34. **Am come down to deliver them.** Though God is present in all places, yet He speaks here of coming down to deliver them, because that deliverance was typical of what Christ did, when "for us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven"—M. H. (Ex. 3. 7.)

35. **This Moses whom they refused**—"namely, forty years before. Probably not they but their fathers did it, and God imputes it to them. So God frequently imputes the

sins of the fathers to those of their children who are of the same spirit. **Him did God send to be a deliverer**—which is much more than a judge. **By the hand of**—that is, by means of—**the Angel.** This Angel, who spake to Moses on Mount Sinai, expressly called Himself Jehovah; a name which cannot, without the highest presumption, be assumed by any created angel, since 'He whose name alone is Jehovah is the Most High over all the earth' (Ps. 83. 18). It was therefore the Son of God who delivered the law to Moses under the character of Jehovah, and who is here spoken of as the Angel of the Covenant, in respect of His mediatorial office"—WESLEY.

"This Moses." "The repetition of the word is evidently designed to draw the attention of the hearers to the remarkable parallel between Moses and Jesus in their rejection by those whom they came to deliver"—W. W. In the original, five successive clauses (in vers. 35–38) begin with the word "this." (Ex. 14. 19; Num. 20. 16; Ex. 12. 41; 33. 1, 7–11, 14; Ps. 105. 27; Ex. 14. 21, 27–29; 16. 1, 35.)

37. **The Lord will raise you up a prophet**—"S. Stephen here shows that there is no opposition between Moses and Christ"—WESLEY.

S. Stephen does Moses the greatest honour, by showing how one of the most important of his prophecies was fulfilled. (Deut. 18. 15, 18; ch. 3. 22; Matt. 17. 5.)

38. **In the Church in the wilderness.** "The camp of Israel is so called with good reason; for it was a sacred society, incorporated by a Divine charter, under a Divine government, and blessed with a Divine revelation. It was the honour of Moses that he was in that Church, and many a time it would have been destroyed if Moses had not been in it to intercede for it. **But** Christ is the President and Guide of a more excellent Church than that in the wilderness; and is more in it than Moses could be in that, as being the life and soul of it"—B. **This is he**—"Moses. **With the angel, and with our fathers**—as a mediator between them. **Who received the living oracles.** Every period beginning with 'And the Lord said unto Moses' is properly an oracle. But the oracles here intended are chiefly the ten commandments. These are termed 'living,' because all 'the word of God,' applied by His Spirit, 'is living and powerful' (Heb. 4. 12); enlightening the eyes, rejoicing the heart, converting the soul, raising the dead"—WESLEY. (Ex. 19. 3, 17; Isa. 63. 9; Gal. 3. 19; Heb. 2. 2; Ex. 21. 1; Deut. 5. 27, 31; 33. 4; John 1. 17; Rom. 3. 2.)

39. **In their hearts turned back into Egypt.** "In their hearts they turned to the idolatry of Egypt, *i.e.* fell into heresy. (Ex. 32. 1, 4; Ezek. 20. 7.) Then they longed after the delicacies and plenty of Egypt, *i.e.* were led astray by worldliness and sensuality. (Num. 11. 5.) At length they openly proposed to return to the land of Egypt, *i.e.* lapsed into apostasy and infidelity"—W. W. (Num. 14. 4.)

40. **Make us gods to go before us.** "Back into Egypt"—WESLEY. (Ex. 32. 1.)

41. **And they made a calf**—"in imitation of Apis, the Egyptian god"—WESLEY.

"This was in imitation of the sacred ox, called Apis, under which form the Egyptians worshipped Osiris, the inventor of agriculture. Aaron did not proclaim a feast to Apis, but to Jehovah. When Jeroboam introduced the worship of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, he used the same expressions concerning them as the people in the wilderness. (1 Kings 12. 28.) Though Aaron and Jeroboam *intended* to worship Jehovah, their conduct made way for the worst species of idolatry"—W. W.

Rejoiced in the works of their hands—"in the god they had made"—WESLEY. (Deut. 9. 16; Ps. 106. 19.)

42. **God turned**—"from them in anger—**and gave them up**—frequently, from the time of the golden calf to the time of Amos and afterwards. **The host of heaven.** The stars are called an army or host because of their number, order, and powerful influence. **In the book of the prophets**—of the twelve prophets, which the Jews always wrote together in one book. **Have ye offered.** The passage of Amos referred to (ch. 5. 25, etc.) consists of two parts: of which the former confirms ver. 41, of the sin of the people; the latter, the beginning of ver. 42, concerning their punishment. 'Have ye offered' **to Me?** They had offered many sacrifices; but God did not accept them as offered to Him, because they sacrificed to idols also, and did not sacrifice to Him with an upright heart"—WESLEY. (Ps. 81. 12; Ezek. 20. 25, 39; Rom. 1. 24; 2 Thess. 2. 11; Deut. 4. 9; 17. 3; 2 Kings 17. 16; 21. 3; Jer. 19. 13; Amos 5. 25, 26.)

43. **Ye took up**—"probably not long after the golden calf, but secretly, else Moses would have mentioned it—**the shrine**—a small, portable chapel, in which was the image of their god. Moloch was the planet Mars, which they worshipped under a human shape. **Remphan**—that is, Saturn, they represented by a star. **And I will carry you beyond Babylon**—that is, beyond Damascus (which is the word in Amos) and Babylon. This was fulfilled by the king of Assyria"—WESLEY. (2 Kings 17. 6.)

S. Stephen quotes literally from the LXX. translation, which, as a Hellenist Jew, he constantly studied. The original Hebrew is somewhat obscure. The A.V. has "Ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images"; the R.V. "Ye have borne Siccuth your king and Chiun your images." Remphan, or rather Rephan, which the LXX. substitutes for Chiun, is said to be the Egyptian name for Saturn, and may have been inserted by them

as an equivalent of that other name which is found nowhere else but in Amos. The whole idea of the passage is that the stars were worshipped by the Israelites in the wilderness.

44. **Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony.** "'The testimony' was, properly, the two tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written. Hence the ark which contained them is frequently called 'the ark of the testimony'; and the whole tabernacle in this place—**the tabernacle of the testimony, according to the model which he had seen**—when he was caught up in the visions of God on the mount"—WESLEY.

As S. Stephen had been accused of blaspheming the Temple he takes occasion to speak of their sacred places with due reverence, as raised by special direction from God; and yet corrects that extravagant regard for them, and confidence in them, which the Jews entertained. (Ex. 25. 40; 26. 30; Heb. 8. 5.)

45. **Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered on the possession of the nations,** etc. (R.V.) "Which our fathers having received—from their ancestors—brought into the possession of the Gentiles—into the land which the Gentiles possessed before. So that God's favour is not a necessary consequence of inhabiting this land. All along S. Stephen intimates two things—(1) that God always loved good men in every land; (2) that He never loved bad men even in this"—WESLEY.

Unto the days of David—that is, the tabernacle continued for many ages, even unto David's time, to be the resort of pious worshippers in Israel. (Josh. 3. 14; Neh. 9. 24; Ps. 44. 2; 78. 55; ch. 13. 19.)

46. **Who petitioned to find a habitation for the God of Jacob.** "But he did not obtain his petition. For God remained without any temple till Solomon built Him a house. Observe how wisely the word is chosen with respect to what follows"—WESLEY. (1 Sam. 16. 1; 2 Sam. 7. 1; Ps. 89. 19; ch. 13. 22; 1 Kings 8. 17; 1 Chron. 22. 7; Ps. 132. 4, 5; 1 Kings 6. 1; 8. 20; 1 Chron. 17. 12; 2 Chron. 3. 1.)

48. **Yet the Most High inhabiteth not temples made with hands** (R.V. "houses")—"as Solomon declared at the very dedication of the Temple. (1 Kings 8. 27.) **The Most High**—whom, as such, no building can contain"—WESLEY. (2 Chron. 2. 6; 6. 18; ch. 17. 24.)

49, 50. **What is the place of My rest?** "Have I need to rest?"—WESLEY.

What need have I of a house, either to rest in, or to show My glory? **Hath not My hand made all these things?** "Whatever splendour any temples may have, did not I form the materials with which they were built, and endow the workmen that fashioned them with all their art and genius? Do not imagine, then, that such structures confer any obligation upon Me, or can charm Me to continue My abode there"—B. (Isa. 56. 1, 2; Matt. 5. 34, 35; 23. 22.)

51. **Ye stiff-necked.** "S. Stephen, finding by a confused murmur in the place that they understood whither his discourse tended, and perceiving that they would soon interrupt him, applied himself more closely to his persecutors in these remarkable words, which he addressed to them under the influence of the Holy Spirit"—B. "Ye stiff-necked"—"not bowing the neck to God's yoke—**and uncircumcised in heart**—so they showed themselves (ver. 54)—**and ears**—as they showed (ver. 57). So far were they from receiving the word of God into their hearts that they would not hear it even with their ears. **Ye,** and your fathers, **always**—as often as ever ye are called—**resist the Holy Ghost**—testifying, by the prophets, of Jesus and the whole truth. This is the sum of what he had shown at large"—WESLEY.

Circumcision was the sign of submission to the Jewish religion in its fullest requirements, so the word "uncircumcised" became a synonym for obstinate resistance to what God had revealed, and we read in the Old Testament of the uncircumcised heart. But there was a daring fidelity in the application of such a term to these bigoted Jews. (Ex. 32. 9; 33. 3; Isa. 48. 4; Lev. 26. 41; Deut. 10. 16; Jer. 4. 4; 6. 10; 9. 26; Ezek. 44. 9.)

52. **Which of the prophets.** Christ brought the same charge against Jerusalem. **The Just One**—so called in several passages by way of eminence, as being alone perfectly righteous. (2 Chron. 26. 16; Matt. 21. 35; 23. 34, 37; 1 Thess. 2. 15; ch. 3. 14.)

53. **Who have received the Law by the administration of angels.** "God, when He gave the Law on Mount Sinai, was attended 'with thousands of His angels'"—WESLEY. (Gal. 3. 19; Ps. 68. 17; Ex. 20. 1; Heb. 2. 2.)

The speech of S. Stephen consists chiefly of a recital of the history of Israel, in which the past serves as a mirror to the present, illustrating the freedom with which God had revealed Himself in various countries and under different circumstances, and also the habitual unsusceptibility and opposition of Israel, both in earlier and in present times. This last thought is, at the close of ver. 51, expressed in open and emphatic reproach.

Vers. 54–60. EFFECT OF THE SPEECH—THE FIRST MARTYRDOM.—54. **They were cut to the heart.** The same effect which followed the speech of the apostles before the same persons. (Ch. 5. 33.)

55. **But he, looking steadfastly up to heaven, saw the glory of God.** "Doubtless he saw such a glorious representation, God miraculously operating on his imagination, as on Ezekiel's, when he 'sat in his house at Babylon,' and saw Jerusalem, and seemed to himself 'transported thither' (Ezek. 8. 1–4). And probably other martyrs, when called to

suffer the last extremity, have had extraordinary assistance of some similar kind"—WESLEY.

In the time of greatest danger, no power can prevent us looking steadfastly into heaven, or can intercept the help we may thus secure from heaven. (Ch. 6. 5.)

56. **I see the Son of Man standing**—"as it were, just ready to receive him! Otherwise He is said to *sit* at the right hand of God"—WESLEY.

The Son of Man. "This name, which the Redeemer so often used Himself, is never used by the Evangelists, or in any of the Epistles, or elsewhere in the Acts. It is appropriately used by S. Stephen to denote that Jesus appeared in His human form, and as the Representative of mankind, encouraging the martyr to follow Him"—W. W. (Ezek. 1. 1; Matt. 3. 16; ch. 10. 11; Dan. 7. 13.)

57. **They rushed upon him**—"before any sentence passed"—WESLEY.

58. **And cast him out of the city.** This was in strict accordance with the Mosaic Law. **And the witnesses**—whose hands were first upon him to put him to death. **A young man, whose name was Saul.** "O Saul, couldest thou have believed, if one had told thee, that thou thyself shouldest be stoned in the same cause; and shouldest triumph in committing thy soul, likewise, to that Jesus whom thou art now blaspheming! His dying prayer reached thee, as well as many others. And the martyr S. Stephen, and Saul the persecutor (afterwards his brother both in faith and martyrdom), are now joined in everlasting friendship, and dwell together in the happy company of those who 'have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb'"—WESLEY.

"The proceedings in connection with the death of S. Stephen were evidently judicial from first to last. How are we to reconcile this with the declaration of the Jews, that under the Roman Government they no longer retained the power of inflicting capital punishment? (John 18. 31.) Both are quite consistent, if we conceive that the Sanhedrim ventured occasionally to exercise their original powers, when the absence, or the negligence, or the connivance of the Roman governor would allow them to do so with safety"—L. (1 Kings 21. 13; Luke 4. 29; Heb. 13. 12; Lev. 24. 16; Deut. 13. 9, 10; 17. 7; ch. 8. 1; 22. 20.)

59. **And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.** "This is the literal translation of the words, the name of God not being in the original. Nevertheless, such a solemn prayer to Christ, in which a departing soul is thus committed into His hands, is such an act of worship as no good man could have paid to a mere creature: S. Stephen here worshipping Christ in the very same manner in which Christ worshipped the Father on the cross"—WESLEY. (R.V. "Calling upon the Lord, and saying.") (Ch. 9. 14; Ps. 31. 5; Luke 23. 46.)

60. **Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.** In this dying prayer, as well as in that which preceded it, there is a distinct imitation of the spirit and temper of the Lord Jesus. "Grant, Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of Thy truth, we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of Thy first martyr, S. Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to Thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those that suffer for Thee, our only Mediator and Advocate"—*Collect, S. Stephen's Day.* (Ch. 9. 40; 20. 36; 21. 5; Matt. 5. 44; Luke 6. 28; 23. 34.)

CHAPTER VIII.

Vers. 1-4. THE CHURCH SCATTERED BY PERSECUTION.—1. **At that time there was a great persecution against the Church**—"their adversaries, having tasted blood, were the more eager. **And they were all dispersed**—not all the Church; if so, who would have remained for the apostles to teach, or Saul to persecute? But all the teachers **except the apostles**, who, though in most danger, stayed with the flock"—WESLEY.

"There arose on that day a great persecution" (R.V.). (Ch. 7. 58; 22. 20; 11. 19.)

2. **Devout men**—"who feared God more than persecution. And yet were they not of little faith? else they would not have made so great lamentation"—WESLEY.

This demonstration of feeling would doubtless increase the exasperation of the Sanhedrim. (Gen. 23. 2; 50. 10; 2 Sam. 3. 21.)

3. **Saul made havoc of the Church**—"like some furious beast of prey. So the Greek word properly signifies"—WESLEY.

"Laid waste the Church" (R.V.) **Entering into every house**—"where Christians assembled for worship; or every house that was supposed to have Christians in it. **Men and women**—regarding neither age nor sex"—WESLEY. (Ch. 7. 58; 9. 1, 13, 21; 22. 4; 26. 10, 11; 1 Cor. 15. 9; Gal. 1. 13; Phil. 3. 6; 1 Tim. 1. 13.)

4. **Therefore they that were dispersed went everywhere.** "These very words are reassumed after, as it were, a long parenthesis (ch. 11. 19), and the thread of the story continued"—WESLEY.

The dispersed preached the word. Thus, by the storm, the seeds hitherto collected in one place are scattered hither and thither, and carried to a distance, where they germinate and bear fruit. Thus the Redeemer knows how to convert into good that which men intended for evil; not only to hinder their wicked designs, but by means of them to secure an unexpected furtherance of His kingdom"—L. (Matt. 10. 23; ch. 11. 19.) It will be noted that the great majority of the dispersed

Christians held no office in the Church; yet they preached wherever they came, and this spread of the gospel without the holy city, this planting of the Church in the regions beyond, was effected not by the apostles but by an entirely voluntary and unofficial agency.

Vers. 5–13. PHILIP IN SAMARIA—BAPTISM OF SIMON MAGUS.—5. **Then Philip.** "S. Stephen being taken away, Philip, his next colleague, (not the apostle) rises in his place"—WESLEY.

It is evident that the deacon and not the apostle is intended. The apostles remained in Jerusalem; and this Philip had not the power of communicating the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, as the apostles did. (Ch. 6. 5.)

6. **And the people with one accord.** It is certain that the Samaritans were better prepared to receive the gospel than the Gentile nations, as they worshipped the true God, and acknowledged the authority of the five books of Moses. And the command of Christ (ch. 1. 8) directed the apostles to preach to them second only to the Jews. **Hearing and seeing** (R.V. "When they heard and saw the signs which he did").

7. **Unclean spirits crying with a loud voice** — which showed that they came out with great reluctance, overcome by a superior power. (Mark 16. 17.)

8. **Great joy in that city**—caused partly by the healing of so many sick, but chiefly by the fact that these "signs" authenticated Philip's message concerning the Saviour. Here is the harvest of the seed sown by Jesus some years before. (John 4.)

9. **A certain man, using magic.** "So there was such a thing as witchcraft once; in Asia, at least, if not in Europe and America"—WESLEY.

From the Greek word *magos*, sorcerer, or magician, this man is usually known as Simon Magus. The history given of him on the authority of Justin Martyr, who lived about a hundred years later, represents him as being, after the events recorded in this chapter, persistently hostile to S. Peter, and as following the apostle to Rome to oppose his teaching. But much that is related is of very doubtful authority. **Bewitched the people** (R.V. "amazed"). (Ch. 13. 6; 5. 36.)

10. **This man is the great power of God** (R.V. "This man is that power of God which is called Great"). "This doubtless imports that they imagined they recognised in the person of Simon a kind of theophany, and believed that the mighty power of God had appeared in him. S. Luke makes a distinction between the magician's own statement and the delusion of the people. He perhaps found it advisable, for his own interest, to make statements concerning himself wrapped in a certain mysterious reserve"—L. And it is to be noted that the general expectation that some great person was to arise among the Jews contributed to the temporary success of pretenders like Simon, Elymas, and many others.

12. **But when they believed**—"what Philip preached, they then saw and felt the real power of God and submitted thereto"—WESLEY. (Ch. 1. 3.)

13. **And Simon believed** — "that is, was convinced of the truth"—WESLEY.

Miracles and signs (R.V. "And beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed"). "Real miracles produced on Simon the same effect which his false miracles produced on others. (Vers. 9, 11.) We see in this, as in a thousand nearer instances, that there may be speculative faith in the gospel where there is no true piety"—B.

Vers. 14–25. PETER AND JOHN IN SAMARIA — SIMON MAGUS UNMASKED. 14. **And the apostles hearing that Samaria**—the inhabitants of that country—**had received the word of God** — by faith. **Sent Peter and John.** "He that sends must be superior, or at least equal, to him that is sent. It follows, that the college of the apostles was equal, if not superior, to S. Peter"—WESLEY.

The Twelve, though they remained in Jerusalem, considered themselves responsible for the administration of the entire Church.

15. **The Holy Ghost.** "In His miraculous gifts, or His sanctifying power? Probably in both"—WESLEY.

"Not that all, who had been baptized in Samaria, might receive the miraculous gifts; for it was never so in any Church, no, not in that of Jerusalem; but that some might receive these gifts for the confirmation of the gospel, and especially such as were designed for office in the Church, or to be eminently active members of it"—B. (Ch. 2. 38.)

16. **For as yet He was fallen upon none of them.** "None of them were endued with those extraordinary gifts, although they had been wonderfully displayed in the miracles which Philip performed"—B. **Baptized into the name** (R.V.). The preposition "into," which was used also at the institution of the Sacrament, implies the tie by which new converts are in baptism bound to Christ, as His followers, servants, worshippers. (Ch. 19. 2; Matt. 28. 19; ch. 2. 38; 10. 48; 19. 5.)

17. **Then laid they their hands on them.** "So Ananias laid his hands on Saul (ch. 9. 17), and he received the Holy Ghost. But on Cornelius and his companions (ch. 10. 44) the same gift was bestowed while S. Peter spake unto them. **They received the Holy Ghost** —that is, these new converts spake with tongues, and performed other extraordinary works. Thus God put honour upon the apostolic office, and bore witness to His truth"—B. (Ch. 6. 6; 19. 6; Heb. 6. 2.)

18, 19. **Simon offered them money.** "And hence the procuring any ministerial function or ecclesiastical benefice by money is termed *Simony*"—WESLEY.

The character of the man is shown by what he asks for. He does not desire the Holy

Ghost for himself, as a spiritual gift; he asks that he may be enabled to bestow, what he looks upon as a higher power than his own magic, upon others. And as he offered to buy this power we may be sure he meant to sell it.

20. **Thy money perish with thee.** "S. Peter was unable to conceal his righteous indignation. His words are not to be considered as an imprecation, but as a strong intimation to Simon of his danger"—B. (Matt. 10. 8; 2 Kings 5. 16; ch. 2. 38; 10. 45; 11. 17.)

21. **Thou hast neither part**—"by purchase—**nor lot**—given gratis—**in this matter**—this gift of God. **For thy heart is not right before God.** Probably S. Peter discerned this long before he declared it; although it does not appear that God gave to any of the apostles an universal power of discerning the hearts of all they conversed with, any more than an universal power of healing all the sick they came near. This we are sure S. Paul had not; though he was not inferior to the chief of the apostles. Otherwise, he would not have suffered the illness of Epaphroditus to have brought him so near to death (Phil. 2. 25–27); nor have left so useful a fellow-labourer as Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4. 20)"—WESLEY.

"Though we cannot infer from everything that a man saith or does amiss, that he is a hypocrite in the profession he makes of religion, yet conduct like this of Simon can by no means consist with a state of grace. His offering money for a spiritual gift was an incontestable evidence—(1) that he was yet under the power of a worldly and carnal spirit; and (2) that he was yet a mere natural man, who received not the things of the Spirit of God. His heart, as S. Peter tells him, was not right; and we are as our hearts are—if they be not right, we are wrong"—B.

22, 23. **Repent, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.** "Without all doubt, if he had repented, he would have been forgiven. The doubt was, whether he would repent. **Thou art in the gall of bitterness**—in the highest degree of wickedness, which is bitterness, that is, misery to the soul—**and in the bond of iniquity**—fast bound therewith"—WESLEY.

"S. Peter makes the attainment of forgiveness doubtful to Simon, because the sincerity of his repentance was doubtful. It is dangerous, and contrary to Scripture, to make the forgiveness of sins uncertain, to represent it as something of which the soul can never be assured in an undoubted manner, as the Romish Church does. But, on the other hand, it is unscriptural, and dangerous to souls, to sever forgiveness from moral susceptibility and preparedness—that is, from true repentance"—L. (Dan. 4. 29; 2 Tim. 2. 25; Heb. 12. 15.)

24. **Pray ye to the Lord for me.** The word "ye" is emphatic. In his utter spiritual ignorance, he thinks their prayers are more important than his own repentance. **That none of the things come upon me.** He seeks to be delivered from punishment, he expresses no desire for deliverance from sin. The evident absence of true repentance fully justified the apostle's sad "if perhaps." (Gen. 20. 7, 17; Ex. 8. 8; Num. 21. 7; 1 Kings 13. 6; Job 42. 8; Jas. 5. 16.)

Vers. 26–40. PHILIP THE DEACON BAPTIZES THE ETHIOPIAN.—26. **The angel** (R.V. "An angel of the Lord"). **The way, which is desert.** "There were two ways from Jerusalem to Gaza; one desert, the other through a more populous country"—WESLEY.

Gaza was one of the five chief cities of the Philistines. It was on the southern border of Canaan, and about an hour's journey from the Mediterranean.

27. **An eunuch.** "Chief officers were anciently called eunuchs, though not always literally such; because such used to be chief ministers in the Eastern courts. **Candace, queen of the Ethiopians.** So all the queens of Ethiopia were called"—WESLEY.

Ethiopia, in its most extended sense, embraced the modern Nubia, Senaar, Kordofan, and Northern Abyssinia, and in its more definite sense the kingdom of Meroë, from the junction of the Blue and White branches of the Nile to the border of Egypt. Shortly before our Saviour's birth a native dynasty of females, holding the official title of Candace, held sway in Ethiopia, and even resisted the advance of the Roman arms. **Who had the charge of all her treasure.** His character had already won the confidence of his sovereign. **Had come to Jerusalem for to worship.** He was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and had taken this long journey in order to sacrifice and to worship in the Temple. (Zeph. 3. 10; John 12. 20.)

28. **Sitting in his chariot, he read the prophet Isaiah.** "God meeteth those that remember Him in His ways. It is good to read, hear, seek information, even in a journey. Why should we not redeem all our time?"—WESLEY.

29. **The Spirit said.** This was the first intimation Philip had of the purpose for which he was sent to that desert country.

30. **And Philip running to him, said.** "He did not begin about the weather, news, or the like. In speaking for God, we may frequently come to the point at once without circumlocution"—WESLEY.

Heard him read. For he read aloud, both that his own mind might be more deeply impressed, and that his servants might receive some benefit by it.

31. **How can I, except some man should guide me?** "He was thirsting after the truth, seeking it as honestly as anyone can do, but he did not understand the prophecy, because he had no guide. But as soon as Philip showed him the way to Jesus, and brought him by the

word and sacrament into fellowship with the Redeemer, he needs no more a guide. Christ Himself is now to him the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the Holy Spirit will guide him into all truth. (John 16. 13.) That the chamberlain feels the want of a guide by no means proves, as Romanists teach, that the Bible without the guidance of the Church is insufficient; otherwise Philip would not have been caught away from his convert until means had been provided for his further instruction. But after his baptism he is left alone, and he goes on his way rejoicing, for he has found the Saviour, and with Him light for the Scriptures"—L. **He desired Philip to come up, and sit with him.** "Such was his modesty and thirst after instruction"—WESLEY.

32. **The portion of Scripture.** "By reading that very chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, many Jews, yea and atheists, have been converted. Some of them history records. God knoweth them all"—WESLEY. (Isa. 53. 7, 8.)

33. **In His humiliation His judgment was taken away**—"that is, when He was a Man He had no justice shown Him. To take away a person's judgment is a proverbial phrase for oppressing him. **And who shall declare**, or 'count,' **His generation?**—that is, who can number His seed (Isa. 53. 10), which He has purchased by laying down His life?"—WESLEY.

"The verses quoted are given *verbatim* from the LXX., which it is evident that the eunuch was reading. That version was made in Egypt for the use of the Jews residing there, and it was probably the form in which Old Testament Scripture was most familiar to the eunuch, and also to Philip. The translation varies in some points from the original, but it is sufficiently close to express the mind of the Spirit, and to form the subject of Philip's discourse. The expression, Who shall declare His generation? has been interpreted, 'Who shall describe His contemporaries?' (and their wickedness), for they have taken away His life"—L. Mr. Wesley's interpretation is that of Calvin and Beza, others have interpreted the word "generation" either of His eternal generation or His incarnation. Bishop Lowth translates, "His manner of life who shall declare?" referring to the custom of calling witnesses to character.

34. **Of whom speaketh the prophet this?** Some of the Jews interpreted this passage as relating to the Messiah, some to the whole congregation of Israel. In the beginning of Isa. 61 the prophet was supposed to refer to himself, which may have suggested a similar reference here.

35. **Preached unto him Jesus**—"preached to him glad tidings of Jesus." "After he had laid before him the predictions recorded in Scripture, and especially in this chapter, concerning the character, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection, and the mediatorial triumphs of the Messiah—he doubtless witnessed to him of the glorious accomplishment of them in the person of the Lord Jesus. And although no miracle was wrought to attest Philip's ministry, yet such an influence accompanied it that the eunuch was convinced, and was prepared heartily to accept Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and Christ"—B. (Luke 24. 27; ch. 18. 28.)

36. **And as they went on the way, they came to a certain water.** "Thus even the circumstances of the journey were under the direction of God. The kingdom of God suits itself to external circumstances, without any violence; as air yields to all bodies, and yet pervades all. **What hindereth me to be baptized?**—probably he had been circumcised; otherwise Cornelius would not have been the first-fruits of the Gentiles"—WESLEY.

37. This verse is omitted in the oldest and best manuscripts, and is therefore not found in the R.V. Probably it was first inserted in the margin of a manuscript by some scribe who imagined the narrative of baptism incomplete without a confession of faith.

38. **And they both went down**—"out of the **chariot.** It does not follow that he was baptized by immersion. The text neither affirms nor intimates anything concerning it"—WESLEY.

"Though Philip had very lately been deceived in Simon Magus, yet he did not scruple to baptize the eunuch immediately on his profession of faith. If some hypocrites crowd into the Church, they shall answer for their hypocrisy and not we"—B.

39. **The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip**—"carried him away with a miraculous swiftness, without any action or labour of his own. This had befallen several of the prophets"—WESLEY.

And he went on his way rejoicing (R.V. "for he went," etc.). The reason that the eunuch saw him no more was that he pursued his journey, and did not seek to find the messenger of Divine mercy who had mysteriously disappeared. He was happy in the new light, and the new life, of the gospel of Jesus Christ; and he had no doubt that Philip was safe. (1 Kings 18. 12; 2 Kings 2. 16; Ezek. 3. 12, 14.) Observe that Philip was miraculously sent to his work, and was miraculously removed when his work was done; but no miracle helped him in the work itself; he met a stranger on the road, he accosted him courteously, and talked to him of Jesus. We sometimes preach most successfully, because most closely and most tenderly, to an audience of *one*. **But Philip was found at Azotus**—"probably none saw him from his leaving the eunuch till he was there"—WESLEY.

Till he came to Cæsarea. This was Cæsarea Sebaste, and must be distinguished from Cæsarea Philippi, which is mentioned in Matt. 16. 13; this was the capital of the Roman province of Judea; Cornelius the centurion was stationed there; S. Paul was sent there under escort, and appeared before Felix and Drusilla, and before

Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice. Philip settled there, perhaps for life; at least, we shall find him and his family there much later in this history. (Ch. 21. 8, 9.)

CHAPTER IX.

Vers. 1-9. SAUL'S MISSION TO DAMASCUS—THE HEAVENLY VISION.—1, 2. **Saul desired letters to Damascus to the synagogues**—there were thousands of Jews residing in Damascus, and of course many synagogues. **This way** (R.V. "The way"). **Bound**—"by the connivance, if not authority, of the governor, under Aretas the king"—WESLEY.

Damascus was at this time in the possession of Aretas, king of Arabia Petræa. (Ch. 8. 3; Gal. 1. 3; 1 Tim. 1. 13.)

3. **And suddenly.** "When God suddenly and vehemently attacks a sinner, it is the highest act of mercy. So Saul, when his rage was come to the height, is taught not to 'breathe slaughter.' And what was wanting in time to confirm him in his discipleship is compensated by the inexpressible terror he sustained. By this also the suddenly-constituted apostle was guarded against the grand snare into which novices are apt to fall"—WESLEY.

A light from heaven. "It is plain, from ch. 22. 14 and other texts, that he saw amid this glory a human form, which yet he might not at first imagine to be that of Jesus"—B. (Ch. 22. 6; 26. 12; 1 Cor. 15. 8.)

4. **He heard a voice**—"severe yet full of grace"—WESLEY. **Why persecutest thou Me?** "The persecutions of Christ's disciples are represented as the persecutions of Christ Himself, because of their union with Him by the Holy Spirit, which makes them members of His body; and especially because of the sympathy which He has with them in all their sufferings"—B. (Matt. 25. 40, etc.)

5. **To kick against the goads** "is a Syriac proverb, expressing an attempt that brings nothing but pain"—WESLEY.

6. **And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him.** These words are not found in the oldest MSS., and are therefore omitted in R.V. They have evidently been inserted in this place for the sake of making a complete narrative, by the combination of the different particulars given in ch. 26. 14 and 22. 10. **It shall be told thee.** "So God Himself sends Saul to be taught by a man, as the angel does Cornelius. (Ch. 10. 5.) Admirable condescension, that the Lord deals with us by men like ourselves"—WESLEY.

"It was encouragement enough for Saul to have further instruction promised him. But (1) he must not have it yet—let him consider a while what he has done in persecuting Christ and His people, and be deeply humbled for that, and then he shall be told what he has further to do; (2) he must not have it in this way, by a voice from heaven—he shall be told what he shall do by a man like himself, whose terror shall not make him afraid"—B.

7. **The men stood**—"having risen before Saul; for they also fell to the ground (ch. 26. 14). It is probable they all journeyed on foot. **Hearing the noise**—but not an articulate voice. And seeing the light, but not Jesus Himself (ch. 26. 13)"—WESLEY. (Dan. 10. 7; ch. 22. 9.)

8. **They led him by the hand**—"for as they had not looked earnestly and steadfastly, as Saul had done, on the glorious light which surrounded the person of Christ, but had lain with their faces on the ground, their eyesight remained"—B.

9. **And he was three days.** "An important season. So long he seems to have been in the pangs of the new birth. **Without sight**—by scales growing over his eyes, to intimate to him the blindness of the state he had been in, to impress him with a deeper sense of the almighty power of Christ, and to turn his thoughts inward, while he was less capable of conversing with outward objects. This was likewise a manifest token to others of what had happened to him in his journey, and ought to have humbled and convinced those bigoted Jews to whom he had been sent from the Sanhedrim"—WESLEY.

Did neither eat nor drink. "In remorse and terror he humbled himself before the Lord, in the mode to which, as a strict Pharisee, he had been accustomed; yet not in the spirit of a Pharisee, but of the publican in the parable"—W. W. "With fasting he joined fervent and repeated prayer, perhaps to the Lord Jesus; in which he made confession of his sin, and earnest supplication for pardon; all of which, being certain signs of his repentance, are in ver. 11 mentioned as such"—B. "The essential point of this occurrence before Damascus was, that Jesus appeared personally to Saul; first He made Himself seen in the light from heaven, and immediately addressed him, made Himself known, and directed him to go into the city, where the will of God would be further revealed to him. The first and strongest impression was, *Jesus lives.* Saul had persecuted the disciples on the supposition that Jesus of Nazareth had remained in the state of the dead. Now Jesus personally appears to him; he receives direct and personal certainty that Jesus, the Crucified, is alive. And Saul received also a profound impression of the glory of Christ in His exaltation. The light which shone round about him was a light from heaven, the glory which encircles God. And the voice with which Jesus addresses him has in it something overwhelming; he immediately feels the pre-eminence of the Person who appears, and is compelled to bow and submit. In short, Jesus not only lives, but lives exalted in heaven, lives and rules in Divine glory. And this was not a dream, not an exclusively subjective transaction, not a spiritual manifesta-

tion; but, as is manifest from vers. 17, 27, and from 1 Cor. 15. 8, an actual appearance in this world of sense"—L. "This was ample evidence to produce intellectual conviction; and evidently it was accompanied by a secret spiritual power. The apostle says to the Galatians, 'It pleased God to reveal His Son *in* me.' So did the Saviour exalted give repentance"—G.

Vers. 10–19. THE HUMAN AGENCY—SAUL'S CONVERSION.—10. **A certain disciple, named Ananias**—not distinguished, even among Christians; not mentioned in the subsequent history. His special qualification for the service to which he was sent was his spotless character. (Ch. 22. 12.)

11. **The street which is called Straight.** This long straight street still runs through Damascus. **Behold, he is praying.** "He was shown thus to Ananias"—WESLEY. (Ch. 21. 39; 22. 3.)

12. **And hath seen in a vision.** Compare, with the history in the next chapter of the conversion of Cornelius, the simultaneous preparation of Ananias and Saul, and of Peter and Cornelius; the hesitation in each case to attempt the work; the unhesitating obedience when the Divine will was clearly known. **A man called Ananias**—"his name also was revealed to Saul"—WESLEY.

The words "in a vision" omitted in R.V.

13. **But he answered.** "How natural is it to reason against God!"—WESLEY.

14. **He hath authority**—probably the Christians in Jerusalem had communicated this information. **All that call on Thy name**—"that is, all Christians"—WESLEY.

"Thy name"—for the Lord who appeared was the Lord Jesus. (Ver. 21; ch. 7. 59; 22. 16; 1 Cor. 1. 2; 2 Tim. 2. 22.) "Now why doth Ananias thus object? Does he say, Why should I do him a kindness, who has done us so much unkindness? No; Christ had taught him to render good for evil. But if he be such a persecutor of Christians—(1) Will it be safe for Ananias to go to him? (2) Will it be to any purpose to go to him? Can such a hard heart be ever softened?"—B.

15. **Go thy way.** "The Lord simply insists upon the command, but sets at ease His anxious servant by telling him that Saul will do no more mischief"—L. **He is a chosen vessel, to bear My name**—"that is, to testify of Me. It is undeniable that some men are unconditionally chosen or elected to do some works for God"—WESLEY.

Before the Gentiles. This was a revelation to Ananias, for Jewish Christians did not yet contemplate the inclusion of the whole world in the Church of Christ. **And kings**—before Agrippa, and before Cæsar himself. (Ch. 13. 2; 22. 21; 26. 17; Rom. 1. 1; 1 Cor. 15. 10; Gal. 1. 15; Eph. 3. 7, 8; 1 Tim. 2. 7; 2 Tim. 1. 11; Rom. 1. 5; 11. 13; Gal. 2. 7, 8; ch. 25. 22, 23; 26. 1.)

16. **For I.** "Do thou as thou art commanded; I will take care of the rest. **Will show him**—in fact, through the whole course of his ministry—**how great things he must suffer**—so far will he be now from persecuting others"—WESLEY. (Ch. 20. 23; 21. 11; 2 Cor. 11. 23.)

17. **Brother Saul.** The readiness of Ananias to hail the persecutor on his repentance as a brother intimated to Saul God's readiness to receive him as a son. **The Lord, even Jesus**—combining the name "Lord," used by Saul when the vision appeared, with the name "Jesus," which Christ uttered in reply to Saul's inquiry. Thus was brought to Saul from without a confirmation of the reality of what he had seen three days before. **Hath sent me.** "Ananias does not tell Saul all which Christ had said concerning him. It was not expedient that he should know yet to how great a dignity he was called"—WESLEY.

S. Luke does not profess to give here the entire conversation. (See also ch. 22. 14–16; 8. 7; 2. 4; 4. 31; 8. 17; 13. 52.)

18. **There fell from his eyes as it had been scales**—something like scales. The word rendered "scales" is used as a technical term for a disease of the eye, by Hippocrates, the great physician of antiquity, with whose writings S. Luke was probably acquainted. Of course, in this case, both the malady and the cure were supernatural. **He was baptized**—and thereby submitted himself to the government of Christ, and cast himself upon His grace.

19. **Then was Saul certain days with the disciples at Damascus.** Not for the purpose of learning Christian truth from them (see Gal. 1. 12), but of satisfying them that he was well acquainted with it, and had a commission to preach it with authority.

Vers. 20–30. SAUL PREACHES CHRIST, AND IS COMPELLED TO FLEE.—20. **Preached Christ** (R.V. "Proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues"). (Ch. 8. 37.)

21. **All that heard were amazed.** "No doubt this was regarded as a great confirmation of the truth of Christianity, as indeed it has been ever since. This miracle on the mind of such a man outshone the miracles upon men's bodies"—B. (Ch. 8. 3; ver. 1; Gal. 1. 13, 23.)

22. **Saul increased in strength.** The best answer to any who doubt the sincerity of our conversion is growth in the new life. **Confounded the Jews, proving** that Jesus is the Messiah. Saul "proved" from prophecy and its fulfilment, from the agreement of the messianic prophecies with the historical facts in the life of Jesus, that Jesus is the Messiah. On the other hand, that Jesus is the Son of God, Saul *proclaimed* (ver. 20)—that is, he did not seek to prove it by inferences from the Old Testament, but declared it by direct and simple testimony from his own experience. (Ch. 18. 28.)

23. And after many days were fulfilled—in which many events must have taken place. We learn from Gal. 1. 16–18 that during this time he "went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus," and that he did not go up to Jerusalem until three years after his conversion. (Ch. 23. 12; 25. 3; 2 Cor. 11. 26.)

24. They guarded the gates day and night—"that is, the governor did, at their request"—WESLEY. (2 Cor. 11. 32.)

25. Let him down by the wall in a basket. Professor Hackett observed at Damascus "windows in the external face of the wall, opening into houses on the inside of the city." So Rahab let down the spies, and so David escaped from Saul. (Josh. 2. 15; 1 Sam. 19. 12.)

26. And coming to Jerusalem—"three years after (Gal. 1. 18). These three years S. Paul passes over (ch. 22. 7) likewise"—WESLEY.

Believed not that he was a disciple. "It may seem strange that so remarkable an event as Saul's conversion should be unknown to the Christians at Jerusalem; but it is to be considered that there was not then the facility of correspondence between distant places which we have now, and that the war then subsisting between Herod Antipas and Aretas would probably interrupt that between Damascus and Jerusalem. S. Paul might now well think himself in evil case, when the Jews had abandoned and persecuted him, and the Christians would not receive him"—B. (Ch. 22. 17; Gal. 1. 17, 18.)

27. But Barnabas took him. They may have been acquainted before. Cyprus is within a few hours' sail of Cilicia. **To the apostles**—"S. Peter and S. James. (Gal. 1. 18, 19.) **And declared.** He who has been an enemy to the truth ought not to be trusted till he gives proof that he is changed"—WESLEY. (Ch. 4. 36; 13. 2; vers. 20, 22.)

29. Disputed against the Grecians—or "Grecian Jews" (R.V.), probably in the same synagogue, "of them of Cilicia," in which S. Stephen had employed the same arguments. **But they went about to slay him**—more suddenly and terribly enraged against him than even against S. Stephen, because the champion in whom they trusted had turned against them. (Ch. 6. 1; 11. 20; ver. 23; 2 Cor. 11. 26.)

30. Which when the brethren knew—remembering how the putting S. Stephen to death, upon his disputing with the Grecians, had been the beginning of a great persecution, they hastened S. Paul out of the way. Yet it was also by direction from heaven, as he himself tells us (ch. 22. 17, 18), that he left Jerusalem at this time, Christ ordering him to go out of it, because he was sent to the Gentiles.

Vers. 31–43. THE CHURCH LEFT AT PEACE—MIRACLES PERFORMED BY PETER.—**31. Then had the Churches rest** (R.V. "So the Church . . . had peace"). It is not meant that the quiet was only due to the absence of Saul, who had left Jerusalem three years before, and had only spent fifteen days there on his return. It is rather explained by the consternation of the Jews at the determination of Caligula to place his statue in the temple of Jerusalem. This profanation was averted, partly by the determined opposition of the Jews, and partly by the intercession of Herod Agrippa. **Then the Church**—"the whole body of Christian believers—**had peace**—their bitterest persecutor being converted. **And being built up**—in holy, loving faith, continually increasing. **And walking in**—that is, speaking and acting only from this principle—**the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Ghost.** An excellent mixture of inward and outward peace, tempered with filial fear"—WESLEY. (Ch. 8. 1.)

32. Peter passed throughout all quarters. This was an apostolic journey of visitation and inspection, wherever the disciples that were dispersed had planted churches. **The saints.** This name was given to members of the Christian Church at a very early period. (See ver. 13 in this chapter.) It shows at least how high a standard they set for themselves. (Ch. 8. 14.)

33. Which had kept his bed eight years—so that his cure was evidently miraculous.

34. Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. As in the case of the lame man at the gate of the Temple, S. Peter is careful to have it understood it is not by his own power or holiness the miracle is done. (Ch. 3. 6, 16; 4. 10.)

35. Lydda—"was a large town, one day's journey from Jerusalem. It stood in the plain or valley of Sharon, which extended from Cæsarea to Joppa, and was noted for its fruitfulness"—WESLEY.

Saron (R.V. "Sharon"). (1 Chron. 5. 16; ch. 11. 21.)

36. There was at Joppa—a seaport on the Mediterranean, about forty miles from Jerusalem. The materials for Solomon's temple were landed there by Tyrian seamen; Jonah took ship there for Tarshish. Modern tourists to Palestine frequently land there. **Tabitha, which is by interpretation Dorcas.** "She was probably a Hellenist Jew, known among the Hebrews by the Syriac name Tabitha; while the Greeks called her, in their own language, Dorcas. They are both words of the same import, and signify a roe or fawn"—WESLEY. (1 Tim. 2. 10; Titus 3. 8.)

38. The disciples sent to him—"probably none of those at Joppa had the gift of miracles. Nor is it certain that they expected a miracle from him"—WESLEY.

"They do not mention the reason for their desiring his coming. If they had any expectation of his restoring her to life, it was a remarkable instance of faith; for it does not appear that any of the apostles had as yet raised anyone from the dead"—B.

39. **All the widows**—"who had been relieved by her benevolence"—B. Perhaps the widows supported by the Church. (1 Tim. 5. 3-9.) **While she was with them**—"that is, before she died"—WESLEY.

40. **Peter having put them all out**—"that he might have the better opportunity of wrestling with God in prayer. **Said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, sat up.** Who can imagine the surprise of Dorcas when called back to life? or of her friends when they saw her alive? For the sake of themselves and of the poor, there was cause of rejoicing; and much more for such a confirmation of the gospel. Yet to herself it was matter of resignation, not joy, to be called back to these scenes of vanity. But doubtless her remaining days were still more zealously spent in the service of her Saviour and her God. Thus was a richer treasure laid up for her in heaven, and she afterward returned to a more exceeding weight of glory than that from which so astonishing a providence had recalled her for a season"—WESLEY.

"S. Peter put them forth, as Christ did at the raising of Jairus's daughter, when S. Peter was present"—C. B. "He addressed himself to God in solemn prayer, as Christ did when He raised Lazarus; but Christ's prayer was with the authority of a Son who quickeneth whom He will, S. Peter's was with the submission of a servant under direction, and therefore he **kneeled down** when he offered it"—B. (Matt. 9. 25; ch. 7. 60; Mark 5. 41, 42; John 11. 43.)

41. **Called the saints and widows.** The petition sent to S. Peter had been the supplication of the whole Church at Joppa.

42. **Many believed in the Lord**—not only in Joppa, but in other places, with which Joppa had intercourse by trade. (John 11. 45; 12. 11.)

43. **Tarried many days in Joppa.** The miracle had prepared the people to receive the doctrine which he remained to instruct them in. **Simon a tanner.** From the necessary contact with dead animals, the occupation was held as abominable by the Jews. Either S. Peter's choice of a residence was limited by poverty or otherwise, or his Jewish prejudices had already begun to pass away, when he went to lodge at the house of Simon.

CHAPTER X.

Vers. 1-8. CORNELIUS, INSTRUCTED BY AN ANGEL, SENDS FOR S. PETER.—1. **And there was a certain man**—"the first-fruits of the Gentiles—**in Cæsarea**—where Philip had been before. (Ch. 8. 40.) So that the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus was not unknown there. Cæsarea was the seat of the civil government, as Jerusalem was of the ecclesiastical. It is observable that the gospel made its way first through the metropolitan cities. So it first seized Jerusalem and Cæsarea; afterwards Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome itself. **A centurion**—or captain—**of that called the Italian band**—that is, troop or company"—WESLEY.

"The gospel had hitherto been preached only to the Jews and Samaritans, and to such Gentiles as had by circumcision become complete proselytes to Judaism. God was now determined to open the way for the publication of it to the uncircumcised Gentiles, and to admit them to His Church by baptism, on the terms of true repentance and faith in Christ. This remarkable change in the economy of Divine grace, this discovery of the gospel to the Gentiles, and the bringing of them, who had been 'strangers and foreigners,' to be 'fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God,' without laying them under any obligation to observe the Ceremonial Law, was such a mystery to the apostles themselves, and such a surprise (Eph. 3. 3, 6), that it concerns us carefully to observe all the circumstances of the beginning of this great work"—B.

2. **A devout man** — a Gentile who had abandoned idolatry, and who worshipped the true God, but who was not a proselyte to Judaism. **Feared God with all his house.** The soldier whom he sent to S. Peter is called "devout" in ver. 7. **Who gave much alms to the people**—"that is, to the Jews, many of whom were at that time extremely poor"—WESLEY. (Ver. 22; ch. 8. 2; 22. 12; 5. 35.)

3. **He saw in a vision**—"not in a trance, like S. Peter—**plainly** (R.V. 'openly')—so as to leave one not accustomed to things of this kind no room to suspect any imposition"—WESLEY.

The ninth hour of the day—the hour for evening prayer. (Ch. 3. 1.) In this respect he had conformed to the usages of the Jews. (Ver. 30; ch. 11. 13.)

4. **What is it, Lord?** "The words imply his readiness to perform what shall be commanded, as though he had said, What wilt Thou have me to do"?—C. B. **Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.** "Dare any man say, these were only splendid sins; or that they were an abomination before God? And yet it is certain, in the Christian sense, Cornelius was then an unbeliever. He had not then faith in Christ. So certain is it, that everyone who seeks faith in Christ should seek it in prayer, and doing good to all men; though, in strictness, what is not exactly according to the Divine rule must stand in need of Divine favour and indulgence"—WESLEY.

5, 6. **He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.** These words are omitted in R.V. In S. Peter's own account (ch. 11. 14), we have "who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house may be saved." The prayer of Cornelius had been for light; and he is directed to the instructor whom he needs. "Two things here are worthy of particular attention—(1) Cornelius is influenced continually by the

fear of God; from that principle he prays and gives alms, is religious himself, and maintains religion in his family. And he is accepted of God. Nevertheless, it is now necessary that he should do something further; he must accept the Christian faith which God is now establishing among men. Not, he might do it if he pleased, and it would be an improvement of his religion; but he must do it, his doing it is absolutely indispensable to his acceptance with God for the future. Prayers and alms are still accepted from those who believe in God and fear Him, if they have not an opportunity of knowing more. But with those to whom the gospel is preached, it is necessary in order to the acceptance of their persons, prayers, and alms that they should believe that Jesus is the Christ, and should confide in Him alone for acceptance. (2) Though Cornelius has now an angel from heaven talking to him, yet he must not receive the gospel of Christ from this angel, nor be told by him what he ought to do, but must send for S. Peter. Not to angels, but to saints, compassed about with infirmity, was 'this grace given'"—B. (Ch. 9. 43; 11. 14.)

7. **A devout soldier.** "How many such attendants have our modern officers? A devout soldier would now be looked upon as little better than a deserter from his colours"—WESLEY.

Mr. Wesley's Notes were published in 1754. He lived to reckon devout soldiers among his own people. There were reported in 1892 20,494 declared Wesleyans, of whom 1466 were Church members, in the Army and Royal Navy.

8. **He declared all these things to them.** They had known his former hopes and prayers, and Cornelius had confidence in them; and he wished them to be able to answer any questions S. Peter might ask, and if necessary to urge him to comply.

Vers. 9–24. PETER PREPARED BY A VISION, GOES AT ONCE TO CORNELIUS.—9. **Peter went upon the housetop to pray.** The houses had flat roofs, on which people walked to take the air, and where they conversed, meditated, and prayed. **About the sixth hour**—midday, the second of the stated hours for prayer. (Ch. 11. 5.)

10. **And he became very hungry**—"at the usual meal-time. The symbols in visions and trances, it is easy to observe, are generally suited to the state of the natural faculties"—WESLEY.

He fell into a trance—"such a rapture of mind as makes the person who falls into it insensible of external objects, while his imagination is impressed by striking scenes which pass before it"—B. This was entirely different from the actual appearance of the angel to Cornelius, but it was equally supernatural.

11. **Knit at the four corners, and let down** (R.V. "let down by four corners"). "Tied at the corners—not all in one knot; but each fastened, as it were, up to heaven"—WESLEY. (Ch. 7. 56; Rev. 19. 11.)

12. **All manner**, etc. (R.V. omits "and wild beasts.")

13, 14. **Peter said, Not so, Lord**—in nowise, Lord. "When God commands a strange, or seemingly improper, thing, the first objection frequently finds pardon. But it ought not to be repeated. This doubt and delay of S. Peter had several good effects. Hereby the will of God in this important point was made more evident and incontestable, and S. Peter also, having been so slow of belief himself, could the more easily bear the doubting of his brethren"—WESLEY. (Ch. 15. 9.)

S. Peter might well hesitate, for the voice that bade him kill and eat what was set before him in vision, must have been as hard as to tell a Brahmin to break his caste, with the addition, that he knew these restrictions were commanded by God Himself. (Lev. 11. 4; 20. 25; Deut. 14. 3, 7; Ezek. 4. 14.)

15. **What God hath cleansed**—"purified—hath made and declared clean. Nothing but what is clean can come down from heaven. S. Peter well remembered this saying, in the Council at Jerusalem (ch. 15. 9)"—WESLEY. (Matt. 15. 11; ver. 28; Rom. 14. 14, 17, 20; 1 Cor. 10. 25; 1 Tim. 4. 4; Titus 1. 15.)

16. **This was done thrice**—"to make the deeper impression"—WESLEY.

17. **While Peter doubted in himself, behold, the men.** "Frequently the things which befall us within and from without, at the same time, are a key to each other. The things which thus occur and agree together ought to be diligently attended to"—WESLEY.

Doubted in himself (R.V. "Was much perplexed"). He did not doubt that it was a heavenly vision; all his doubt was concerning the meaning of it.

19, 20. **The Spirit said unto him**—suggested to his mind, as manifestly as if He had whispered in his ear—**Behold, men seek thee. Arise, therefore, and go down and go with them, nothing doubting.** "How gradually was S. Peter prepared to receive this new admonition of the Spirit! Thus God is wont to lead on His children by degrees, always giving them light for the present hour"—WESLEY. (Ch. 11. 12; 15. 7.)

21. **What is the cause wherefore ye are come?** Probably he would recognise them all as Gentiles, and one as a soldier.

22. **Cornelius the centurion.** To obviate as far as possible any prejudice which S. Peter might have against Cornelius as a Gentile they describe his character, and add, as an irresistible argument, that he had been warned by an angel to send for S. Peter. (Vers. 1, 2; ch. 22. 12.)

23. **Called them in and lodged them**—"the first step towards laying aside Jewish

scruples. **Certain brethren from Joppa**—Jewish Christians (ver. 45), six in number (ch. 11. 12)—probably desired by the apostle to go with him, that they might be witnesses of what happened, as this was an affair in which some difficulties might arise, and some censure be incurred from the Jewish converts. How pleasing a mixture have we here of prudence and humility! Sufficient to teach us a prudent caution in our best-intended actions, that our good may not be evil spoken of"—B.

24. **Cornelius was waiting for them**—"not engaging himself in any secular business during that solemn time, but being altogether intent upon this one thing"—WESLEY.

His kinsmen and near friends. Doubtless men of like mind with Cornelius in faith and worship. They had been informed that S. Peter was expected, and were all waiting for the promised instruction.

Vers. 25–48. PETER PREACHES TO CORNELIUS AND HIS FRIENDS, AND THE HOLY GHOST DESCENDS ON THEM.—25. **Worshipped him.** It was not a Roman custom to offer the *salaam* to any man. Cornelius prostrated himself as to a superhuman visitor.

26. **I myself am a man**—"and not God, who alone ought to be worshipped"—WESLEY. (Ch. 14. 14, 15; Rev. 19. 10; 22. 9.)

27, 28. **An unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew.** "It was not made unlawful by the law of God, but by the precepts of their wise men, which they regarded as no less binding. They did not forbid them to do business with Gentiles, but to eat and drink, or to hold friendly intercourse"—B. **But God hath showed me.** "He speaks sparingly to them of his former doubt, and his late vision"—WESLEY. (John 4. 9; 18. 28; ch. 11. 3; Gal. 2. 12, 14; ch. 15. 8, 9; Eph. 3. 6.)

29. **I ask for what intent ye have sent for me?** "S. Peter knew this already. But he puts Cornelius on telling the story, both that the rest might be informed, and Cornelius himself more impressed by the narration; the repetition of which, even as we read it, gives a new dignity and spirit to S. Peter's succeeding discourse"—WESLEY.

30. **Four days ago I was fasting.** "The first of these days he had the vision; the second, his messengers come to Joppa; on the third, S. Peter set out: and on the fourth, came to Cæsarea"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Four days ago until this hour I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house." "This makes the time of S. Peter's arrival to be after the ninth hour of the day. The prayers of Cornelius had been continued some time before the angel appeared"—C. B. **A man in bright clothing**—like that of the angels who appeared at the resurrection and the ascension. (Ch. 1. 10; Matt. 28. 3; Mark 16. 5; Luke 24. 4.)

31. **Thy prayer is heard.** "Doubtless he had been praying for instruction how to worship God in the most acceptable manner — WESLEY.

Thine alms had in remembrance. God looks not only on the outward gift, but on the inward affection from which it proceeds. (Vers. 4, etc.; Dan. 10. 12; Heb. 6. 10.)

33. **Now therefore we are all present before God**—"the language of every truly Christian congregation"—WESLEY.

To hear all things that are commanded thee of God—"to know and do whatsoever He shall require of us. In this spirit ought everyone that would profit by the word of God to attend upon it"—B.

34. **Peter opened his mouth.** The expression always intimates the commencement of an important discourse. **I perceive of a truth**—"more clearly than ever, from such a concurrence of circumstances—**that God is not a respecter of persons**—is not partial in His love. The words mean, in a particular sense, that He does not confine His love to one nation; in general, that He is loving to every man, and willeth all men should be saved"—WESLEY. (Deut. 10. 17; 2 Chron. 19. 7; Job 34. 19; Rom. 2. 11; Gal. 2. 6; Eph. 6. 9; Col. 3. 25; 1 Pet. 1. 17.)

35. **But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness**—"he that first reverences God, as great, wise, good—the Cause, End, and Governor of all things; and secondly, from this awful regard to Him, not only avoids all known evil, but endeavours, according to the best light he has, to do all things well. **Is accepted of Him**—through Christ, though he knows Him not. The assertion is express, and admits of no exception. He is in the favour of God, whether enjoying His written words and ordinances or not. Nevertheless, the addition of these is an unspeakable blessing to those who were before, in some measure, accepted; otherwise, God would never have sent an angel from heaven to direct Cornelius to S. Peter"—WESLEY.

See note on ver. 6. (Ch. 15. 9; Rom. 2. 13, 17; 3. 22, 29; 10. 12, 13; 1 Cor. 12. 13; Gal. 3. 28; Eph. 2. 13, 18; 3. 6.)

36. **The word,** etc. (R.V. "The word which He sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace"). "**This is the word which God sent** — when He sent His Son into the world. **Preaching**—proclaiming by Him—**peace**—between God and man, whether Jew or Gentile, by the God-Man. He is Lord of both; yea, Lord of and over all"—WESLEY. (Isa. 57. 19; Eph. 2. 14, 16, 17; Col. 1. 20; Matt. 28. 18; Rom. 10. 12; 1 Cor. 15. 27; Eph. 1. 20, 22; 1 Pet. 3. 22; Rev. 17. 14; 19. 16.)

37. **That word—ye know the word that was published.** "You know the facts in general, the meaning of which I shall now more particularly explain and confirm to you. **The baptism which John preached** — to which he invited them by his preaching, in

token of their repentance. This began in Galilee, which was near Cæsarea"—WESLEY. (Luke 4. 14.)

38. **How God anointed Jesus**—"particularly at His baptism, thereby inaugurating Him to His office. **With the Holy Ghost and with power.** It is worthy our remark, that frequently, when the Holy Ghost is mentioned, there is added a word particularly adapted to the present circumstances. So the deacons were to be 'full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom' (ch. 6. 3); S. Barnabas was 'full of the Holy Ghost and faith' (11. 24); the disciples were 'filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost' (13. 52); and here, where His mighty works are mentioned, Christ Himself is said to be 'anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power.' **For God was with Him.** He speaks sparingly here of the majesty of Christ, as considering the state of his hearers" —WESLEY.

"'God anointed Jesus.' The apostle refers to Christ as the promised Messiah; for as Messiah signifies the Anointed One, and Christ has the same signification in Greek; and the Messiah, according to the prophets, was to work miracles, S. Peter proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, and refers to the miracles which He wrought, as the proof of it"—C. (Luke 4. 18; ch. 2. 22; 4. 27; Heb. 1. 9; John 3. 2.)

39. **And we are witnesses**—His apostles, having been with Him from the beginning of His public ministry. (Ch. 2. 32; 5. 30.)

40. **Showed Him openly** (R.V. "Gave Him to be made manifest"). "Christ was not openly showed; but by many proofs it was made clear to those who saw Him that it was the same body, though now glorified, which had been wounded on the cross, but was alive again"—C. B. (Ch. 2. 24.)

41. **Not** now **to all the people**—as before His death. **To us who did eat and drink with Him**—"that is, conversed familiarly and continually with Him in the time of His ministry"—WESLEY.

Witnesses chosen before of God. Jesus also speaks of His apostles as given unto Him by God. (John 17. 6; 14. 17, 22; ch. 13. 31; Luke 24. 30, 43; John 21. 13.)

42. **It is He who is ordained of God the Judge of the living and the dead**—"of all men, whether they are alive at His coming, or had died before it. This was declaring to them, in the strongest terms, how entirely their happiness depended on a timely and humble subjection to Him who was to be their final Judge" —WESLEY.

So Christ had taught in His personal ministry. (Matt. 28. 19, 20; ch. 1. 8; John 5. 22. 27; ch. 17. 31.)

43. **To Him give all the prophets witness.** "Speaking to heathens, he does not quote any in particular. **That every one that believeth in Him** — whether he be Jew or Gentile— **receiveth remission of sins**—though he had not before either feared God, or worked righteousness"—WESLEY.

The appeal to the prophets certainly intimates that Cornelius and his household were not entirely ignorant of the Jewish Scriptures. (Isa. 53. 11; Jer. 31. 34; Dan. 9. 24; Micah 7. 18; Zech. 13. 1; Mal. 4. 2; ch. 26. 22; 15. 9; 26. 18; Rom. 10. 11; Gal. 3. 22.)

44. **While Peter yet spake** — "before he had finished, and without any imposition of hands"—B.

The Holy Ghost fell on all that were hearing the word. "Thus were they consecrated to God, as the first-fruits of the Gentiles. And thus did God give a clear and satisfactory evidence that He had accepted them as well as the Jews"—WESLEY.

The Holy Spirit was given before baptism, or imposition of hands, to show that the admission of the Gentiles was in no degree due to the agency or will of S. Peter, but was the immediate act of God. To this S. Peter alludes in his defence of his conduct (ch. 11. 15). (Ch. 4. 31; 8. 15–17.)

45. **The believers of the circumcision**—"the believing Jews"—WESLEY—that is, the six men who had accompanied S. Peter from Joppa. They were astonished, for they saw it incontestably proved that those who had never been circumcised, or been made converts to Judaism, might not only become Christian believers, but might be partakers of the highest privileges of the Church. (Ver. 23; ch. 11. 18; Gal. 3. 14.)

46. **They heard them speak with tongues.** The same kinds of manifestation attended the gift as on the day of Pentecost. (Ch. 11. 15.)

47. **Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost?** "He does not say, They have the baptism of the Spirit; therefore they do not need baptism with water, but just the contrary; if they have received the Spirit, then baptize them with water. How easily is this question decided, if we will take the word of God for our Judge! Either men have received the Holy Ghost, or not. If they have not, 'Repent,' saith God, 'and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' If they have, if they are already baptized with the Holy Ghost, then 'who can forbid water?'" —WESLEY. (Ch. 11. 17; 15. 8, 9; Rom. 10. 12.)

48. **And he commanded them to be baptized** (R.V. "in the name of Jesus Christ")— "which implies the Father who anointed Him, and the Spirit with which He was anointed to His office. But as these Gentiles had before believed in God the Father, and could not but now believe in the Holy Ghost, under whose powerful influence they were at this very time, there was the less need of taking notice that they were baptized into the belief and profession of the sacred Three; though doubtless the apostle administered the ordinance in that very

form which Christ Himself had prescribed"—WESLEY.

"'Commanded them to be baptized.' Choosing to make use of the ministry of his brethren, that by this means the expression of their consent might be the more explicit"—B. "S. Peter seems to have refrained from baptizing converts, and we know that S. Paul did so; and the latter indicates a reason which may have influenced all the Twelve to appoint others to baptize, lest factions should arise"—C. B. (Ch. 2. 38; 8. 16.) The point at which the Holy Spirit fell upon the hearers intimates what was the chief thing Cornelius desired to know, and that S. Peter was commissioned to teach. Cornelius felt the need of a clearer sense of the Divine acceptance, and had sincerely prayed for light. S. Peter preaches to him Jesus Christ—speaking of His life, His death, His resurrection, and His mediatorial glory; then announces in ver. 43 the great message of mercy through Him. He offers forgiveness to every one, implying that all are sinners; he declares that Christ is the Mediator of reconciliation; and he teaches faith in Him as the only condition of salvation. At once Cornelius saw the light which he had longed for, and, as his heart was opening to receive it, the Holy Spirit came.

CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 1–18. PETER JUSTIFIES HIS CONDUCT BEFORE THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS.—**1. The apostles and brethren heard.** The news of these occurrences reached them while S. Peter yet tarried at Cæsarea.

2. **They of the circumcision contended with him.** "There seems no reason to exclude any of the believing Jews, except the apostles, from this contention; for they were 'all zealous of the Law,' and of their customs, and could not endure that any Jew should act contrary to them (ch. 21. 20, 21), and S. Peter himself had been of that mind until he received the vision; and even afterwards on one occasion he withdrew himself from the believing Gentiles, for fear of the Jews"—B. (Gal. 2. 12; ch. 10. 45.)

3. **Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised.** The word was one of great reproach in the mouth of a Jew; the employment of it shows strong feeling. (Ch. 10. 28; Gal. 2. 12.)

4. **Peter laid all things before them.** "So he did not take it ill to be questioned, or desire to be treated as infallible. And he answers the more mildly, because it related to a point which he had not readily believed himself"—WESLEY.

It is evident that the Jewish Christians had no idea of the supremacy, much less of the infallibility of S. Peter. (Luke 1. 3; ch. 10. 9, etc.)

5. **In a trance**—"which suspends the use of the outward senses"—WESLEY.

11. **The house where I was** (R.V. "where we were").

12. **These six brethren.** The new reading in ver. 11, which has the support of the best MSS., makes it probable that these brethren were his companions in the journey which he was making "throughout all quarters" (ch. 9. 32), and so were lodging with him at Simon's house in Joppa. (John 16. 13; ch. 10. 19; 15. 7; 10. 23.)

13. **An angel in his house** (R.V. "The angel standing")—of whom you have already heard by common report. (Ch. 10. 30.)

14. **Saved**—"with the full Christian salvation, both in this world and the world to come"—WESLEY.

17. **To us when we believed.** "The sense is, Because we believed, not because we were circumcised, was the Holy Ghost given to us. **What was I?**—a mere instrument in God's hand. They had inquired only concerning his 'eating with the Gentiles.' He satisfies them likewise concerning his baptizing them; and shows that he had done right in going to Cornelius, not only by the command of God, but also by the event, the descent of the Holy Ghost. **And who are we that we should withstand God?**—particularly by laying down rules of Christian communion, which exclude any whom He has admitted into the Church of the first-born from worshipping God together. Oh that all church governors would consider how bold an usurpation this is on the authority of the supreme Lord of the Church! Oh that the sin of thus withstanding God may not be laid to the charge of those who, perhaps with a good intention, but in an over-fondness for their own forms, have done it, and are continually doing it!"—WESLEY. (Ch. 10. 47.)

18. **They glorified God**—"being fully satisfied. **Repentance unto life.** True repentance is a change from spiritual death to spiritual life, and leads to life everlasting"—WESLEY.

"But though those who heard the account of S. Peter were satisfied that God had called Gentiles into His Church as well as Jews, there were others who maintained the necessity of the observance of the older Covenant, some perhaps from a real though misguided zeal for the Law, others from national pride and bigotry (Gal. 6. 13); and hence arose dissensions in the Church, which caused much trouble"—C. B. (Rom. 10. 12, 13; 15. 9, 16.)

Vers. 19–30. FURTHER SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL—THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH.—19. **They who had been dispersed.** "S. Luke here resumes the thread of his narration, in the very words where he broke it off (ch. 8. 4)—**as far as Phenicia north,** Cyprus to the west, and Antioch to the east"—WESLEY. (Ch. 8. 1.)

20. **Some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene**—"who were more accustomed to converse with the Gentiles—**who coming into Antioch**—then the capital of Syria and, next to Rome and Alexandria, the most considerable city of the empire. **Spake to the Greeks.**

As the Greeks were the most celebrated of the Gentile nations near Judea, the Jews called all the Gentiles by that name. Here we have the first account of the preaching the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles. All those to whom it had been preached before did at least worship one God, the God of Israel"—WESLEY.

R.V. also has "spake unto the Greeks," instead of "Grecians." By "Grecians" we understand Greek-speaking Jews, such as those mentioned in ch. 6. 1. The change of word is required not only by the best MSS., but by the sense of the context. As the Grecians or Hellenists were Jews, there is, on the common reading, no difference between the conduct of these preachers and those mentioned in the preceding verse. (Ch. 6. 1; 9. 29.)

21. **And the hand of the Lord**—"that is, the power of His Spirit"—WESLEY.

Was with them—indicating His approval of their conduct, as well as crowning it with success. (Luke 1. 66; ch. 2. 47; 9. 35.)

22. **Tidings came to the ears of the Church at Jerusalem.** And as they had lately seen a way opened for the conversion of the Gentiles, they received information of this further progress of the gospel with peculiar pleasure. **And they sent forth Barnabas**—as S. Peter and S. John were sent to Samaria under similar circumstances. (Ch. 8. 14.) S. Barnabas, being a native of Cyprus, would probably know something of the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who had begun the work. (Ch. 9. 27.)

23. **Who was glad.** Where the work of Divine grace is unmistakable, there the child of God rejoices and finds himself at home. **Cleave unto the Lord**—not simply to His Church, or to His doctrine, but to Himself. Spiritual union with Christ Himself is the only true Christian life. (Ch. 13. 43; 19. 22.)

24. **Full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.** The same character as is ascribed to S. Stephen. Divine wisdom had directed the choice of the Church; S. Barnabas was not the man to restrain the zeal and energy of those who were already in the field, but to lead them to more earnest and successful labour. (Ver. 21; ch. 6. 5; ch. 5. 14.)

25. **To Tarsus to seek Saul.** S. Barnabas, at an earlier period, brought Saul to the apostles, and to the Church at Jerusalem; now he brings him to Antioch. The history of the conversion of Saul was known to S. Barnabas, and therefore he must have known the declaration of the Redeemer, that Saul was chosen to bear His name before Gentiles and before kings. And thus the thought was suggested that this great Gentile city was the place for Saul, that such a sphere of labour would suit him, and that he might be the agent of great good. But Saul had withdrawn to his native city, had disappeared not only from his enemies but from his Christian brethren; so that S. Barnabas had to seek him out, and Saul returned to Antioch in his company. (Ch. 9. 20.)

26. **A whole year**—probably the first time Saul had the opportunity of quiet and consecutive labour. **Taught much people.** Much teaching would be needed by the various classes of persons who were brought together in the Church in Antioch. **And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.** "Here it was that they first received this standing appellation. They were before termed Nazarenes and Galileans"—WESLEY.

"The name was evidently invented by the Gentiles; as they called men Pompeians, Cæsarians, Herodians, because of their political opinions and associations, it was natural for them, when they met with persons who made their allegiance to Christ conspicuous, to call them Christians. The circumstance indicates that believers in Antioch cleaved to Christ as a real Person, the King and Lord of His redeemed people"—L.

27, 28. **Agabus rising up**—"in the congregation. **All the world**—the word generally signifies the Roman empire. And so it is doubtless to be taken here"—WESLEY.

Which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar—the emperor then reigning. It began, according to Josephus, in the fourth year of his reign, but was still more severe during the two years following. (Ch. 2. 17; 13. 1; 15. 32; 21. 9; 1 Cor. 12. 28; Eph. 4. 11; ch. 21. 10.)

29, 30. **Then**—"understanding the distress they would otherwise be in on that account—**the disciples determined to send relief to the brethren in Judea**—who herein received a manifest proof of the reality of their conversion. **Sending it to the elders**—who gave it to the deacons to be distributed as every one had need"—WESLEY.

The poverty of the Church at Jerusalem doubtless arose in the first instance from persecution. The wealthier members, who would otherwise have assisted their brethren, would be in the greatest danger and would be the first to leave the city. "The elders." This is the first mention of this office in the Christian Church. They are again mentioned in ch. 20. 17; and in S. Paul's address to the *elders* or *presbyters* of the Church at Ephesus, he reminds them that the Holy Ghost had made them *overseers* or *bishops*. The distinction between the two offices, which early arose, was entirely a human and prudential arrangement. (Rom. 15. 26; 1 Cor. 16. 1; 2 Cor. 9. 1; ch. 12. 25.)

CHAPTER XII.

Vers. 1–19. HEROD'S PERSECUTION—PETER IMPRISONED, AND DELIVERED BY AN ANGEL.—1. **At that time**—"so wisely did God mix rest and persecution in due time and measure succeeding each other—**Herod** (Agrippa), the latter was his Roman, the former his Syrian name. He was the grandson of Herod the

Great, nephew to Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist, brother to Herodias, and father to that Agrippa before whom S. Paul afterward made his defence. Caligula made him king of the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, to which he afterwards added the territories of Antipas. Claudius made him also king of Judea, and added thereto the dominions of Lysanias"—WESLEY.

Josephus describes him as mild, generous, and compassionate, and especially as strongly attached to the Jewish Law.

2. **James the brother of John.** "So one of the brothers went to God the first, the other the last, of the apostles"—WESLEY.

"This early execution of one of the apostles after our Lord's death would illustrate the courage of the rest in going on with their ministry, since it would show that their miraculous powers did not secure them from the sword of their enemies"—B. (Matt. 4. 21; 20. 23.)

3. **It pleased the Jews.** "This appears to have been the leading principle of his government"—B. **Then were the days of unleavened bread**—"at which the Jews came together from all parts"—WESLEY.

The popular feeling, which had been in favour of the gospel, from Pentecost to the death of S. Stephen, had now set in the contrary direction.

. **Four quaternions**—"sixteen men, who watched by turns, day and night"—WESLEY.

After Easter (R.V. "After the Passover"). "This intention was, after the paschal lamb was eaten and the seven days' festival quite finished, to gratify the people by putting him to death publicly"—B. "It may have been Herod's intention to present him for trial before the Sanhedrim, and to execute their sentence"—W. W. (John 21. 18.)

5. **Continual prayer was made for him.** "Yet, when their prayer was answered, they could scarcely believe it (ver. 15). But why had they not prayed for S. James also? Because he was put to death as soon as apprehended"—WESLEY.

R.V. "But prayer was made earnestly of the Church." "The Greek also intimates that it was incessant, kept up, always going on"—W. W. (2 Cor. 1. 11; Eph. 6. 18; 1 Thess. 5. 17.)

6. **Peter was sleeping**—"easy and void of fear—**between two soldiers**—sufficiently secured, to all human appearance"—WESLEY.

"It is likely the Jews remembered how all the apostles had escaped, when they had formerly put them in prison, and that it was at their request that such a number of soldiers were appointed to guard S. Peter"—B.

7. **The angel of the Lord came upon him** (R.V. "stood by him"). The word is the same which is used of the angel appearing to the shepherds (Luke 2. 9), where the passage continues, "And the glory of the Lord shone round about them," words strikingly parallel with this description of S. Peter's release, "And a light shined in the prison." **Raised him up** (R.V. "Awoke him"). **His chains**—"with which his right arm was bound to one of the soldiers, and his left arm to the other"—WESLEY. (Ch. 5. 19.)

8. **Gird thyself.** "Probably he had put off his girdle, sandals, and upper garment before he lay down to sleep"—WESLEY.

"These directions, given thus in detail, are perfectly natural. A man suddenly aroused, by such a visitor, would be in amazement, and would need to be told to do each particular thing"—W. W.

9, 10. **The first and second ward**—"at each of which was a guard of soldiers. **The gate opened of its own accord**—without either S. Peter or the angel touching it. **And they went on through one street**—that S. Peter might know which way to go. **And the angel departed from him**—being himself sufficient for what remained to be done"—WESLEY. (Ps. 126. 1; ch. 10. 3, 17; 11. 5; 16. 26.)

11. **Now I know of a truth**—"that this is not a vision"—WESLEY. (Ver. 9.)

The Lord hath sent His angel—"as He formerly did"—B. (Ch. 5. 19.) "This deliverance of S. Peter represents to us our redemption by Christ, which is not only the proclaiming of liberty to the captives, but the bringing them out of the prison-house. The grace of God, like this angel of the Lord, brings light first into the prison by the opening of the understanding, smites the sleeping sinner on the side by the awakening of the conscience, causeth the chains to fall off from the hands by the renewing of the will; and then gives the word of command, 'Gird thyself, and follow Me.' Difficulties are to be passed through, and the opposition of Satan and his instruments, a first and second ward, an untoward generation, from which we are concerned to save ourselves, and shall be saved by the grace of God, if we put ourselves under the Divine conduct. And at length the iron gate shall be opened to us to enter into the New Jerusalem"—M. H. (See *Wesley's Hymns*, 201, 4; Ps. 34. 7; Dan. 3. 28; 6. 22; Heb. 1. 14; Job 5. 19; Ps. 33. 18, 19; 34. 22; 41. 2; 97. 10; 2 Cor. 1. 10; 2 Pet. 2. 9.)

12. **And having considered**—"what was best to be done. **Many were gathered together**—at midnight"—WESLEY.

"Mary was sister to S. Barnabas, as we learn from Col. 4. 10. We do not read of the father of S. Mark anywhere; and it is probable that Mary was a widow"—C. B. (Ch. 4. 23; 15. 37; ver. 5.)

13. **The gate**—"at some distance from the house. **To hearken**—if any one knocked"—WESLEY.

"Saul had entered into every house, and carried off men and women to prison, and there

was a prospect of a like persecution. So Rhoda was not minded to open till she knew who was seeking admission"—C. B.

14. **And knowing Peter's voice**—"bidding her open the door"—WESLEY.

Opened not for gladness. "A touch of nature, showing the reality of the event"—W. W.

15. **They said, Thou art mad.** "As we say, Sure you are not in your senses to talk so. **It is his angel.** It was a common opinion among the Jews that every man had his particular guardian angel, who frequently assumed both his shape and voice. But this is a point on which the Scriptures are silent"—WESLEY. (Gen. 48. 16; Matt. 18. 10.)

17. **Beckoning to them.** "Many of whom, being amazed, were talking together. **And he said, Show these things to James**—the brother or kinsman of our Lord, and author of the Epistle which bears his name. He appears to have been a person of considerable weight and importance, probably the chief overseer of that province, and of the Church in Jerusalem in particular. **He went into another place**—where he might be better concealed, till the storm was over"—WESLEY.

The times were altered since the day when, after his former deliverance, he could go and speak to the people in the Temple at the dawn of day. Then the populace were a protection to the Church, now they were bitterly hostile. And probably more was to be feared from Herod's soldiers, if any difficulty should arise in carrying out the orders given them, than from the captain of the Temple and his officers. (Ch. 13. 16; 19. 33; 11. 40.)

18, 19. **No small stir among the soldiers**—"ready to accuse each other of negligence or treachery"—B. **Herod commanded them to be put to death.** "And thus the wicked suffered in the room of the righteous. **And going down from Judea**—with shame for not having brought forth S. Peter, according to his promise"—WESLEY.

"This deliverance of S. Peter out of prison is one of the most remarkable instances of answer to prayer. There were, so to speak, two powers wrestling with each other: the power of the world will hold fast the apostle and put him to death; the Church will rescue him. The world has all material instruments at its disposal—prisons, chains, and fetters, soldiers and weapons; the Church has none of these, but instead of them prayer, united and continual prayer. The whole of the new nature which Divine grace had given, their faith on God in Christ, their love to one another, their Christian hope,—all are concentrated in prayer. And such prayer, laying hold on the omnipotence of God, prevails easily over all the power of the world"—L.

Vers. 20-25. DEATH OF HEROD AGRIPPA—GROWTH OF THE CHURCH.—20. **Highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon.** It is improbable that Herod intended actual war, which would have given offence to the Imperial government. He could bring them into great distress, by simply closing his frontier against trade with them. **Having gained Blastus**—"to their side, **they sued for**, and obtained, **peace**—reconciliation with Herod. And so the Christians of those parts were, by the providence of God, delivered from scarcity. **Their country was nourished**—was provided with corn—**by the king's country**. Thus Hiram also, king of Tyre, desired of Solomon 'food,' or corn, for his household"—WESLEY. (1 Kings 5. 9; Ezek. 27. 17.)

21. **And on a set day**—"which was solemnised yearly, in honour of Claudius Cæsar—**Herod arrayed in royal apparel**—in a garment so wrought with silver that the rays of the rising sun striking upon and being reflected from it, dazzled the eyes of the beholders. **The people shouted, It is the voice of a god.** Such profane flattery they frequently paid to princes. But the commonness of a wicked custom rather increases than lessens the guilt of it"—WESLEY.

Josephus confirms this account of the death of Herod (A.D. 44), mentioning the set day, the splendid robe, the flattery of the multitude who hailed him as a god, the immediate attack of illness so that he had to be carried to his palace, and his death five days after.

23. **And immediately**—"God does not delay to vindicate His injured honour—**an angel of the Lord smote him.** Of this other historians say nothing: so wide a difference is there between Divine and human history! An angel of the Lord brought out S. Peter; an angel smote Herod. Men did not see the instruments in either case. These were only known to the people of God. **Because he gave not glory to God.** He willingly received it to himself, and by this sacrilege filled up the measure of his iniquities. So then vengeance tarried not. **And he was eaten by worms**—or vermin. How changed! **And** on the fifth day **expired** in exquisite torture. Such was the event! the persecutor perished, and the gospel **grew and multiplied**"—WESLEY.

"Christ, as Lord and King, protects and increases His Church. For the first time are the civil authority, the people of Israel, and their hierarchical rulers, united against the Church. At the beginning the hierarchy stood alone, and afterwards it stood united with the people; now Herod is joined with them, concentrating in himself all the political power under the Roman authority. But Christ is always with His people, and to Him is committed all power in heaven and in earth. The power of the world, which raises itself against God and Christ, suffers the most ignominious overthrow, while the Church continues to prosper and increase"—L. (1 Sam. 25. 38; 2 Sam. 24. 17; Ps. 115. 1.)

24. **The word of God grew.** "After all the

opposition of its enemies, the progress of Christianity was apparently promoted by the concurrence of extraordinary events related in this chapter"—B. (Isa. 55. 11; ch. 6. 7; 19. 20; Col. 1. 16.)

25. **Saul returned**—to Antioch. **Taking John surnamed Mark**—"the son of Mary (at whose house the disciples met to pray for S. Peter), who was sister to S. Barnabas"—WESLEY. **When they had fulfilled their ministry** (R.V. "ministration")—viz. the giving to the elders of the Church the money contributed in Antioch for the relief of the poor. (Ch. 11. 29, 30; 13. 5, 13; 15. 37; ver. 12.)

CHAPTER XIII.

Vers. 1–12. SAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY — EVENTS IN CYPRUS. — 1. **There were in the church that was at Antioch** (R.V. "At Antioch, in the church that was there"). "Up to this point the spread of the gospel beyond Palestine may be attributed chiefly to the persecutions at Jerusalem. A movement is now made for the express purpose of extending Christianity to foreign nations"—W. W. **Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod**—"his foster brother, now freed from the temptations of a court"—WESLEY.

The Herod meant is Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. He was at this time in exile. (Ch. 11. 27; 14. 26; 15. 35; 11. 22–26; Rom. 16. 21.)

2. **As they ministered to the Lord**—carried on the public and social worship of the Church, but doubtless a special time of prayer is meant—**the Holy Ghost said**—probably by the mouth of one of the prophets—**Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.** "This was not ordaining them. S. Paul was ordained long before, and that, 'not of men, neither by man.' It was only inducting him to the province for which our Lord had appointed him from the beginning, and which was now revealed to the prophets and teachers. In consequence of this they fasted, prayed, and laid their hands upon them; a rite which was used not in ordination only, but in blessing, and on many other occasions"—WESLEY. (Num. 8. 14; ch. 9. 15; 23. 21; Rom. 1. 1; Gal 1. 15; 2. 9; Matt. 9. 38; ch. 14. 26; Rom. 10. 15; Eph. 3. 7, 8; 1 Tim. 2. 7; 2 Tim. 1. 11; Heb. 5. 4.)

3. **Then having fasted.** "Again, Thus they did also (Acts 14. 23)"—WESLEY.

They sent them away—"with the most affectionate marks of Christian friendship, and fervent prayers for their success"—B. (Ch. 6. 6.)

4. **Sent forth by the Holy Ghost.** The words intimate the importance of the new departure, and the confidence which the Church felt that it was of the Lord. **To Cyprus.** Cyprus was the birthplace of S. Barnabas; if he were permitted to choose the route, he would naturally go first to his countrymen. And Antioch, and indeed the whole Gentile Church, owed much under Divine Providence to the men of Cyprus, who first "spoke to the Greeks." (Ch. 4. 36.)

5. **In the synagogues**—"using all opportunities that offered"—WESLEY.

John to their minister (R.V. "as their attendant"). (Ver. 46; ch. 12. 25; 15. 37.)

6. "**Paphos** was on the western, **Salamis** on the eastern, part of the island"—WESLEY.

A sorcerer—Bar-jesus. For many years before this time, and many years after, impostors from the East, pretending to magical powers, had great influence over the Roman mind. (Ch. 8. 9.)

7. **The proconsul** (so also R.V.)—"the Roman governor of Cyprus. **A prudent man**—and therefore not overswayed by Elymas, but desirous to inquire further"—WESLEY.

Under Augustus the Roman provinces were divided into two classes, one class of which (needing the presence of troops, and the possession of which gave the emperor the control of the army) was called imperatorial, while the others were called senatorial provinces. The former were governed by an officer named *pro-prætor*, the latter by a "proconsul." We know from Dio Cassius that Cyprus was originally an imperatorial province, and therefore under a pro-prætor. This Strabo confirms; but says that Augustus made it over to the Senate, along with part of Galatia, and took instead of these Dalmatia for one of his provinces. So that the government of Cyprus was at the time of S. Paul's visit held by a "proconsul" for the Roman Senate; and this is another instance of the historic faithfulness of S. Luke's record.

8, 9. **Elymas the sorcerer, for so is his name by interpretation**—that is, the word Elymas, in Persian and Arabic, signifies "sorcerer" or "magician." He had assumed this name in place of his own Jewish one. (Ex. 17. 11; 2 Tim. 3. 8.) **Then Saul, who is also called Paul.** "It is not improbable that, coming now among the Romans, they would naturally adapt his name to their own language; and so called him Paul, instead of Saul. Perhaps the family of the proconsul might be the first who addressed to, or spoke of him by, this name, and from this time, being the Apostle of the Gentiles, he himself used the name which was more familiar to them"—WESLEY.

"In the former part of the Acts of the Apostles he is uniformly called Saul; hereafter, in the Epistles as well as in the history, the name employed is always Paul. We are inclined to adopt the opinion that the apostle bore this Roman name, as well as his other Hebrew name, in his earlier days, and even before he became a Christian. As the Jews have successively learned to speak Chaldee, Greek, Latin, or German, so they have adopted into their families the appellations of those

Gentile families with whom they have come in contact, and never united"—C. H. **Filled with the Holy Ghost.** The Spirit gave him a sudden insight into the man, enabled him to discern the innermost state of his soul, and filled him with a holy indignation. (Ch. 4. 8.)

10. **O full of all guile**—"as a false prophet—**and all mischief**—as a magician. **Thou son of the devil**—a title well suited to a magician, and one who not only was himself unrighteous, but laboured to keep others from all goodness. **Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?** Even now thou hast heard the truth of the gospel"—WESLEY. (Matt. 13. 28; John 8. 44; 1 John 3. 8.)

11. **Thou shalt be blind—for a season.** The punishment of Elymas is far lighter than that of Ananias and Sapphira for obvious reasons. For him also there was left space for repentance. "**And immediately a mist**, or dimness within, **and darkness** without, fell upon him"—WESLEY. (Ex. 9. 3; 1 Sam. 5. 6.)

12. **Then the deputy believed.** "The blinding of the false prophet opened the eyes of Sergius Paulus"—C. H. "**Being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord**—confirmed by such a miracle"—WESLEY.

Vers. 13–52. THE APOSTLES AT PERGA, ANTIOCH in PISIDIA, AND ICONIUM.—13. **Paul and those with him.** Henceforth S. Paul becomes the most prominent figure throughout the Acts of the Apostles. **To Perga.** "We read of no missionary work here until the return visit"—C. B. (Ch. 14. 25.) **John withdrawing from them returned**—"tired with the fatigue, or shrinking from danger"—WESLEY. (Ch. 15. 38.)

14. **Antioch in Pisidia**—"different from the Antioch mentioned, ver. 1"—WESLEY.

Went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. "S. Paul making it a point in every place first to offer salvation to the Jews"—B. (Ch. 16. 13; 17. 2; 18. 4.)

15. **And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the chief of the synagogue sent to them.** "The Law was read over once every year, a portion of it every Sabbath; to which was added a lesson taken out of the Prophets. After this was over, anyone might speak to the people on any subject he thought convenient. Yet it was a circumstance of decency, which S. Paul and S. Barnabas would hardly omit, to acquaint the rulers with their desire of doing it; probably by some message before the service began"—WESLEY. (Luke 4. 16; ver. 27; Heb. 13. 22.)

16. **Ye that fear God**—"whether proselytes or heathens"—WESLEY.

"The discourse which the apostle now delivered seems to have been intended to illustrate the Divine economy, in opening the gospel gradually, and in preparing the Jews, by temporal mercies, for others of a more important nature. His sermon is particularly worthy of our consideration, as being an example of his method of preaching in all the synagogues"—B. (Vers. 26, 42, 43; ch. 10. 35.)

17. **The God.** "By such a commemoration of God's favours to their fathers, at once their minds were conciliated to the speaker, they were convinced of their duty to God, and invited to believe His promise, and the accomplishment of it. The six verses (17–22) contain the whole sum of the Old Testament. **Of this people.** S. Paul here chiefly addresses himself to those whom he styles, 'Ye that fear God.' He speaks of Israel first; and (ver. 26) speaks more directly to the Israelites themselves. **Chose.** And this exalted the people; not any merit or goodness of their own. (Ezek. 20. 5.) **Our fathers**—Abraham and his posterity"—WESLEY. (Deut. 7. 6, 7; Ex. 1. 1; Ps. 105. 23, 24; ch. 7. 17; Ex. 6. 6; 13. 14, 16.)

18. **Suffered their manners.** (In the *margin* of R.V. "Many ancient authorities read, 'Bare He them as a nursing father'"). The text has the highest authority in its present form. But the difference in the Greek is only in one letter. (Ex. 16. 15; Num. 14. 33, 34; Ps. 95. 9, 10; ch. 7. 36.)

19, 20. **Seven nations**—"enumerated (Deut. 7. 1). **About four hundred and fifty years**—that is, from the choice of the fathers to the dividing of the land, it was about four hundred and fifty years"—WESLEY.

R.V. "He gave them their land for an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years; and after these things He gave them judges." "According to the received chronology, about four hundred and fifty years elapsed between the call of Abraham and the death of Joshua. This is the usual interpretation of this somewhat difficult passage. But supposing it could be proved that S. Paul's knowledge, or recollection, of ancient chronology was imperfect, this need not surprise us. We have no reason to assume that Divine inspiration would instruct the apostles in truth non-essential to their religious mission"—C. H. (Deut 7. 1; Josh. 14. 1, 2; Ps. 78. 55; Judg. 2. 16; 1 Sam. 3. 20.)

21. **He gave them Saul forty years**—"including the time wherein Samuel judged Israel"—WESLEY. (1 Sam. 8. 5; 10. 1.)

22. **Having removed him.** "Hence they might understand that the dispensations of God admit of various changes. **I have found David, a man after Mine own heart.** This expression is to be taken in a limited sense. David was such at that time, but not at all times; and he was so in that respect, as he performed all God's will in the particulars there mentioned. But he was not a man after God's own heart in other respects, wherein he performed his own will. In the matter of Uriah, for instance, he was as far from being a man after God's heart as Saul himself was. It is therefore a very gross, as well as dangerous,

mistake, to suppose this is the character of David in every part of his behaviour. We must beware of this, unless we would recommend adultery and murder as things after God's own heart"—WESLEY.

The expression refers to David's public, not his private, character. He ruled Israel after the Divine will. He did not allow idolatry; he did not set up absolute power; he was guided in the government of the nation by the Law of Moses as the standing rule, and by the prophet, or the Divine oracle, upon particular emergencies. (1 Sam. 15. 23, 26, 28; 16. 1; Hosea 13. 11; 1 Sam. 16. 13; 2 Sam. 2. 4; 5. 3; Ps. 80. 20; 1 Sam. 13. 14; ch. 7. 46.)

23. **According to His promise** (R.V. "According to promise brought unto Israel"). (Isa. 11. 1; Luke 1. 32, 69; ch. 2. 30; Rom. 1. 3; 2 Sam. 7. 12; Ps. 132. 11; Matt. 1. 21; Rom. 11. 26.)

24. **John having first preached.** "He mentions this as a thing already known to them. And so, doubtless, it was; for it gave so loud an alarm to the whole Jewish nation, as could not but be heard in foreign countries; at least, as remote as Pisidia"—WESLEY. (Matt. 3. 1; Luke 3. 3.)

25. **His course.** "His work was quickly finished, and might therefore well be termed a course or race"—WESLEY.

Whom think ye that I am? (R.V. "What suppose ye?"). (Matt. 3. 11; Mark 1. 7; Luke 3. 16; John 1. 20, 27.)

26. **Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham . . . to us is the word of this salvation sent** (R.V.). (Matt. 10. 6; Luke 24. 47; ver. 46; ch. 3. 26.)

27. **For they that dwell at Jerusalem.** "He here anticipates a strong objection: 'Why did not they at Jerusalem, and especially their rulers, believe?' They knew not Him, because they understood not those very prophets whom they read or heard continually. Their very condemning Him, innocent as He was, proves that they understood not the prophecies concerning Him"—WESLEY.

They knew Him not. So S. Peter said in his sermon at the Beautiful Gate, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Luke 23. 34; ch. 3. 17; 1 Cor. 2. 8; vers. 14, 15; ch. 15. 21; Luke 24. 20, 44; ch. 26. 22; 28. 23.)

28. **They found no cause of death in Him.** So Pilate himself declared. (Matt. 27. 22; Mark 15. 13, 14; Luke 23. 21, 22; John 19. 6, 15; ch. 3. 13, 14.)

29. **They fulfilled all things that were written of Him.** "So far could they go, but no farther"—WESLEY.

"Their ignorance made their condemnation of Jesus all the more certainly a fulfilment of prophecy"—W. W. (Luke 18. 31; 24. 44; John 19. 28, 30, 36, 37; Matt. 27. 59; Mark 15. 46; Luke 23. 53; John 19. 38.)

30, 31. **He was seen many days by them who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem.** "This last journey both presupposes all the rest, and was the most important of them all"—WESLEY.

Who are His witnesses (R.V. "are *now*") **—to the people**—that is, to the people of Israel. (Matt 28. 6; ch. 2. 24; 3. 13, 15, 26; 5. 30; Matt. 28. 16; ch. 1. 3; 1 Cor. 15. 5–7; ch. 1. 11; 1. 8; 2. 32; 3. 15; 5. 32.)

32. **The promise made unto the fathers**—"which had been the hope and joy of their posterity through so many succeeding ages." (Gen. 3. 15; 12. 3; 22. 18; ch. 26. 6; Rom. 4. 13; Gal. 3. 16.)

33. **God hath fulfilled**—"completely ful filled"—W. W. **In the second Psalm.** "By this it appears that the Psalms were then placed in the same order as they are now; and it is observable that this is the only quotation from the Old Testament so circumstantially made in the New"—B. **Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.** It is true He was the Son of God from eternity. The meaning therefore is, I have this day declared Thee to be My Son. As S. Paul elsewhere, 'Declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead' (Rom. 1. 4). And it is with peculiar propriety and beauty that God is said to 'have begotten Him,' on the day when He raised Him from the dead, as He seemed then to be born out of the earth anew"—WESLEY. (Ps. 2. 7; Heb. 1. 5; 5. 5.)

34. **No more to return to corruption**—"that is, to die no more. **I will give you the sure mercies of David.** The blessings promised to David in Christ. These are sure, certain, firm, solid, to every true believer in Him. And hence the resurrection of Christ necessarily follows; for without this, those blessings could not be given"—WESLEY.

R.V. "The holy and sure blessings of David." S. Paul at Antioch quoted from the LXX. (Isa. 55. 3.)

35. **Wherefore He saith.** "David in the name of the Messiah"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Because He saith." The words which David was inspired to utter cannot refer to David himself, as S. Paul proceeds to show. It is perfectly natural that he should repeat at Antioch the Scripture argument which S. Peter had employed in Jerusalem. (Ps. 16. 10; ch. 2. 31.)

36. **David, having served the will of God in his generation, fell asleep.** "So his service extended not itself beyond the bounds of the common age of man; but the service of the Messiah to all generations; as His kingdom to all ages. **Served the will of God.** Why art thou here, thou who art yet in the world? Is it not that thou also mayest 'serve the will of God'? Art thou serving it now? doing all His will? **And was added to his fathers**—not only in body. This expression refers to the soul also, and supposes the immortality of it"—WESLEY.

R.V. "In his own generation served the counsel

of God." "David was not appointed to be the eternal servant of God; he served God in his time, and did so honestly"—L. (Ver. 22; Ps. 78. 72; 1 Kings 2. 10; ch. 2. 29.)

38. **The forgiveness of sins.** "As Jesus in His lifetime on earth declared that His miracles were signs, 'that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins,' so the apostles preach concerning the resurrection. (Comp. ch. 10. 43, the conclusion of S. Peter's speech in the house of Cornelius)"—C. B. (Jer. 31. 34; Dan. 9. 24; Luke 24. 47; 1 John 2. 12.)

39. **Every one that believeth is justified from all things**—"has the actual forgiveness of all his sins at the very time of his believing. **From which ye could not be justified.** Not only, ye cannot now, but ye never could. For it afforded no expiation for presumptuous sins. **By the Law of Moses**—the whole Mosaic institution. The division of the Law into moral and ceremonial was not so common among the Jews as it is among us. Nor does the apostle here consider it at all; but Moses and Christ are opposed to each other"—WESLEY.

"The Mosaic Law appointed sin-offerings to expiate smaller offences, so far as that the offender who offered them should be free from all further prosecution on account of them. But this very view of them shows how absolutely necessary to the being of society it was, that they should not be admitted in cases of murder, adultery, etc. But the expiatory sacrifice of Christ takes away the guilt of all sin, with respect to the penitent that believe aright on Him"—B. (Isa. 53. 11; Rom. 3. 28; 8. 3; Heb. 7. 19.)

40. **Beware**—"a weighty and seasonable admonition. No reproof is as yet added to it"—WESLEY.

The apostle refers to Hab. 1. 5, where the destruction of the Jewish nation by the Chaldæans is foretold, as an incredible and unparalleled destruction; and that prophecy is here, with the greatest propriety, applied to the destruction that was coming on that nation by the Romans for neglecting the gospel of Christ. (Isa. 29. 14; Hab. 1. 5.)

41. **I work a work which ye will in no wise believe.** "This was originally spoken to those who would not believe that God would ever deliver them from (? into) the power of the Chaldæans. But it is applicable to any who will not believe the promises or the works of God"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul quotes, as usual, from the LXX. translation, which varies considerably from the Hebrew. It will be remarked that the close of this speech reminds us of the arguments of S. Peter on the day of Pentecost, just as the beginning recalls that of S. Stephen before the Sanhedrim. Possibly S. Paul himself had been an auditor of the first, as he certainly was of the last"—C. H.

42. **And when the Jews**, etc. **The Gentiles** (R.V. "And as they went out, they besought that these words"). The desire was expressed by the congregation both of Jews and proselytes as they left the synagogue. The Gentiles would hardly be present on an ordinary occasion. **When the Jews were going out**—"probably many of them, not bearing to hear him, went out before he had done. **The Sabbath between.** So the Jews call to this day the Sabbath between the first day of the month Tisri, on which the civil year begins, and the tenth of the same month, which is the solemn day of expiation"—WESLEY.

Both A.V. and R.V., however, translate simply "the next Sabbath."

43. **Who, speaking to them**—"more familiarly—**persuaded them to continue**—for trials were at hand—**in the grace of God**—that is, to adhere to the gospel or Christian faith"—WESLEY.

"With what pleasure can we fancy the apostles to have observed these hearers of the word, who seemed to have heard it in such earnest. How gladly must they have talked with them, entered into various points more fully than was possible in any public address, appealed to them in various ways which no one can touch upon in speaking to a mixed multitude. Yet, with all their pleasure and their hope, their knowledge of man's heart must have taught them not to be over-confident; and therefore would they earnestly urge them to continue in the grace of God; to keep up the impression which had already outlasted their stay in the synagogue, to feed it, and keep it alive, and make it deeper and deeper, that it should remain with them for ever"—ARNOLD. (Ch. 11. 23; 14. 22; Titus 2. 1; Heb. 12. 15; 1 Pet. 5. 12.)

44. **Almost the whole city**—"idolaters as well as proselytes"—B.

45. **The Jews, filled with envy** (R.V. "jealousy"). "The exclusive spirit, which was so engrafted in the Jewish race, asserted itself as soon as they saw the Gentiles gathered to hear the apostles. For themselves and their proselytes they could accept a message as God sent, and tolerate some modification of their teaching or their practice; but they could not endure that the Gentiles should be made equal with God's ancient people"—C. B.

46. **Then Paul and Barnabas, speaking boldly, said.** "Those who hinder others must be publicly reproved. **It was necessary**—though ye are not worthy. He shows that he had not preached to them from any confidence of their believing. **But seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life**—they indeed judged none but themselves worthy of it; yet their rejecting of the gospel was the same as saying, We are unworthy of eternal life. **Behold**—a thing now present, an astonishing revolution—**we turn to the Gentiles.** Not that they left off preaching to the Jews in other places; but they now determined to lose no more time at Antioch on their ungrateful

countrymen, but to employ themselves wholly in doing what they could for the conversion of the Gentiles there"—WESLEY. (Ch. 18. 6; 1 Pet. 4. 4; Jude 10; Matt. 10. 6; ch. 3. 26; ver. 26; Rom. 1. 16; Ex. 32. 10; Deut. 32. 21; Isa. 55. 5; Matt. 21. 43; Rom. 10. 9; ch. 18. 6; 28. 28.)

47. **For so hath the Lord commanded us.** "By sending us forth, and giving us an opportunity of fulfilling what He had foretold. **I have set Thee.** The Father speaks to Christ"—WESLEY.

Divine promises often intimate our duty as well as our privilege. (Isa. 42. 6; 49. 6; Luke 2. 32.)

48. **The Gentiles were glad**—"that such things had been prophesied concerning them many ages ago, and that the Lord Jesus had commanded His apostles to receive them into His Church, without subjecting them to the Law of Moses"—B. **As many as were ordained to eternal life.** "S. Luke does not say 'foreordained.' He is not speaking of what was done from eternity, but of what was then done through the preaching of the gospel. He is describing that ordination, and that only, which was at the very time of hearing it. During this sermon those *believed*, says the apostle, to whom God then gave power to believe. It is as if he had said, They believed, 'whose hearts the Lord opened,' as he expresses it in a clearly parallel place, speaking of the same kind of ordination. (Ch. 16. 14, etc.) It is observable, the original word is not once used in Scripture to express eternal predestination of any kind. The sum is,—all those, and those only, who were ordained now believed. Not that God rejected the rest; it was His will that they also should have been saved; but they thrust salvation from them. Nor were they who then believed constrained to believe. But grace was then first copiously offered them. And they did not thrust it away, so that a great multitude of Gentiles were converted. In a word, the expression properly implies, a present operation of Divine grace working faith in the hearers"—WESLEY.

"The word translated 'ordained' is used in classical Greek chiefly in a military sense. It simply means arranged, drawn up in battle array. It refers at once to the action of the commander in marshalling them, and to their own obedience and readiness"—G. "In ver. 46 we are told that the Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, and all that is meant by the words in this verse is the opposite of that expression. The Jews were acting so as to proclaim themselves unworthy; the Gentiles were making manifest their desire to be deemed worthy. The two sections were like opposing troops, ranged by themselves, and to some degree, though not unalterably, looked upon as so arranged by God on different sides. Thus the Gentiles were ordering themselves, and were ordered unto eternal life. The text says no word to warrant us in trusting that none could henceforth change sides"—C. B. (Ch. 2. 47.)

49. **Throughout all the region.** From this time forth, it appears, in all the Gentile countries, "S. Paul, after preaching to the Jews, constantly offered salvation to the Gentiles"—B.

50. **Devout and honourable women** (R.V. "Devout women of honourable estate"). "Thus an honourable and devout character becomes a barrier to Christianity. Such persons are easy to stir up, and they say, What better do they pretend to have than we possess?"—L. (2 Tim. 3. 16.)

51. **Shook off the dust of their feet**—"as Christ had commanded. It was 'for a testimony,' certainly not of contempt, but of renunciation of all fellowship with them and with their fate"—L. (Matt. 10. 14; Mark 6. 11; Luke 9. 5; ch. 18. 6.)

52. **The disciples were filled with joy**—those at Antioch, although their teachers had been driven away. The joy which the first experience of Christianity produced is mentioned repeatedly in the Acts of the Apostles. It was emphatically the glad tidings, and the reception of it was great joy. (Matt. 5. 12; John 16. 22; ch. 2. 46.)

CHAPTER XIV.

Vers. 1–20. FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY, *continued*—ICONIUM, DERBE, LYSTRA.—1. **In Iconium**—"the modern *Konieh*, famous long afterwards as the cradle of the Ottoman power. At this time it would resemble other important towns in Asia Minor. The elements of its population would be as follows: a large number of trifling and frivolous Greeks, whose principal places of resort were the theatre and the market-place; some remains of a still older population, coming in occasionally from the country, or residing in a separate quarter of the town; some few Roman officials, holding themselves proudly aloof from the inhabitants of the subjugated province; and an old established colony of Jews, who exercised their trade during the week, and met on the Sabbath to read the Law in the synagogue"—C. H. "**So spake.** Persecution having increased their strength"—WESLEY.

2–4. "The same kind of events as in Antioch, and almost in the same order. The Jews were offended, and stirred up the Gentiles against the apostles. **Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord.** One would have thought, that therefore they should have withdrawn and hasted out of the way; or that if they preached, they should have preached cautiously for fear of giving further offence. But, on the contrary, the more they saw the spirit and rancour of the town against the new converts, the more needful they saw it to continue among them"—B. **The multitude of the city was divided.** Jesus had predicted

that such divisions should result from His coming (Luke 12. 51). (Mark 16. 20; Heb. 2. 4; ch. 13. 3.)

5. **When there was an assault made**—or was about to be made—**both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews.** Generally at enmity, they were united against the Christians. The proposal to stone the apostles shows that the conspiracy originated with the Jews. Stoning was their method of punishment for blasphemy. (2 Tim. 3. 11).

6, 7. **They were ware of it and fled**—in obedience to Christ's directions (Matt. 10. 23). **To the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, and Derbe** (R.V.). "This was a wilder region, inhabited by a ruder population. The towns must have been small, and their sites cannot now be positively identified"—F. **There they preached the gospel**—the same gospel, perhaps not in the same manner, but with the same success.

8. **There sat a certain man**—"evidently in some place of public resort, where the apostles came to preach. There is no mention of a synagogue at Lystra or Derbe, and it is not probable that there was one"—C. B. **Impotent in his feet.** S. Luke, the physician, describes the malady with his usual preciseness. (Ch. 3. 2.)

9, 10. **He had faith to be healed.** "He felt the power of God in his soul; and thence knew it was sufficient to heal his body also"—WESLEY.

In this respect the case of the poor heathen at Lystra rises above all that is told us of the lame Jew whom S. Peter healed at the Beautiful Gate. "The lame man at Jerusalem desired and expected nothing but to receive alms, even when S. Peter exhorted him to look on him and S. John. But this lame man, who was an attentive and earnest hearer of S. Paul, already possessed the believing confidence that S. Paul would help him. Then the apostle calls aloud to him to stand up; he does not, as S. Peter did, invoke the name of Jesus, on whose authority the call was issued, and in whose strength it could be obeyed; because the lame man had learned from the preaching of S. Paul to recognise Jesus as the Saviour. At this call the lame man leaped up at once, and walked up and down; here there is a third distinction, inasmuch as S. Peter took the lame man by the hand and lifted him up"—L. Evidently the three points of difference spring from the same origin. This man had faith to be healed. (Matt. 8. 10; 9. 28, 29; Isa. 35. 6.)

11, 12. **In the speech of Lycaonia.** "The people were bilingual, and S. Paul had been speaking to them in Greek. This fact may give us some additional light on the question of what the gift of tongues was, which was bestowed upon the apostles. From what we see here, it was not such a power as enabled them at once to employ or even to understand the various dialects of all the people into whose countries they might be brought in their missionary labours. For it is evident that neither S. Paul nor S. Barnabas understood the cry of these Lycaonians. If they had, we cannot suppose they would have allowed a moment to elapse before they corrected the false impression which the words conveyed, and at which, when they came to know its purport, they expressed such horror. They, however, left the place where the multitude had been assembled, and departed to their own lodgings"—L. **The gods are come down**—"which the heathens supposed they frequently did, Jupiter especially. But how amazingly does the Prince of Darkness blind the minds of them that believe not! The Jews would not own Christ's Godhead, though they saw Him work numberless miracles. On the other hand, the heathens seeing mere men work one miracle were for deifying them immediately"—WESLEY. (Ch. 8. 10; 28. 6.)

Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius. "They identified S. Paul with Mercury, who was the god of eloquence. If it be asked why they called S. Barnabas Jupiter, it is sufficient to say that these two divinities were always represented as companions in terrestrial expeditions. It is also probable that S. Barnabas was older and therefore more venerable in appearance than S. Paul"—C. H.

13. **The priest of Jupiter**—"whose temple and image were just without the gate of the city — **brought garlands** — to put on the victims—**and bulls**—the usual offerings to Jupiter"—WESLEY.

Unto the gates—"of the place where S. Paul and S. Barnabas were"—B. **Would have done sacrifice**—"to acknowledge the obligation they were under for this visit, and to ask their continued protection"—B. (Dan. 2. 46.)

14. **They rent their clothes**—"in token of the indignation and sorrow with which they beheld this strange abuse of a miracle, wrought to destroy this very idolatry"—B. **Ran in among the people** (rather, as in R.V. "sprang forth")—that is, out of their lodging, as soon as they heard what was being done. **Crying out**—"as in a fire or other sudden and great danger"—WESLEY. (Matt. 26. 65.)

15. **Of like passions with you**—exposed to the common infirmities of human life. The gods were even to the heathen incapable of suffering—free from want, blessed, immortal. **To turn from these vanities**—"from worshipping any but the true God. He does not deign to call them gods. **Unto the living God.** Not like these dead idols. **Who made the heaven and earth, the sea**—each of which they supposed to have its own gods"—WESLEY. (1 Sam. 12. 21; 1 Kings 16. 13; Jer. 14. 22; Amos 2. 4; 1 Cor. 8. 4; ch. 10. 36; Jas. 5. 17; Rev. 19. 10; 1 Thess. 1. 9; Gen. 1. 1; Ps. 33. 6; 146. 6; Rev. 14. 7.)

16. **Who in times past.** "He prevents their objecting, But if these things are so, we

should have heard them from our fathers. **Suffered**—an awful judgment—**all nations**—the multitude of them that err does not turn error into truth—**to walk in their own ways**—the idolatries which they had chosen"—WESLEY. (Ps. 81. 12; ch. 17. 30; 1 Pet. 4. 3.)

17. **He left not Himself without witness.** "For the heathens had always from God Himself a testimony both of His existence and His providence. **In that He did good.** Even by punishments He testifies of Himself; but more peculiarly by benefits. **Giving rain**—by which air, earth, and sea are, as it were, all joined together—**from heaven**—the seat of God; to which S. Paul probably pointed while he spoke. Filling the body **with food**, the soul **with gladness**"—WESLEY.

We cannot help pausing to observe the essentially Pauline character of this speech. It is full of coincidences, evidently undesigned, in argument and even in expression, with S. Paul's language in other parts of the Acts and in his Epistles. He reminds the Thessalonians that they had turned from idols to serve the living and true God. He tells the Romans that God in His forbearance had passed over the former sins of men, in times gone by (Rom. 3. 25, R.V.). And so he tells the Athenians that the past times of ignorance God overlooked. Lastly, how striking is the similarity between the natural theology with which the present speech concludes, and that in the Epistle to the Romans where, speaking of the heathen, he says that atheists are without excuse. "For His eternal power and Godhead, though they be invisible, yet are seen ever since the world was made, being understood by the works which He hath wrought"—C. H. (Ch. 17. 27; Rom. 1. 20; Lev. 26. 4; Deut. 11. 14; 28. 12; Job 5. 10; Ps. 65. 10; 68. 9; 147. 8; Jer. 14. 22; Matt. 5. 45.)

19. **Jews from Antioch and Iconium.** "Their arrival was certainly not accidental, but occasioned by the news received of the success of the apostles at Lystra" — L. **Persuaded the multitude** — "moved with equal ease either to adore or murder him"—WESLEY.

Having stoned Paul. This must be the stoning to which S. Paul alludes (2 Cor. 11. 25), "Once was I stoned." "Paley (*Horæ Paulinæ*) calls attention to the close agreement between the history of S. Luke and the letter of S. Paul. At Iconium S. Paul had just escaped stoning; at Lystra he was stoned. The two circumstances are mentioned by the historian; only the actual suffering by the apostle himself. Nothing but truth to guide them, says Paley, could have brought the two writers so close 'to the very brink of contradiction without falling into it'"—C. B. (2 Tim. 3. 11.)

20. **But as the disciples stood around**—"probably after sunset. The enraged multitude would scarce have suffered it in the daytime. **He rose and went into the city.** That he should be able to do this, just after he had been left for dead, was a miracle little less than a resurrection from the dead; especially considering the manner wherein the Jewish malefactors were stoned. The witnesses first threw as large a stone as they could lift, with all possible violence, upon his head, which alone was sufficient to dash the skull in pieces. All the people then joined, as long as any motion or token of life remained"—WESLEY.

The next day he departed. Having been sheltered for the night in the house of some disciple, perhaps in that of Eunice and Lois, the mother and grandmother of Timothy. **With Barnabas to Derbe**—east of Lystra. No other places in Lycaonia are mentioned as visited by S. Paul and S. Barnabas, but we gather from ver. 6 that they went through other parts of the surrounding country.

Vers. 21–28. FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY—THE RETURN HOME.—21. **Taught many** (R.V. "Made many disciples"). The work at Derbe appears to have been very successful. Of one convert we read afterwards, Gaius of Derbe (ch. 20. 4). **Returned again to Lystra and to Iconium and Antioch.** They considered it their nearest duty to visit once more all the churches founded on this missionary journey, and to confirm them in the faith.

22. **Confirming the souls**—by the word of exhortation, that they should cleave steadfastly to the faith; to which they added the declaration, that the way to the kingdom of God leads necessarily through many troubles. This was necessary, lest opposition and suffering should shake their confidence, and even cause them to apostatise from the faith. (Ch. 11. 23; 13. 43; Matt. 10. 38; 16. 24; Luke 22. 28, 29; Rom. 8. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12; 3. 12.)

23. **When they had ordained them presbyters in every church**—"out of those who were themselves but newly converted. So soon can God enable even a babe in Christ to build up others in the common faith"—WESLEY.

This was a case of necessity; where choice is possible, S. Paul himself says, "Not a novice." **They commended them to the Lord** — "an expression implying faith in Christ, as well as love to the brethren"—WESLEY. (Titus 1. 5.)

25. "**Perga** and **Attalia** were cities of Pamphylia"—WESLEY.

They preached the word in Perga, which they had simply passed through on the outward journey.

26. **Sailed to Antioch** — in Syria — **from whence they had been recommended to the grace**, or favour, **of God for the work which they fulfilled.** "This shows the nature and design of that laying on of hands which was mentioned in Acts 13. 3"—WESLEY. (Ch. 15. 40.)

27. **Gathered the Church together** — all the leading persons of them, and perhaps as many as the place of meeting would contain. The Church had sent them forth, and it was fitting that the Church should receive a formal report of the results of the mission. **How He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles** —had made faith the door of admission to His kingdom. Through the open door of faith in Christ the Gentiles might now come in. (Ch. 15. 4, 12; 21. 19; 1 Cor. 16. 9; 2 Cor. 2. 12; Col. 4. 3; Rev. 3. 8.)

We must assign to this first mission a space of three or four years, and as the district traversed was but small, a considerable time must have been spent at each place chosen for a centre of labour. The abundant fruit of the labours of the apostles is seen in the need for the ordination of elders, and in the provisions made for orderly church government. The course S. Paul adopted was to tarry in some centre of population, and to continue his ministry until a sufficient number of converts had been gained to carry on the work after he left them. In this manner at least four Christian churches had been founded, consisting for the most part of Gentiles, which promised well.

CHAPTER XV.

Vers. 1–5. THE ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE THE JEWISH LAW ON GENTILE CONVERTS—DEPUTATION TO JERUSALEM.—1. **Coming down from Judea** — "perhaps to supply what they thought S. Paul and S. Barnabas had omitted" —WESLEY. (John 7. 22; ver. 5; Gal. 5. 2; Phil. 3. 2; Col. 2. 8, 11, 16; Gen. 17. 10; Lev. 12. 3.)

2. **No small dissension and disputation.** "They strenuously opposed this doctrine— (1) Because its direct tendency was to subvert the gospel which they had preached, and which they knew was of itself sufficient for the salvation of men; (2) Because it was a betraying of the natural rights of mankind, who by the gospel are left free to obey the good laws of the countries where they live, and to enjoy whatever rights accrue to them from these laws. Whereas, by receiving the Law of Moses, the Gentiles made themselves the subjects of a foreign power, being under the jurisdiction of the high priest and Council of Jerusalem"—B. "S. Paul's position in this controversy will be best understood by a careful study of his Epistles, especially that addressed to the Galatians. He regarded the proposal as not only an infringement of the lawful liberty of the Church, but an attack on the office and work of the Redeemer Himself. The conflict was prolonged, and caused him much suffering; but we owe the existence of the Christian Church, in its present form, under the providence of its Divine Head, to the fidelity of S. Barnabas and S. Paul"—G. **They**—the brethren —**determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others, should go up to Jerusalem about this question.** "This is the journey to which S. Paul refers (Gal. 2. 1, 2) when he says he 'went up by revelation'; which is very consistent with this; for the Church in sending them might be directed by a revelation, made either immediately to S. Paul, or to some other person, relating to so important an affair. Important indeed it was, that these Jewish impositions should be solemnly opposed in time; because multitudes of converts were still 'zealous for the Law,' and ready to contend for the observance of it. Indeed, many of the Christians of Antioch would have acquiesced in the determination of S. Paul alone. But as many others might have prejudices against him for his having been so much concerned for the Gentiles, it was highly expedient to take the concurrent judgment of all the apostles on this occasion"—WESLEY. (Gal. 2. 1.)

3. **Through Phenice and Samaria**—which lay in their way. The gospel had reached Samaria by the agency of Philip (ch. 8. 5), and those who were scattered by the persecution which arose about S. Stephen had preached in Phenice. **Great joy unto all the brethren.** These churches were very largely, if not entirely, gathered from the Jews and proselytes. It is probable that the party of the circumcision was stronger at Jerusalem than in the remoter congregations. (Rom. 15. 24; 1 Cor. 16. 6, 11; ch. 14. 27.)

4. **They were received** — "solemnly welcomed"—WESLEY.

All things that God had done with them. The expression intimates that the apostles deemed themselves workers together with God. (See Mark 16. 20.) In ver. 12 they speak of themselves as instruments in His hand. (Ver. 12; ch. 14. 27; 21. 19.)

5. **But certain Pharisees**—"for even believers are apt to retain their former turn of mind, and prejudices derived therefrom. **The Law of Moses**—the whole Law both moral and ritual"—WESLEY.

R.V. "It is needful," ver. 1.

Vers. 6–21. THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM—SPEECHES OF PETER AND JAMES.—6. **The apostles and elders came together** (R.V. "were gathered together"). This was evidently a formal meeting to discuss the question, probably some days after the first welcome of the apostles by the Church.

7. **After much debate.** "It does not appear that this was among the apostles themselves. But if it had, if they themselves had debated at first, yet might their final decision be from an unerring direction. For how really soever they were inspired, we need not suppose their inspiration was always so instantaneous and express as to supersede any deliberation in their own minds, or any consultation with each other. **Peter rose up.** This is the last time he is mentioned in the Acts"—WESLEY.

He begins by referring to the scene in the house of Cornelius, by which he had himself, while obeying the direct commands of God, been brought into trouble among the stricter Jews. (Ch. 10. 20; 11. 12.)

8. **God bare them witness**—"that He had accepted them, by giving them the Holy Ghost"—WESLEY. (1 Chron. 28. 9; ch. 1. 24; 10. 44.)

9. **Purifying.** "This word is repeated from ch. 10. 15. **Their hearts.** The heart is the proper seat of purity. **By faith**—without concerning themselves with the Mosaic Law" —WESLEY. (Rom. 10. 11; ch. 10. 15, 28, 43; 1 Cor. 1. 2; 1 Pet. 1. 22.)

10. **Now therefore**—seeing these things are so—**why tempt ye God?** "Why do ye provoke Him to anger by putting so heavy a yoke on their neck?"—WESLEY.

"Tempt"—provoke—try the forbearance of God. This they would do if they called in question His wisdom and goodness as exemplified in the case of Cornelius. (Matt. 23. 4; Gal. 5. 1.)

11. **The Lord Jesus Christ** (R.V. omits "Christ"). "He does not here say, Our Lord; because in this solemn place he means, The Lord of all. **We**—Jews—**shall be saved, even as they**—Gentiles—namely, **through the grace of the Lord Jesus**, not by our observance of the Ceremonial Law"—WESLEY.

"There had been a long conference, in which reasons for and against were weighed. Because neither the written word of the Old Testament nor the judgment of the brethren had led to any sure result, S. Peter takes the ground of decision from the experience of what God had done under their own eyes" —L. (Rom. 3. 24; Eph. 2. 8; Titus 2. 11; 3. 4, 5.)

12. **All the multitude.** "Though the apostles and elders alone are mentioned (ver. 6) it now appears that the assembly was a large one'—C. B. **Miracles and wonders** (R.V. "Signs and wonders"). "By which also what S. Peter had said was confirmed"—WESLEY. (Ch. 14. 27.)

14. **Symeon hath rehearsed** (R.V.). "James, the apostle of the Hebrews, calls S. Peter by his Hebrew name. **To take out of them a people for His name**—that is, to believe in Him, to be called by His name"—WESLEY.

So that it was evident the Jews were no longer to be exclusively the chosen people. (Ver. 7.)

15. **To this agree.** "S. Peter had urged the plain fact, which S. James confirms by Scripture prophecy. **The words of the prophets.** One of whom is immediately cited"—WESLEY.

16. **After this**—"after the Jewish Dispensation expires—**I will build again the fallen tabernacle of David.** By raising from his seed the Christ, who shall build on the ruins of His fallen tabernacle a spiritual and eternal kingdom"—WESLEY. (Amos 9. 11,12.)

17. **The Gentiles on whom My name is called**—"that is who are called by My name: who are My people"—WESLEY.

The quotation is as usual almost exactly in the words of the LXX. version.

18. **Known unto God are all His works from eternity**—"which the apostle infers from the prophecy itself, and the accomplishment of it. And this conversion of the Gentiles being known to Him from eternity, we ought not to think a new or strange thing. It is observable, he does not speak of God's works in the natural world (which had been nothing to his present purpose), but of His dealing with the children of men. Now He could not know these without knowing the characters and actions of particular persons, on a correspondence with which the wisdom and goodness of His providential dispensations is founded. For instance, He could not know how He would deal with heathen idolaters (whom He was now calling into His Church), without knowing there would be heathen idolaters; and yet this was a thing purely contingent, a thing as dependent on the freedom of the human mind as any we can imagine. This text therefore, among a thousand more, is an unanswerable proof that God foreknows future contingencies, though there are difficulties relating hereto which man cannot solve"—WESLEY.

R.V. makes ver. 18 a part of the quotation from the prophecy. "Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world," or "who doeth these things that were known," etc.

19. **Are turned to God**—"to the knowledge and worship of the true God, and to obedience to His gospel"—B. (Ver. 28; 1 Thess. 1. 9.)

20. **From pollutions of idols.** Explained (ver. 29) to mean "meats offered to idols." This regulation was adopted to make it possible for strict Jews to have social intercourse with Gentiles. S. Paul's view of the question is explained in 1 Cor. 8. 1–10. **To abstain from fornication**—"which even the philosophers among the heathens did not account any fault. It was particularly frequent in the worship of their idols; on which account they are here named together. **And from things strangled** —that is, from whatever had been killed without pouring out the blood. When God first permitted man to eat flesh, He commanded Noah, and in him all his posterity, whenever they killed any creature for food, to abstain from the blood thereof. It was to be poured 'upon the ground as water'; doubtless in honour of that blood which was in due time poured out for the sin of the world"—WESLEY. (Gen 35. 2; Ex. 20. 3, 23; Ezek. 20. 30; 1 Cor. 8. 1; Rev. 2. 14, 20; 10. 20, 28; 1 Cor. 6. 9, 18; Gal. 5. 19; Eph. 5. 3; Col. 3. 5;

1 Thess. 4. 3; 1 Pet. 4. 3; Gen. 9. 4; Lev. 3. 17; Deut. 12. 16, 23.)

21. **For Moses.** "Perhaps the connection is, To the Jews we need write nothing on these heads. For they hear the Law continually"—WESLEY.

"The Gentiles were advised to abstain from these things, because they would give great offence to the Jews"—W. W. "The argument may be supposed to run thus: We may make this concession to the Gentiles without the fear of doing any injury to the Jew. For Moses, etc."—C. B. (Ch. 13. 15, 27.)

Vers. 22–35. THE DECISION OF THE COUNCIL SENT TO ANTIOCH. — 22. **With the whole Church.** "Which therefore had a part therein —**to send chosen men,** who might put it beyond all dispute that this was the judgment of the apostles and all the brethren"—WESLEY. (Ch. 1. 23.)

23. **Writing thus, and sending it by their hand.** "The whole conduct of this affair plainly shows that the Church in those days had no conception of St. Peter's primacy, or of his being the chief judge in controversies. For the decree is drawn up not according to his, but the Apostle James's, proposal and direction; and that in the name, not of S. Peter, but of all the apostles and elders, and of the whole Church. Nay, S. Peter's name is not mentioned at all, either in the order for sending to Jerusalem on the question (ver. 2), or in the address of the messengers concerning it (ver. 4), or in the letter which was written in answer"—WESLEY.

The apostles, and elders, and brethren (R.V. "The apostles and the elder brethren"). **Greeting.** "The ordinary Greek salutation at the commencement of a letter, as in ch. 23. 26. The peculiarity is that it occurs only once in the apostolic epistles, viz. in Jas. 1. 1. An undesigned coincidence, tending to prove the genuineness of this document, as drawn up by S. James"—C. H.

24. **Forasmuch as.** "The simplicity, weightiness, and conciseness of this letter are highly observable"—WESLEY.

The simplicity and conciseness are still more marked in R.V., "Subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commandment." So that their interference was absolutely unauthorised. (Ver. 1; Gal. 2. 4; ver. 12; Titus 1. 10, 11.)

25. **Being assembled with one accord** (R.V. "Having come to one accord"). **To send chosen men.** "This was an interchange of courtesy and respect, as well as a provision for the more solemn and authoritative settlement of the question"—W. W.

26. **Men that have hazarded their lives.** "This is spoken of S. Paul and S. Barnabas"—WESLEY.

"Such a testimony was by no means a mere compliment, but exceedingly prudent, as it would tend to remove the prejudices conceived against them by the Jewish teachers, and would also be an evidence of the harmony subsisting between them and the apostles of the circumcision"—B. (Ch. 13. 50; 14. 19; 1 Cor. 15. 30; 2 Cor. 11. 23, 26.)

27. **Judas and Silas**—"men that have heard our debates, and are perfectly acquainted with our judgment and decision"—B. **Who will tell you the same things**—"which we have written"—WESLEY.

28, 29. **To the Holy Ghost and to us.** "This may include the decision which the Holy Spirit had given by His descent on Cornelius and his friends, but seems more directly to express the consciousness which this assembly had of being guided by His influence in the present determination. It cannot, however, be extended to ecclesiastical councils which have not inspired apostles to preside"—B. **These necessary things.** "All of these were necessary for that time. But the first of them was not necessary long; and the direction concerning it was therefore repealed by the same Spirit, as we read in the former Epistle to the Corinthians"—WESLEY.

Blood—"the eating which was never permitted the children of God from the beginning of the world. Nothing can be clearer than this: for (1) From Adam to Noah no man ate flesh at all; consequently no man then ate blood; (2) When God allowed Noah and his posterity to eat flesh, He absolutely forbade them to eat blood, and accordingly this, with the other six precepts of Noah, was delivered down from Noah to Moses; (3) God renewed this prohibition by Moses, which was not repealed from the time of Moses till Christ came; (4) Neither after His coming did any presume to repeal this decree of the Holy Ghost, till it seemed good to the Bishop of Rome so to do, about the middle of the eighth century; (5) From that time those churches which acknowledged his authority held the eating of blood to be an indifferent thing; but (6) In all those churches which never did acknowledge the Bishop of Rome's authority, it never was allowed to eat blood; nor is it allowed at this day. This is the plain fact; let men reason as plausibly as they please, on one side or the other. **From which keeping yourselves, ye will do well**—that is, ye will find a blessing. This gentle manner of concluding was worthy the apostolical wisdom and goodness. But how soon did succeeding councils of inferior authority change it into the style of anathemas! forms which have proved an occasion of consecrating some of the most devilish passions under the most sacred names; and, like some ill-adjusted weapons of war, are most likely to hurt the hand from which they are thrown"—WESLEY. (Ver. 20; ch. 21. 25; Rev. 2. 14, 20; Lev. 17. 14.)

30, 31. **They gathered the multitude**—"the private Christians as well as the elders and other official members of the Church"—B. **Rejoiced for the consolation**—"to find that

so venerable an assembly had concurred with S. Paul and S. Barnabas in vindicating the liberty of the Gentile converts from the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies. Their joy would be in proportion to the anxiety and suspense with which they waited for the apostle's decision"—B.

32. **Judas and Silas exhorted**—"did not only deliver the particular message with which they were charged. Their ministry would tend to show the identity of the teaching at Jerusalem with that of the elders at Antioch. **Confirmed them**—in every branch of Christian faith and practice"—B. (Ch. 14. 22; 18. 23.)

33. **Let go in peace.** Translation of a Hebrew phrase—"in peace" means "with a blessing or prayer for peace as a parting word"—C. B. (1 Cor. 16. 11; Heb. 11. 31.)

34. R.V. inserts in the *margin* only—probably an interpolation to account for ver. 40.

35. **Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch.** "And it was during this time that S. Peter came down from Jerusalem, and that S. Paul withstood him to the face for separating himself from the Gentiles (Gal. 2. 11)"—WESLEY. (Ch. 13. 1.)

"This is the first ecclesiastical assembly or synod in the history of the Church. It was occasioned by a deeply important question, which concerned the whole Church of Christ, the Gentile Christians directly and the Jewish indirectly. It was referred by the Church at Antioch, who were primarily interested, to Jerusalem, as the mother Church, the sacred metropolis. But the apostles did not take the decision upon themselves, much less did S. Peter; not even the apostles in conjunction with the elders; but the whole Church of Jerusalem was present, and participated in the solution of the question. The different views entertained were freely expressed in the synod. But the truth, evangelical liberty, prevailed, and that purely by the power of the Spirit, of the Divine word, and of the deeds and acts of God. Not a doubtful majority, not a majority tyrannising over the minority, but an entire unanimity decided the business. The result was not formed by mutual concessions, agreed upon in a prudent and calculating manner, but resulted from an honest, truth-loving, and God-fearing consideration, under the guidance and illumination of the Holy Ghost"—L.

Vers. 36–41. THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY — DIVISION BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS.—36. **Let us go and visit the brethren in every city where we have preached.** "This was all that S. Paul designed at first. But it was not all that God designed by his journey, whose providence carried him much farther than he intended. **And see how they do** — how their souls prosper; how they grow in faith, hope, love. What else ought to be the grand and constant inquiry in every ecclesiastical visitation? Reader, how dost thou do?"—WESLEY.

It is only just to add that John Wesley's conduct in his repeated visits to the churches he had founded was in strict accordance with the spirit of his note. His chief concern was the religious state of the Societies. (Ch. 13. 4, 13, 14, 51; 14. 1, 6, 24, 25.)

37. **Barnabas counselled to take John**—"his kinsman"—WESLEY.

A.V. "Determined"; R.V. "Was minded." (Ch. 12. 12, 25; 13. 5; Col. 4. 10; 2 Tim. 4. 11; Philem. 24.)

38. **But Paul thought it not right**—"to trust him again who had deserted them before; who had shrunk from the labour and danger of converting those whom they were now going to confirm"—WESLEY. (Ch. 13. 13.)

39. **And there was a sharp contention**—"literally, a paroxysm, or fit of a fever. But nothing in the text implies that the sharpness was on both sides. It is far more probable that it was not; that S. Paul who had the right on his side (as he undoubtedly had) maintained it with love. **And Barnabas taking Mark with him sailed away to Cyprus**—forsaking the work in which he was engaged, he went away to his own country"—WESLEY.

R.V. "There arose a sharp contention, so that they parted." The strife between these good men, which certainly was to be lamented, was made the occasion of a more extensive spread of the gospel. For S. Barnabas sailed with S. Mark into Cyprus, to visit the churches which he and S. Paul had planted there in their former journey; and S. Paul, choosing Silas, who was a prophet and a chief man among the brethren, departed to pursue the course which he had intended"—B.

40. **But Paul departed**—"held on his intended course — **being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God.** We do not find that Barnabas stayed for this. Oh, how mighty is the grace of God! which, in the midst of the world, in the midst of sin, among so many snares of Satan, and in spite of the incredible weakness and depravity of nature, yet overcomes all opposition, sanctifies, sustains, and preserves us to the end. It appears, not only that S. Paul and S. Barnabas were afterwards thoroughly reconciled (1 Cor. 9. 6; Gal. 2. 9), but also that S. Mark was again admitted by S. Paul as a companion in his labours. (Col. 4. 10; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4. 11; ch. 14. 26.)"—WESLEY.

41. **Through Syria and Cilicia**—"which was S. Paul's native country, as Cyprus was that of S. Barnabas"—B. "These were districts in which the teaching of the Judaisers had been most active, and the presence of S. Paul, with Silas as a representative of the Church in Jerusalem, would allay all doubts and questionings. This duty S. Paul first discharged before he went on to visit any of the churches he himself had founded"—C. B. (Ch. 16. 5.)

CHAPTER XVI.

Vers. 1–13. PAUL REVISITING THE CHURCHES—FORBIDDEN TO PREACH IN PROCONSULAR ASIA—CROSSES INTO EUROPE.—1. **To Derbe and Lystra.** "These cities are specially named, because he there came into the scene of his former labours. **Timotheus.** As S. Paul (2 Tim. 3. 10, 11) speaks of Timothy having been a witness of his sufferings at Lystra, and we read nothing of any remarkable suffering at the time of this second journey, it is probable that Timothy was converted by him in his former journey, and was a spectator of what he then suffered (ch. 14. 19, 20), and that S. Paul there began to have some acquaintance with him. **The son of.** These circumstances are mentioned, because he became a very considerable person in the Church, as well as a faithful and useful friend to the apostle"—B. (Ch. 14. 6; 19. 22; Rom. 16. 21; 1 Cor. 4. 17; Phil. 2. 19; 1 Thess. 3. 2; 1 Tim. 1. 2; 2 Tim. 1. 2; 2 Tim. 1. 5.)

2, 3. **Well reported of.** "Five or six years had elapsed since the previous visit, so that the congregations had become somewhat formed, and the characters of the more earnest members well known"—C. B. S. Paul did not rely only on his own well-trained insight into character, or upon any supernatural assistance he might expect, in selecting a young man to be set apart to the work of the ministry. He sought to know the opinions of those among whom Timothy had dwelt from his youth up; and he noted his parentage, and the training of his childhood. (Ch. 6. 3.) **Him would Paul have**—as an assistant in his work. Probably it was at this time that he was solemnly set apart for the ministry by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (1 Tim. 4. 14.) **He took and circumcised him, because of the Jews**—"the unbelieving Jews, to whom he designed he should preach. For they would not have conversed with him at all, so long as he was uncircumcised"—WESLEY. (1 Cor. 9. 20; Gal. 2. 3; 5. 2.)

4. **They delivered them the decrees**—"committed to the custody of each church an exact and attested copy of the decrees made by the Council at Jerusalem"—B. (Ch. 15. 29.)

5. **Churches established in the faith.** "Watered by such faithful labourers, and encouraged with so favourable a decision of the great point then in question, they were much confirmed in their adherence to the faith. **Increased in number daily**—for the burdensome yoke of the Law of Moses being now broken, a great obstacle to the conversion of the Gentiles was removed"—B. The history evidently represents the publication of the "decrees" as having given a new impetus. Probably, in the Gentile congregations, the first result would be an enhanced feeling of unity with the whole Church and of loyalty to Christ. (Ch. 15. 41.)

6. **And having gone through Phrygia**—"and spoken there what was sufficient, as well as in **the region of Galatia, being forbid by the Spirit,** probably by an inward dictate, **to speak** as yet **in** the Proconsular **Asia,** the time for it not being come"—WESLEY.

Flourishing churches were afterwards planted there, particularly at Colosse, Laodicea, Sardis, Thyatira, and Philadelphia. It is not improbable that the churches in Galatia were founded at this visit. (See Gal. 4. 13–19.)

7. **After they were come to Mysia** (R.V. "come over against Mysia"). **The Spirit suffered them not** (R.V. "The Spirit of Jesus"). (Gal. 4. 6; Phil. 1. 19; 1 Pet. 1. 11.) Note that the acts of the Spirit here are those of a Person.

8. **Coming to Mysia, and passing it by**—"as being a part of **Asia, they attempted to go into Bithynia**; but the **Spirit suffered them not**—forbidding them as before. Sometimes a strong impression, for which we are not able to give any account, is not altogether to be despised"—WESLEY.

Came down to Troas—a well-known seaport on the coast of Mysia. (2 Cor. 2. 12; 2 Tim. 4. 13.)

9. **A vision appeared to Paul by night.** "It was not a dream, though it was by night. No other dream is mentioned in the New Testament than that of Joseph, and of Pilate's wife. **A man of Macedonia**—probably an angel clothed in the Macedonian habit, or using the language of the country, and representing the inhabitants of it. **Help us**—against Satan, ignorance, and sin"—WESLEY.

10. **We sought to go into Macedonia.** "This is the first place in which S. Luke intimates his attendance on the apostle. And here he does it only in an oblique manner. Nor does he throughout the history once mention his own name, or any one thing which he did or said for the service of Christianity; though S. Paul speaks of him in the most honourable terms (Col. 4. 14; 2 Tim. 4. 11); and probably as 'the brother whose praise in the gospel went through all the churches' (2 Cor. 8. 18). The same remark may be made on the rest of the sacred historians, who every one of them show the like amiable modesty"—WESLEY.

R.V. "We sought to go forth"—inquiring how and when they could cross into Europe. (2 Cor. 2. 13.)

11. **We came with a straight course** (R.V. "made a straight course to Samothrace"—"which increased their confidence that God had called them"—WESLEY.

Samothrace is an island about half-way across.

12. **The first city.** "Neapolis was the first city they came to in that part of Macedonia which is nearest to Asia; in that part which was farthest from it, Philippi. The river

Strymon ran between them. Philippi was a Roman colony"—WESLEY.

Some difference of opinion has existed as to the true position of Neapolis; but recent inquiries seem to leave little doubt that the small Turkish village of Cavallo is the Neapolis at which S. Paul landed, and the seaport of Philippi which is ten miles inland. **Which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony** (R.V.).

13. **We went out of the gate.** "The Jews usually held their religious assemblies (either by choice or constraint) at a distance from the heathens. **By a river side**—which was also convenient for purifying themselves. **Where prayer was wont to be made**—though it does not appear there was any house built there"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Where we supposed there was a place of prayer." **We spake**—"at first in a familiar manner. S. Paul did not immediately begin to preach"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul and his companions were divinely called, in an extraordinary manner, into Macedonia, but we may see how artlessly and simply they commence their labours. They remain some days by themselves; then they go, as others, to the usual place of devotion, content to speak there with some women; and, full of believing calmness, are ready to follow the leadings of God"—L.

Vers. 14–40. CONVERSION OF LYDIA — A SPIRIT OF DIVINATION CAST OUT—STRIPES, IMPRISONMENT, AND TRIUMPHANT DELIVERANCE OF THE APOSTLES.—14. **Lydia—of the city of Thyatira**—"in the province of Asia, and famous for its dyeing works—**which worshipped God**—a proselyte to the Jewish faith" —C. B. "Probably acquainted with the prophetic writings"—WESLEY.

Whose heart the Lord opened. "The Greek properly refers to the opening of the eyes. And the heart has its eyes. (Eph. 1. 18.) These are closed by nature; and to open them is the peculiar work of God"—WESLEY.

God opens the heart, but man must permit it to be opened. (Rev. 3. 20.) "Lydia was so strongly affected by what S. Paul said, that she embraced the gospel with the full assurance of faith"—B. (Luke 24. 45.)

15. **She was baptized and her family.** "Who can believe, that in so many families there was no infant? or, that the Jews, who were so long accustomed to circumcise their children, would not now devote them to God by baptism? **She entreated us**—the souls of the faithful cleave to those by whom they were gained to God. **She constrained us**—by her importunity. They did not immediately comply, lest any should imagine they sought their own profit by coming into Macedonia"—WESLEY.

"Lydia's pressing invitations, however, overcame their reluctance, and they at last consented to her request, and abode at her house as long as they continued at Philippi, which was many days (see vers. 12, 18)"—B. "The apostles did not gain over by their discourse great crowds, but one woman only. The kingdom of God commences like a grain of mustard seed. From a converted Lydia afterwards sprang that glorious Church of Philippi, to which the apostle wrote such an excellent epistle, and which he called his crown"—L. (Gen. 19. 3; 33. 11; Judg. 19. 21; Luke 24. 29; Heb. 13. 2.)

16. **As we went to prayer** (R.V. "As we were going to the place of prayer"). **A spirit of divination** (R.V. *margin*, "A spirit, a Python") —"a divining spirit like that attributed to the Pythoness at Delphi. The whole tenor of the narrative implies a supernatural possession; and though we do not witness the terrible spectacle of human beings possessed by evil spirits, nothing can be more presumptuous than to make our own experience the criterion of truth for the times which have preceded us" —W. W. (1 Sam. 28. 7; ch. 19. 24.)

17. **Followed Paul and us.** After this verse the writer ceases for a time to intimate that he accompanied S. Paul. As he reappears (ch. 20. 5), he was probably left behind at Philippi. **These men are.** "A great truth; but S. Paul did not need, nor would accept of, such testimony"—WESLEY.

So the demoniacs in the gospel confessed the true character of the Lord Jesus. (R.V. "Proclaim unto you.")

18. **Paul being grieved** (R.V. "being sore troubled")—"under an apprehension that this stratagem of Satan might lead the people to imagine that the preachers of the gospel acted in confederacy with the evil spirit"—B. (Mark 1. 25, 34; 16. 17.)

19. **The hope of their gains was gone.** "The effect produced upon the woman evidently proves the reality of the possession; had she been an impostor, she would have still persisted in the imposture at the instigation of her masters"—W. W. "The gospel certainly prevents much gain, because it forbids and condemns many arts and trades"—L. **Caught Paul and Silas**—letting S. Luke and Timothy, the younger members of the mission party, escape. **Drew them** (R.V. "Dragged"). (Ch. 19. 25, 26; 2 Cor. 6. 5; Matt. 10. 18.) **The rulers**—"the supreme magistrates of the city. In the next verse they are called by a title which often signifies prætors. These officers exercised both the military and civil authority" —WESLEY.

20. **The magistrates** (R.V. *margin*, "prætors"). **Being Jews**—"a nation peculiarly despised by the Romans"—WESLEY. (1 Kings 18. 17; ch. 17. 6.)

Trouble our city. "Those who disturb the false peace of sinners are cried against as disturbers of the common peace"—L. "If they troubled the city, it was but like the angel troubling the water of Bethesda's pool in order to healing"—M. H.

21. **And teach customs which it is not lawful for us to receive.** "The world has received all the rules and doctrines of all the philosophers that ever were. But this is a property of gospel truth—it has something in it perfectly intolerable to the world"—WESLEY.

Being Romans—though living in Macedonia. "A Roman colony was not like what we now call a colony. The inhabitants did not settle as they pleased, but were sent out by authority from Rome, and they reproduced, where they settled, a close resemblance to Roman rule and life. They were planted on the frontiers of the empire for protection, and as a check upon the provincial magistrates. Latin was their language, and they used the Roman coinage, and had their chief magistrates sent out or appointed from the mother city"—C. B. The manner in which S. Luke describes the proceedings at Philippi confirms our confidence in the genuineness of the whole narrative.

22. **The magistrates rent their garments off them** (R.V.), **and commanded to beat them with rods.** "This was the office of the Roman lictor, who carried rods for the purpose when attending on the magistrates. The use of this special word indicates that S. Luke was aware of the particular kind of beating, and perhaps beheld the infliction. This is one of the occasions to which S. Paul alludes (2 Cor. 11. 25), 'Thrice was I beaten with rods'"—C. B. (2 Cor. 6. 5; 1 Thess. 2. 2.)

23. **They laid many stripes upon them.** "Either they did not immediately say they were Romans, or in the tumult it was not regarded. **Charging the jailor** — perhaps rather to quiet the people than because they thought them criminal"—WESLEY.

24. **The inner prison**—"like that dungeon in the court of the prison into which Jeremiah was let down with cords, and where he sank in the mire. (Jer. 38. 6.) One such place may be seen to this day on the slope of the Capitol at Rome"—C. H. **Secured their feet in the stocks.** "These were probably those large pieces of wood in use among the Romans, which not only loaded the legs of the prisoner, but also kept them extended in a very painful manner"—WESLEY.

25. **At midnight**—sleep being out of the question—**Paul and Silas sang a hymn to God** — "notwithstanding weariness, hunger, stripes, and blood. **And the prisoners heard** —a song to which they were not accustomed"—WESLEY.

R.V. "The prisoners were listening."

26, 27. **Would have killed himself.** "Philippi had already witnessed, in Cassius and Brutus, examples of such desperation. Ancient philosophy approved of the practice. The Roman jailor who allowed a prisoner to escape was liable to suffer his punishment"—W. W. (Ch. 4. 31; 5. 19; 12. 7, 10.)

28. **But Paul cried.** "As they were then all in the dark, it is not easy to say how S. Paul knew of the jailor's purpose; unless it were by some immediate notice from God, which is by no means incredible. **With a loud voice**—through earnestness, and because he was at some distance—**Do thyself no harm.** Although the Christian faith opens the prospect into another life, yet it absolutely forbids, and effectually prevents, a man's discharging himself from this"—WESLEY.

29. **Called for lights** (R.V.). **Fell down before Paul and Silas**—paid them supreme honours; he felt persuaded that the earthquake had happened on their account, having doubtless heard something of their previous history, of their miracles and mission.

30. **Sirs.** "He did not style them so the day before. **What must I do to be saved?** —from the guilt I feel, and the vengeance I fear. Undoubtedly God had set his sins in array before him, and convinced him in the clearest and strongest manner that the wrath of God abode upon him"—WESLEY.

"He had probably heard about the testimony of the possessed damsel, that S. Paul and Silas showed the way of *salvation*, and now, without knowing what it fully meant, he cries out for the teaching which they had to give"—C. B. (Luke 3. 10; ch. 2. 37; 9. 6.)

31. R.V. omits the word "Christ," which a heathen would not understand without long explanations. What was required of this ignorant Gentile was to receive Jesus as his Lord, and to trust in Him as his Saviour. **Thou shalt be saved, and thy household**—"if ye believe. They did so, and were saved"—WESLEY. (John 3. 16, 36; 6. 47; 1 John 5. 10.)

32. **Spake unto him the word of the Lord** —declared more fully the contents and design of the gospel, giving a brief account of the person and offices of the Lord Jesus, of His life, His death, His resurrection and ascension. Their discourse on these subjects was so convincing that both the jailor and all his household became real converts, accepting Christ with a true and intelligent faith. "Faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. 10. 17).

33. **He washed their stripes.** "It should not be forgot that the apostles had not the power of working miraculous cures when they pleased, either on themselves or their dearest friends. Nor was it expedient they should; since it would have frustrated many wise designs of God, which were answered by their sufferings"—WESLEY.

"It is happy for us that few modern countries know, by the example of a similar punishment, what the severity of a Roman scourging was"—H.

34. **Set a table before them, and rejoiced.** "Faith makes a man joyful, prudent, liberal"—WESLEY.

Believing in God—"in the one living and true God; a very different Being from the gods in whom he had before believed"—B. This true God had been revealed to him in His Son,

the Lord Jesus. Contrast the kindness, the courtesy, the consideration of the man with his former barbarity, and we have a lively proof of the change wrought in his disposition and conduct. (Luke 5. 29; 19. 6.)

35. **The prætors sent**—"being probably terrified by the earthquake"—WESLEY.

Saying, Let those men go. "How different from the charge given a few hours before! and how great an ease to the mind of the jailor"—WESLEY.

The prompt action of the magistrates, **as soon as it was day**, shows that they were alarmed, being convinced by the earthquake which must have been felt over the city, and by the rumour of what had taken place in the prison, that these men were under the protection of supernatural powers.

37. **They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans** (R.V.). "S. Paul does not always plead this privilege. But in a country where they were entire strangers, such treatment might have brought upon them a suspicion of having been guilty of some uncommon crime, and so have hindered the course of the gospel"—WESLEY.

S. Paul knew that the report of the proceedings at Philippi would follow him wherever he went in the province, and that the conduct of the magistrates might easily be made a precedent elsewhere; and, having the opportunity, he made it appear that Roman law protected him. (Ch. 22. 25.)

38. **They feared when they heard that they were Romans.** "They had probably heard of the punishment of the inhabitants of Rhodes, A.D. 44, whom Claudius had deprived of their freedom for putting to death some Roman citizens. Besides, the prætors were liable to action under the Cornelian law"—W. W.

39. **Asked them to go away from the city** (R.V.)—to prevent popular tumult. S. Paul went not unwillingly, knowing that the foundation had been laid, and probably trusting in S. Luke to carry on the work of building up the Church. (Matt. 8. 34.)

40. **When they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.** "Though many circumstances now invited their stay, yet they wisely complied with the request of the magistrates, that they might not seem to express any degree of obstinacy or revenge, or give any suspicion of a design to stir up the people"—WESLEY.

"At Philippi the apostles for the first time came into direct contact with pagan Rome. In Jerusalem the ostensible ground of persecution was always religious. The Christian teachers were accused by the priesthood of blasphemies against God and Moses, against the Temple and the Law. In Philippi the persecution takes a political colour; S. Paul and Silas are accused as disturbers, as setting forth customs contrary to Roman law. It was a persecution arising not only on heathen ground, as at Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium and at Lystra, but from purely heathen motives. And the Roman authorities, misled by statements suggested only by injured avarice, committed themselves rashly to proceedings undeniably illegal and unjust, a prelude to those bloody persecutions which the Imperial government, in the course of two centuries, inflicted on the Christians"—L. It is scarcely possible to help being struck with the effect of the first preaching of the gospel in Europe. The first notable convert is Lydia, the Asiatic settler, a woman evidently of wealth, position, and refinement; the last, the Roman jailor, of a class insensible and hardened by habit, and also disposed to despise the Jews who brought the message of the gospel. The converts at Philippi were types of the universal power of the new faith. How deep the mutual affection which existed between S. Paul and these Philippians, his first European converts, is manifest in every line of the epistle which he wrote to them from Rome in his first imprisonment.

CHAPTER XVII.

Vers. 1–15. PAUL AND SILAS AT THESSALONICA AND BEREA.—1. **And taking their journey through Amphipolis and Apollonia.** "S. Luke seems to have been left at Philippi; and to have continued in those parts, travelling from place to place among the churches, till S. Paul returned thither; for here he leaves off speaking of himself as one of S. Paul's company; neither does he resume that style till we find them together there. (Ch. 20. 5, 6.) After this he constantly uses it to the end of the history. Amphipolis and Apollonia were cities of Macedonia"—WESLEY.

Thessalonica—"now the metropolis of the Roman province of Macedonia. Being the seat of government, it was constantly filled with strangers attending the courts of judicature. Its situation at the bottom of the Thermaic Gulf rendering it fit for commerce, many of its inhabitants were merchants carrying on an extensive trade with foreign countries. The Jews likewise resorted to this city in such numbers as to form a numerous congregation"—B.

2. **And Paul, according to his custom**—"of doing all things, as far as might be, in a regular manner—**went in to them three Sabbath days**—not excluding the days between"—WESLEY. (Luke 4. 16; ch. 9. 20; 13. 5, 14; 14. 1; 16. 13; 19. 8.)

3. **Alleging that Christ must needs have suffered** (R.V. "That it behoved the Christ to suffer"). (Luke 24. 26, 46; ch. 18. 28; Gal. 3. 1.)

4. **Some of them believed** (R.V. "were persuaded"). **Of the devout Greeks a great multitude.** These were Gentile proselytes, who had not the intense prejudices of the born Jews. **Of the chief women not a few.** "Our

freethinkers pique themselves upon observing that women are more religious than men, and this, in compliment both to religion and good manners, they impute to the weakness of their understandings. And, indeed, as far as nature can go in imitating religion by performing the outward acts of it, this picture of religion may make a fairer show in women than in men, both by reason of their more tender passions, and their modesty, which will make those actions appear to more advantage. But in the case of true religion, which always implies taking up the cross, especially in time of persecution, women lie naturally under a great disadvantage, as having less courage than men. So that their embracing the gospel was a stronger evidence of the power of Him whose strength is perfected in weakness, as a stronger assistance of the Holy Spirit was needful for them to overcome their natural fearfulness"—WESLEY.

This is S. Luke's account of the success of the gospel in Thessalonica. But we learn from S. Paul himself (1 Thess. 1. 9) that multitudes of the idolaters also believed. (Ch. 28. 24; 15. 22, 27, 32, 40.)

5. **But the Jews** (R.V. omits "which believed not"). **Lewd fellows of the baser sort** (R.V. "Vile fellows of the rabble," Rom. 16. 21).

6. **Drew Jason** (R.V. "Dragged"). **The rulers of the city.** "The title *politarch* is found nowhere in literature but in this chapter. But an inscription connected with this very city of Thessalonica has been preserved on an arch which spans a street of the modern city; there the title of the magistrates is given in this precise form"—C. B. (Ch. 16. 20.)

7, 8. **Another King, one Jesus. . . Troubled the people and the rulers.** "The accusation of the Jews was well devised. Thessalonica was not a colony like Philippi, but a free city like Antioch in Syria. The privilege technically called freedom was given to certain cities of the empire for various reasons of policy. Such a city was entirely self-governed in all its internal affairs; even the governor of the province had no right, under ordinary circumstances, to interfere; the local magistrates had the power of life and death over the citizens; there was no Roman garrison, and no insignia of Roman rule. The magistrates and the people of cities so distinguished in the midst of a conquered country would be careful to show their loyalty to the emperor, and to avoid every disorder which might compromise their valued dignity"—C. H. (Luke 23. 2; John 19. 12; 1 Pet. 2. 15.)

9. **Taken security of Jason and of the other** (R.V. "the rest"). "It is probably meant that a sum of money was deposited with the magistrates, and that the Christian community of the place made themselves responsible that no attempt should be made against the supremacy of Rome, and that peace should be maintained in Thessalonica itself. The whole aspect of what happened at Thessalonica, as compared with the events at Philippi, is in perfect harmony with the difference in the political condition of the two places. There is no mention of the rights and privileges of *Roman citizenship;* there is a mixed mob of Greeks and Jews, all anxious to show themselves Cæsar's friends. Nothing is said of religious customs which the citizens, being Romans, may not adopt lawfully; all the anxiety of the magistrates and the people is turned to the one point of showing their loyalty to the emperor. And the magistrates, by whom the question is ultimately decided, are not Roman prætors, but Jewish politarchs"—C. H. It should be noted that S. Paul at Thessalonica maintained himself by his own labour (1 Thess. 2. 8, 9), and that he was assisted by the liberality of his friends at Philippi, who once and again sent him relief. (Phil. 4. 15. 16.)

10. **The brethren**—finding that the Jews still meditated mischief, sent the apostles away secretly. **Berea**—a large city, about fifty miles from Thessalonica. (Ch. 9. 25; ver. 14.)

11. **These were more ingenuous**—"or generous. To be teachable in the things of God is true generosity of soul. The **receiving the word with all readiness of mind**, and the most accurate search into its truth, are well consistent"—WESLEY. (Isa. 34. 16; Luke 16. 29; John 5. 39.)

12. **Therefore many of them**—"of the Jews—**and of the Grecian women**—who were followed by their husbands"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Greek women of honourable estate."

13. **Stirred up the people** (R.V. "Stirring up and troubling the multitude"). The same word is used as in ver. 8; which renders it probable that the pretext was the same in Berea as in Thessalonica, namely, disloyalty to the emperor.

14. **The brethren.** A little church had already been gathered. **Immediately.** As from Thessalonica so from Berea, the departure is made in haste. The accusation of disloyalty involved the utmost danger. **As it were to the sea** (R.V. "As far as to the sea"). (Matt. 10. 23.)

15. **They that conducted Paul.** "It is clear from the whole account of S. Paul's travels that he was a person who by reason of his infirmities could not easily travel alone"—C. B. **Silas and Timotheus.** There are some difficulties with regard to the movements of Silas and Timotheus after they were left in Macedonia. They did not, so far as the history records, join S. Paul at Athens; but both of them came to him in Corinth. (Ch. 18. 5; 1 Thess. 3. 1, 2.)

Vers. 16–34. PAUL AT ATHENS — A SPEECH TO THE PHILOSOPHERS, AND ITS RESULT.—16. **While Paul was waiting for them**—"having no design, as it seems, to preach at Athens.

But his zeal for God drew him into it unawares, without staying till his companions came"—WESLEY.

Wholly given to idolatry (R.V. "Full of idols"). (2 Pet. 2. 8.)

17. **Jews and devout persons** — that is, proselytes. It was always "To the Jew first."

18. **Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.** "The Epicureans entirely denied a Providence, and held the world to be the effect of mere chance; asserting sensual pleasure to be man's chief good, and that the soul and body died together. The Stoics held that matter was eternal; that all things were governed by irresistible fate; that virtue was its own sufficient reward, and vice its own sufficient punishment. It is easy to see how happily the apostle levels his discourse at some of the most important errors of each, while, without expressly attacking either, he gives a plain summary of his own religious principles. **What would this babbler say?** Such is the language of natural reason, full of, and satisfied with, itself. Yet even here S. Paul had some fruit; though nowhere less than at Athens. And no wonder, since this city was a seminary of philosophers, who have ever been the pest of true religion. **He seemeth to be a proclaimer.** This he returns upon them at ver. 23. **Of strange gods**—such as are not known even at Athens. **Because he preached to them Jesus, and the resurrection**—a god and a goddess. And as stupid as this mistake was, it is the less to be wondered at, since the Athenians might as well count the resurrection a deity, as shame, famine, and many others"—WESLEY.

"Strange gods" (R.V. *margin*, "demons"). By this term they did not understand devils or evil beings, but an inferior order of divinities.

19. **The Areopagus** — "or Hill of Mars, dedicated to Mars, the heathen god of war, was the place where the Athenians held their supreme court of judicature. But it does not appear he was carried thither as a criminal. The original number of its judges was twelve; but afterwards it increased to three hundred. These were generally men of the greatest families in Athens, and were famed for justice and integrity"—WESLEY.

Took hold of him (R.V.). No violence is implied; it is the same word as is used when "Barnabas took Paul and brought him to the apostles." The expression, "the Areopagus," was used to describe either the supreme court itself, or its ordinary place of meeting. There is nothing in the history to intimate that the court was actually sitting.

21. **And the strangers sojourning there**—"and catching the distemper of them. **Some new thing.** The Greek word signifies some *newer* thing. New things quickly grew cheap, and they wanted those that were newer still"—WESLEY.

22. **Then Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus.** "An ample theatre! **Said.** Giving them a lecture of natural divinity, with admirable wisdom, acuteness, fulness, and courtesy. They inquire after new things: S. Paul, in his divinely philosophical discourse, begins with the first and goes on to the last things, both of which were new things to them. He points out the origin and the end of all things, concerning which they had so many disputes, and equally refutes both the Epicurean and the Stoic. **I perceive.** With what clearness and freedom does he speak! S. Paul against Athens"—WESLEY.

"A stranger standing in the midst of the Areopagus would be impressed with the magnificence of the religion which he sought to overthrow. The temple of the Eumenides was immediately below him; opposite, at the distance of two hundred yards, was the hill of the Acropolis, which was entirely occupied by statues and temples"—W. W. **Too superstitious** (R.V. "Somewhat superstitious").

23. **Your devotions** (R.V. "The objects of your worship"). **I found an altar.** "Some suppose this was set up by Socrates, to express in a covert way his devotion to the only true God, while he derided the plurality of the heathen gods, for which he was condemned to death; and others, that whoever erected this altar, did it in honour to the God of Israel, of whom there was no image, and whose name, Jehovah, was never made known to the idolatrous Gentiles. **Him proclaim I.** Thus he fixes the wandering attention of these blind philosophers; proclaiming to them an unknown, and yet not a new, God"—WESLEY.

What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you (R.V.).

24. **God who made the world.** "Thus is demonstrated, even to reason, the one true, good God; absolutely different from the creatures, from every part of the visible creation"—WESLEY.

He asserts the existence of God, the Creator, and the Providential Ruler of the universe, in opposition to the doctrine of the Epicureans. And he argues that the Lord of the whole universe has no need of temples to dwell in; that the thought of winning His favour by erecting costly and beautiful buildings, even like those upon the hill of the Acropolis, was a thought unworthy of men whose minds have been enlightened by science. (Ch. 14. 15; Matt. 11. 25; ch. 7. 48.)

25. **As though He needed anything**—"or person, the Greek word equally takes in both. **To all**—that live and breathe—**life.** In Him we live. **And breath.** In Him we move. By breathing life is continued. I breathe this moment; the next is not in my power. **And all things.** For in Him we are. So exactly do the parts of this discourse answer each other"—WESLEY. (Ps. 50. 8; Gen. 2. 7; Num. 16. 22; Job 12. 10; 27. 3; 33. 4; Isa. 42. 5; 57. 16; Zech. 12. 1.)

26. **He hath made of one blood the whole nation of men.** "By this expression the apostle showed them, in the most unaffected manner, that though he was a Jew he was not enslaved to any narrow views, but looked on all mankind as his brethren. **Having determined the times.** That it is God who gave men the earth to inhabit, S. Paul proves from the order of times and places, showing the highest wisdom of the Disposer, superior to all human counsels. **And the bounds of their habitation**—by mountains, seas, rivers, and the like"—WESLEY.

R.V. "And He made of one every nation, having determined their appointed seasons." The R.V., founded on the best MSS., omits the word "blood." "And this seems to bring out more clearly what the apostle desires to dwell upon—the Fatherhood of God. It is not only that men are all of one family, and so all equal in God's eyes. When we read they are 'made of One' we are carried back to the higher thought of the prophet. (Mal. 2. 10.) Have we not all one Father?"—C. B. If this was a difficult conception for a Jew, it was perhaps harder still for an Athenian. The distinction between Greeks and barbarians was radical and ineffaceable, and Athens was the very "eye of Greece."

27. **That they should seek the Lord** (R.V. "God"). **If haply.** "The way is open, God is ready to be found; but He will lay no force upon any man. **That they might feel after Him.** This is in the midst between seeking and finding. Feeling, being the lowest and grossest of all our senses, is fitly applied to that low knowledge of God. **Though He be not far from every one of us**—we need not go far to seek or find Him; He is very near us—in us. It is only perverse reason which thinks He is afar off"—WESLEY. (Rom. 1. 20; ch. 14. 17.)

28. **In Him**—"not in ourselves—**we live, and move, and have our being.** This denotes His necessary, intimate, and most efficacious presence. No words can better express the continual and necessary dependence of all created beings, in their existence and all their operations, on the first and Almighty Cause, which the truest philosophy as well as divinity teaches. **As certain also of your own poets have said.** Aratus, whose words these are, was an Athenian, who lived almost three hundred years before this time. They are likewise to be found, with the alteration of one letter only, in the hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter, or the Supreme Being, one of the purest and finest pieces of natural religion in the whole world of pagan antiquity"—WESLEY.

"'Your own poets.' He regards Athens as the mother of Grecian literature, and calls all Greek poetry their poetry. Aratus was S. Paul's countryman, a native of Cilicia; he flourished about 270 B.C."—W. W. (Col. 1. 17; Heb. 1. 3; Titus 1. 12.)

29. **We ought not to think**—"a tender expression; especially in the first person plural. As if he had said, Can God Himself be a less noble Being than we who are His offspring? Nor does he only here deny that these are like God, but that they have any analogy to Him at all, so as to be capable of representing Him"—WESLEY.

"A man is of more honour than material things, how far above these must the Godhead be. The Athenians, the apostle would teach them, had formed not too high but too low a conception of themselves"—C. B. (Isa. 40. 18.)

30. **The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent** (R.V.). "'The times of ignorance.' What, does he object ignorance to the knowing Athenians? Yes; and they acknowledged it by this very altar. 'God overlooked.' As one paraphrases it, 'The beams of His eye did in a manner shoot over it.' He did not appear to take notice of them, by sending express messages to them, as He did to the Jews. **But now**—this day, this hour, saith S. Paul, puts an end to the Divine forbearance, and brings either greater mercy or punishment. Now, 'He commandeth all men everywhere to repent.' There is a dignity and grandeur in this expression becoming an ambassador from the King of Heaven. And this universal demand of repentance declared universal guilt in the strongest manner, and admirably confronted the pride of the haughtiest Stoic of them all. At the same time it bore down the idle plea of fatality. For how could anyone repent of doing what he could not but have done?"—WESLEY. (Ch. 14. 16; Rom. 3. 25; Luke 24. 47; Titus 2. 11, 12; 1 Pet. 1. 14; 4. 3.)

31. **He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world.** "How fitly does he speak this in their supreme court of justice! **By that Man.** So he speaks, suiting himself to the capacity of his hearers. **Whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead**—God raising Jesus, demonstrated hereby that He was to be the glorious Judge of all. We are by no means to imagine that this was all which the apostle intended to have said. But the indolence of some of his hearers, and the petulancy of others, cut him short"—WESLEY.

The unity of the speech is striking. The inscription of that altar, **To an unknown God**, is the theme of discourse. The apostle gladly allows to the Athenians a certain degree of religious feeling, but he asserts, on the ground of that inscription, that they failed in the true knowledge of God. Therefore he proclaims to them the truth—(1) concerning God (vers. 24, 25); (2) concerning man, as appointed to seek and to find God, and as related to God (vers. 26–28). After the intervening remark (ver. 29), which censured the worship of images as wrong, S. Paul announces,

(3) that the times of ignorance are at an end, and that God requires conversion and faith in the Risen One who is the Saviour and Judge of the world. (Ch. 10. 42; Rom. 2. 16; 14. 10; ch. 2. 24.)

32. **Some mocked** — "interrupting him thereby. They took offence at that which is the principal motive of faith, from the pride of reason. And having once stumbled at this, they rejected all the rest"—WESLEY.

"At this point, but not having come to the conclusion of his discourse, the speaker is interrupted by loud mockery of the resurrection. The other hearers, who did not exactly mock, in a polite manner gave S. Paul to understand that they would hear him again another time, but that they had had enough of it for the present"—L.

33. **So Paul departed**—"leaving his hearers divided in their judgment"—WESLEY.

34. **Among whom was even Dionysius the Areopagite**—"one of the judges of that court; on whom some spurious writings have been fathered in later ages, by those who were fond of high-sounding nonsense"—WESLEY.

"The conduct of S. Paul's hearers at Athens is a picture of the conduct of hearers at the present day—(1) Some mocked; (2) Some said, We will hear thee again of this matter; (3) Some clave to Paul, and believed"—L.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Vers. 1–11. PAUL GOES TO CORINTH — HIS SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY THERE.—1. **Paul departing from Athens.** "He did not stay there long. The philosophers there were too easy, too indolent, and too wise in their own eyes to receive the gospel"—WESLEY.

Corinth. As Athens was the seat of culture, so Corinth was the seat of commerce and of wealth. It was situated on an isthmus which joined Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece. Having been the head of the Achæan league in the final struggle for independence, the ancient city was utterly destroyed; but after lying desolate for a hundred years it was restored by Julius Cæsar. When Achaia became a Roman province, Corinth, becoming the seat of government, soon regained its ancient celebrity in respect of commerce and riches. At the time the apostle arrived, it presented all the characteristics of a great commercial city; a numerous population of varied races, vast wealth, with the luxury and refinement usually accompanying it, and more than ordinary temptations to licentious life.

2. **Claudius**—"the Roman emperor — **had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome**—all who were Jews by birth. Whether they were Jews or Christians, by religion, the Romans were too stately to inquire"—WESLEY.

The occasion is possibly that mentioned by Suetonius (*Claud.* 25), where we read that the Jews, having made tumults at the instigation of one Chrestus, were driven out of the city. The similarity of name may be accidental; on the other hand, discussions among the Jews on the subject of Christianity may have given the pretext for the decree. (Rom. 16. 3; 1 Cor. 16. 19; 2 Tim. 4. 19.)

3. **And wrought.** "By the profits of this labour he maintained himself at Corinth, as he had previously done in Thessalonica"—B. **They were tentmakers by trade**—"for it was a rule among the Jews (and why is it not among the Christians?) to bring up all their children to some trade, were they ever so rich and noble"—WESLEY. (Ch. 20. 34; 1 Cor. 4. 12; 1 Thess. 2. 9; 2 Thess. 3. 8.)

4. **Persuaded** (R.V. *margin*, "Sought to persuade")—**Jews and Greeks.** (Ch. 17. 2.)

5. **And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia.** "Silas seems to have stayed a considerable time at Berea; but Timotheus had come to the apostle while he was at Athens, and been sent by him to comfort and confirm the Church at Thessalonica. (1 Thess. 3. 1–5.) But now at length both Silas and Timotheus came to the apostle at Corinth. **Paul was pressed in spirit**—the more, probably, from what Silas and Timotheus related. Every Christian ought diligently to observe any such pressure in his own spirit, and, if it agree with Scripture, to follow it: if he does not, he will feel great heaviness"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Was constrained by the word, testifying." Being strengthened by the arrival of his companions, and released, by the contributions which they brought (2 Cor. 11. 9), from the necessity of labouring all the week, he was no longer contented with Sabbath ministrations and reasonings out of the Old Testament, but devoted himself to the word, and gave in its fulness his solemn testimony as to the manner in which he had been convinced that Jesus is the Christ. (Ch. 17. 14, 15; Job 32. 18; ch. 17. 3; ver. 2. 8.)

6. **When they opposed themselves.** "The word implies organised opposition"—C. B. **He shook his raiment**—"to signify he would from that time refrain from them; and to intimate that God would soon shake them off as unworthy to be His people. **I am pure**—none can say this but he that has borne a full testimony against sin. **From henceforth I will go to the Gentiles**—but not to them altogether. He did not break off all intercourse with the Jews, even at Corinth. Only he preached no more in their synagogue"—WESLEY. (Ch. 13. 45; 1 Pet. 4. 4; Neh. 5. 13; Matt. 10. 14; ch. 13. 51; Lev. 20. 9, 11, 12; 2 Sam. 1. 16; Ezek. 18. 13; 33. 4; 3. 18, 19; 33. 9; ch. 20. 27; 13. 46; 28. 28.)

7. **He went into the house of one named Justus** — "a Gentile, and preached there; though probably he still lodged with Aquila"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Titus Justus." "He was a proselyte. His house was an appropriate place in

which both Jews and Gentiles might meet"—C. B.

8. **And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue** (R.V.). He is mentioned (1 Cor. 1. 14) as one of the very few whom S. Paul himself had baptized. Perhaps he was converted before Silas and Timothy arrived. **And many hearing**—"the conversation of Crispus, and the preaching of S. Paul"—WESLEY.

9, 10. **Then spake the Lord**—the Lord Jesus. Probably S. Paul had been discouraged at the contrast between his personal resources and the immense forces, both Jewish and Pagan, that were arrayed against him. It is of this time that he reminds the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2. 3), "I was with you in weakness and in fear." **I am with thee**—"therefore *fear not* all the learning, politeness, grandeur, or power of the inhabitants of this city. *Speak and hold not thy peace*, for thy labour shall not be in vain. **For I have much people in this city.** So He calls prophetically them that afterwards believed"—WESLEY. (Ch. 23. 11; Jer. 1. 18, 19; Matt. 28. 20.)

11. **He continued there a year and six months**—"a long time. But how few souls are now gained, in a longer time than this! Who is in the fault? Generally both teachers and hearers"—WESLEY.

"The apostle seems to have wrought many miracles at Corinth (2 Cor. 12. 12); during this period he wrote the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, late in A.D. 52, and the Second Epistle in the spring of 53"—W. W. "Ministers (and other Christians) may be serving Christ, and promoting the great ends of their ministry, by writing good letters, as well as by preaching good sermons"—M. H. During this time, also, the churches in all Achaia (mentioned 2 Cor. 1. 1) may have been founded.

Vers. 12–17. PAUL BROUGHT BEFORE THE PROCONSUL, WHO DECLINES TO TREAT THE CHARGE SERIOUSLY.—12. **When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia**—"of which Corinth was the chief city. This Gallio, the brother of the famous Seneca, is much commended both by him and other writers, for the sweetness and generosity of his temper, and easiness of his behaviour. Yet one thing he lacked! But he knew it not, and had no concern about it"—WESLEY.

13. **Persuaded men to worship God contrary to the Law.** "Probably S. Paul had taught that men were no longer bound to worship God with sacrifices and other bodily services"—B. The Jewish religion was one of those allowed throughout the empire, and the hope of the Jews was, by availing themselves of the inexperience of the newly-arrived proconsul, to induce him to enforce Jewish law on Jews by Roman authority. But the majesty of Roman power was too august to be invoked for such an object. He would not meddle in such matters.

14, 15. **Matter of wrong or wicked lewdness.** (R.V. "wicked villany.") (Ch. 23. 29; 25. 11, 19.) **But if it be**—"he speaks with the utmost coolness and contempt—**a question of names**—the names of the heathen gods were fables and shadows. But the question concerning the name of Jesus is of more importance than all things else under heaven. Yet there is this singularity, among a thousand others, in the Christian religion, that human reason, curious as it is in all other things, abhors to inquire into it"—WESLEY.

Look to it yourselves; I am not minded, etc. (R.V.). "Gallio knows his own business, and will only mind that. He sits to administer Roman law, and this dispute among the Jews at Corinth lies outside his cognisance altogether"—C. B.

17. **All the Greeks took Sosthenes** (R.V. omits "Greeks")—"the successor of Crispus, and probably S. Paul's chief accuser—**and beat him**—it seems, because he had occasioned them so much trouble to no purpose. **Before the judgment seat.** One can hardly think in the sight of Gallio, though at no great distance from him. And it seems to have had a happy effect. For Sosthenes himself was afterwards a Christian (1 Cor. 1. 1)"—WESLEY.

At least, there was a Sosthenes a brother, about four years afterwards, with S. Paul at Ephesus, who was not unknown to the Church at Corinth. S. Luke mentions the incident as the fulfilment of the promise in ver. 10; so little happened to the apostle that the accusers themselves were beaten.

Vers. 18–22. PAUL GOES BY WAY OF EPHESUS AND CÆSAREA TO JERUSALEM, AND THENCE TO ANTIOCH.—18. **Paul continued many days**—"after the year and six months, to confirm the brethren. **Aquila having shaven his head**—as was the custom in a vow. (Ch. 21. 24; Num. 6. 18.) **At Cenchrea**—a seaport town, at a small distance from Corinth"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Having shorn." "Some suppose this refers to Aquila, as being the person last mentioned, but the ordinary interpretation is more natural"—W. W. "S. Paul, though the Apostle of the Gentiles, did not cease to regard the ceremonies of the Jews in things which did not militate against Christian liberty. For some reason, either during sickness or in the midst of his conflict at Corinth, he had taken a vow upon himself of the nature of the Nazarite vow. (Num. 6.) This could only be brought to a fitting close by a journey to Jerusalem to offer up the hair, which was part of the vow to leave uncut. At Jerusalem, when the ceremony was completed, the head was shaven (ch. 21. 24); but it seems to have been allowed to persons at a distance to cut the hair short and to bring that with them to the Temple, and offer it up when the rest was shaven. This appears to be what S. Paul did at Cenchrea, before starting on the voyage to Syria"—C. B. Cenchrea was the eastern harbour of

Corinth whence S. Paul would sail. (Rom. 16. 1.)

19. **To Ephesus**—the capital of Ionia, and by far the busiest and most populous city in Proconsular Asia. Up to this time he had not been permitted by the Holy Spirit to preach in this province.

21. **I must by all means keep the feast at Jerusalem.** "This was not from any apprehension that he was obliged in conscience to keep the Jewish feasts; but to take the opportunity of meeting a great number of his countrymen to whom he might preach Christ, or whom he might further instruct, or free from the prejudices they had imbibed against him"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits the clause and reads, "Taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again." "So he did (ch. 19. 1)"—WESLEY.

22. **And landing at Cæsarea he went up**—"immediately to Jerusalem—**and saluted the Church**—eminently so-called, being the mother-Church of Christian believers; and having kept the feast there, he went down from thence to Antioch"—WESLEY.

"Thus S. Paul concluded his second missionary journey. He had revisited some of the churches founded during his first mission with S. Barnabas, and he had gone through Phrygia and Galatia, breaking new ground, and sowing seed which had grown rapidly; but his chief labours and successes had been in Europe. He was led by the Spirit to select those scenes of labour where success would be of the greatest advantage to the future extension of the Church. Nothing in Church history is more interesting or more instructive than the simple narrative of the adventures of the apostle and his companions at Philippi, at Thessalonica and Berea, at Athens and at Corinth. The journey occupied about three years, A.D. 51–54"—G.

Vers. 23–28. PAUL SETS FORTH ON A THIRD JOURNEY—APOLLOS COMES TO EPHESUS.—23. **He went over the country of Galatia and Phrygia.** "It is supposed, spending about four years therein, including the time he stayed at Ephesus"—WESLEY.

In order—taking no doubt the same direction as on the second journey, and going from city to city and from church to church strengthening (R.V. "stablishing") all the disciples. One may see something of what S. Paul meant by the "care of all the churches." (Gal. 1. 2; 4. 14; ch. 14. 22; 15. 32, 41.)

24. **An eloquent man** (R.V. "a learned man")—**mighty in the Scriptures**—"of the Old Testament. Every talent may be of use in the kingdom of God, if joined with knowledge of the Scriptures and fervour of spirit"—WESLEY.

Alexandria was a place abounding with Jews, and was the chief seat of Jewish culture. (1 Cor. 1. 12; 3. 5, 6; 4. 6; Titus 3. 13.)

25. **This man had been instructed** (R.V.)—"though not perfectly—**in the way of the Lord**—in the doctrine of Christ. **Knowing only the baptism of John**—only what John taught those whom he baptized, namely, to repent and believe in a Messiah shortly to appear"—WESLEY.

Being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus (R.V.). "'He spake'—privately—'and taught'—publicly. Probably he returned to Alexandria soon after he had been baptized by John; and so had no opportunity of being fully acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel, as delivered by Christ and His apostles"—WESLEY.

"This Alexandrian Jew might publish with the utmost accuracy all that John had proclaimed about the kingdom of heaven, and enforce it from his own studies of the Scriptures; he might declare how John had pointed to Jesus, and might even relate much of the words and works of Christ, and show that Christ's life was a testimony that redemption was near"—C. B.

26. **Aquila and Priscilla.** The R.V., following the best MSS., reverses the order of the names, putting the wife before the husband, as in ver. 18. She must have been a person of considerable ability and influence, judging from the manner in which she is repeatedly spoken of. **Explained to him the way of God more perfectly.** "He who knows Christ is able to instruct even those that are mighty in the Scriptures"—WESLEY. (Rom. 12. 11; ch. 19. 3.)

27. **Who greatly helped through grace** (so *margin* in R.V.). "It is through grace only that any gift of anyone is profitable to another. **Them which had believed.** Apollos did not plant, but water. This was the peculiar gift which he had received. And he was better able to convince the Jews than to convert the heathens"—WESLEY.

28. **Mightily convinced the Jews** (R.V. "Powerfully confuted"). The word, however, refers to the character of his reasoning rather than to its effect. **And that publicly**—"in the synagogue. This was an important element in the help which Apollos gave. He was a learned Jew, able to set forth to whole Jewish congregations how their Scriptures were receiving their fulfilment"—C. B. (1 Cor. 3. 16; ch. 9. 22; 17. 3; ver. 5.) "It is instructive that a man so important and influential in the apostolic Church as Apollos should have been indebted to a plain married couple, as Aquila and Priscilla, for his thorough introduction into positive Christian truth. They took notice of him and of his promising gifts, but they also recognised what was defective in him; they initiated him, certainly more highly gifted and more learned than themselves, more thoroughly into the Christian truth; they assisted his coming to Corinth, and so set the

right man in the right place. Two persons, without ecclesiastical position, and especially a woman of real piety and of solid Christian knowledge, have done what, according to our ideas, is the business of theological institutions and ecclesiastical boards—a proof of the universal priesthood of the apostolic times"—L.

CHAPTER XIX.

Vers. 1–12. PAUL AT EPHESUS—GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY.—1. **Having passed through**—"Galatia and Phrygia, which were termed **the upper parts** of Asia Minor"—WESLEY.

R.V. "The upper country." **Certain disciples**—"who had been formerly baptized by John the Baptist, and since imperfectly instructed in Christianity"—WESLEY.

2. **Have ye received the Holy Ghost?**—"the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit as well as His sanctifying graces. **We have not so much as heard**—whether there be any such gifts"—WESLEY. (1 Cor. 1. 12; 3. 5, 6; ch. 8. 16; 1 Sam. 3. 17.)

R.V. "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed? . . . Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given." "These were converts to the Christian faith, believing that Jesus is the Christ; but S. Paul inquires whether they have received the Holy Ghost, whose comforting and sanctifying operations on the minds of men were revealed after the doctrine of Jesus being the Christ was made known. He asks whether they have been acquainted with this revelation, and received this blessing. And this was not all. Extraordinary gifts of the Spirit had been conferred upon the apostles and other disciples after Christ's ascension, and had been communicated on certain occasions since; and he inquires whether they had received these. Observe, reader, though we have now no reason to expect extraordinary gifts, yet there are graces of the Spirit given to all true believers; and it concerns us all to inquire whether we have received these"—B.

3. **Into what were ye baptized?**—"into what dispensation? To the sealing of what doctrine? **Into John's baptism**—we were baptized by John, and believe what he taught"—WESLEY. (Ch. 18. 25.)

4. **John baptized**—"that is, the whole baptism and preaching of John pointed at Christ. After this John is mentioned no more in the New Testament. Here he gives way to Christ altogether"—WESLEY. (Matt. 3. 11; John 1. 15, 27, 30; ch. 1. 5; 11. 16; 13. 24, 25.)

5. **And hearing this they were baptized**—"by some other. **Paul only laid his hands upon them.** They were baptized twice, but not with the same baptism. John did not administer that baptism which Christ afterwards commanded—that is, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"—WESLEY. (Ch. 8. 16.)

6. **They spake with tongues and prophesied**—"a pentecostal outpouring, for as in Jerusalem the same gift produced an effect among Jews gathered from every quarter, so was the Spirit given that like results might follow in this great centre of Gentile activity"—C. B. It will be understood that the gift of prophecy generally implied chiefly, if not exclusively, the power of preaching the word with unction and with success. (Ch. 6. 6; 8. 17; 2. 4; 10. 46.)

9. **The way**—"the Christian way of worshipping God. **He departed**—leaving them their synagogue to themselves. **Discoursing daily**—not on the Sabbath only—**in the school of one Tyrannus**—which we do not find was any otherwise consecrated than by preaching the gospel there"—WESLEY.

R.V "The school of Tyrannus." The teacher was evidently a well-known person; he was probably a Greek sophist or rhetorician, the school being his lecture-hall, but the number of instances in which we meet with Jews bearing Gentile names makes it impossible to decide with certainty. (Ch. 17. 2; 18. 4; 1. 3; 28. 23; 2 Tim. 1. 15; 2 Pet. 2. 2; Jude 10; ch. 9. 2; 22. 4; 24. 14; ver. 23.)

10. **All who desired it among the inhabitants** of the proconsular **Asia** now **heard the word.** "S. Paul had been forbidden to preach it in Asia before (ch. 16. 6); but now the time was come"—WESLEY.

Both Jews and Greeks. "The fame of the apostle's doctrine and miracles brought multitudes to Ephesus from distant parts; and these, being converted, preached the gospel in their own cities, and founded those churches which, the apostle tells the Colossians (Col. 2. 1), had not seen his face in the flesh"—B. (Ch. 20. 31.)

11. **Special miracles**—"wrought in a very uncommon manner"—WESLEY. (Mark 16. 20; ch. 14. 3.)

12. **Handkerchiefs or aprons.** "These persons acted on the popular belief that virtue proceeded from the bodies of our Lord and His apostles, without any act of will. The words of Scripture can hardly be made to countenance this belief, though they recognise it. (Mark 5. 30; Luke 8. 44; ch. 5. 15.) But if these men employed means which were unnecessary and superstitious to display their faith, because of the reality of this faith God did not suffer it to lose its reward"—C. B. (2 Kings 4. 29.) **Evil spirits**—"who also occasioned many of those diseases which yet might appear to be purely natural"—WESLEY.

Vers. 13–22. OVERTHROW OF THE EXORCISTS—PLANS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS.—13. **Exorcists.** "Several of the Jews about this time pretended to a power of casting out devils, particularly by certain arts or charms, supposed to be derived from Solomon. **Undertook to name**—vain undertaking! Satan laughs at all those who attempt to expel him either out of the bodies or the souls of men but by divine

faith. All the light of reason is nothing to the craft and strength of that subtle spirit. His craft cannot be known but by the Spirit of God; nor can his strength be conquered but by the power of faith"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Strolling Jews, exorcists." "Observe that these men, by adopting the method of S. Paul, confessed the failure of their own efforts hitherto"—G. (Matt. 12. 27; Mark 9. 38; Luke 9. 49.)

14. **Seven sons . . . chief of the priests** (R.V. "A chief priest"). "There was no high priest, properly so called, of the name of Sceva. He may have been one of the heads of the twenty-four courses"—W. W.

15. **Jesus I know, and Paul I know** (R.V. *margin*, "Jesus I recognise"). "He acknowledged the power of Jesus, and he knew Paul as commissioned with that power"—W. W.

16. **Overcame them** (R.V. "Mastered both of them"). Two only were actually employed in attempting to eject the evil spirit. The distinction between the spirit and the man as separate persons, though the former had entire control of the latter, is carefully marked in these two verses. The supernatural strength recalls the demoniac of Gadara. (Mark 5. 4.)

17. **This was known** (R.V. "became known"). **And the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified**—"so that even the malice of the devil wrought for the furtherance of the gospel"—WESLEY. (Luke 1. 65; 7. 16; ch. 2. 43; 5. 5, 11.)

18. **Many came, confessing**—of their own accord—**and openly declaring their deeds.** "The efficacy of God's word, penetrating the inmost recesses of their soul, wrought that free and open confession to which perhaps even torments would not have compelled them"—WESLEY.

"A teacher can certainly neither demand nor enforce similar confessions of former abominations; but when they occur voluntarily, from the constraint of conscience and the impulse of the Spirit, they ought to be prudently encouraged, that souls may be brought to true repentance"—L. "It will be observed that the confession spoken of was (1) voluntary, (2) public"—G. (Matt. 3. 6.)

19. **Curious arts**—"magical arts, to which that soft appellation was given by those who practised them. Ephesus was peculiarly famous for these. And as these practices were of so much reputation there, it is no wonder the books which taught them should bear a great price. **Bringing their books together**—as it were by common consent. **Burned them**—which was far better than selling them, even though the money had been given to the poor. **Fifty thousand pieces of silver**—if these pieces of silver be taken for Jewish shekels, the sum will amount to six thousand two hundred and fifty pounds"—WESLEY.

If they were Attic drachmæ, the amount would be about two thousand pounds. It will be remembered that Ephesus was a Greek city, and also that even in Palestine the Jewish coinage was not in common use for purposes of trade. In the sacrifice we must think not only of the cost of the books, but also of the prospect of gain by the use of them.

20. **So powerfully did the word of God grow**—"in extent—**and prevail**—in power and efficacy"—WESLEY.

The word translated **mightily** is a military term, and is applied to the capture of a city by storming it. (Ch. 6. 7; 12. 24.)

21. **After these things were ended.** "S. Paul sought not to rest, but pressed on as if he had yet done nothing. He is already possessed of Ephesus and Asia. He purposes for Macedonia and Achaia. He has his eye upon Jerusalem; then upon Rome; afterwards on Spain. (Rom. 15. 24.) No Cæsar, no Alexander the Great, no other hero comes up to the magnanimity of this little Benjamite. Faith, and love to God and man, had enlarged his heart, even as the sand of the sea"—WESLEY.

He purposed passing through Macedonia and Achaia, visiting the churches which he had founded; and thence to go to Jerusalem, taking with him contributions from those churches for the poor Christians there. (1 Cor. 16. 1–3; Rom. 15. 25; Gal. 2. 1; ch. 20. 22; 18. 21; 23. 11; Rom. 15. 24–28.)

22. **So he sent into Macedonia**—no doubt that the contributions of the churches might be in readiness. He did not consider this care for the financial necessities of the Church beneath the dignity of an apostle. **Stayed in Asia**—where Ephesus was his headquarters.

Vers. 23–41. TUMULT CAUSED BY THE SILVERSMITHS—THEIR CRAFT IN DANGER.—23. **About that way.** The "way" was by this time one of the common titles given to Christian doctrine and worship. (2 Cor. 1. 8.)

24. **Silver shrines**—"silver models of that famous temple which were brought not only by the citizens but by strangers from all parts"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Silver shrines of Diana." **The artificers**—"the other silversmiths"—WESLEY.

Brought no little business (R.V.). (Ch. 16. 16, 19.)

25. **The workmen**—"employed by him and them"—WESLEY.

26. **Almost throughout all Asia**—the proconsular province (see ver. 10). **Saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.** "This manifestly shows that a contrary opinion did then generally prevail, namely, that there was a real divinity in their sacred images, though some of the later heathens spoke of them just as the Romanists do now"—WESLEY.

27. **There is danger, not only that this our craft** (trade) **should come into disgrace, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised.** "No

wonder a discourse should make so deep an impression, which was edged both by interest and superstition. 'The great goddess' was one of the standing titles of Diana. **Her majesty destroyed**—miserable majesty, which was capable of being thus destroyed! **Whom all Asia and the world**—that is, the Roman empire—**worshippeth**—although under a great variety of titles and characters. But the multitude of those that err does not turn error into truth"—WESLEY.

"The Diana or Artemis worshipped at Ephesus was totally distinct from the Greek or Roman goddess. It is supposed to have been a personification of the fruitful and nurturing powers of Nature, and so the image in the temple represented her with many breasts. The temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world. No expense had been spared upon its building, and the munificence of worshippers maintained it in full splendour"—C. B.

28. **Great is Diana of the Ephesians**—"an expressive image of many outbreaks of fanaticism, when under the appearance of zeal for the sanctuary nothing else than selfish motives are concealed"—L.

29. **They rushed with one accord**—"Demetrius and his company—**into the theatre**—where criminals were wont to be thrown to the wild beasts—**dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus**—when they could not find S. Paul. Probably they hoped to oblige them to fight with the wild beasts, as some think S. Paul had done before"—WESLEY.

"The theatre in a Greek city was often used for public business as well as for spectacles. It was a very large public building, open to the sky, and generally semicircular in the interior. The ruins of the theatre of Ephesus still remain, and give evidence that it was a building capable of holding 25,000 or 30,000 people"—C. B. (Rom. 16. 23; 1 Cor. 1. 14; ch. 20. 4; 27. 2; Col. 4. 10; Philem. 24.)

30. **Paul would have gone in to the people**—"being above all fear, to plead the cause of his companions, and prove they are not gods which are made with hands"—WESLEY.

31. **Certain of the principal officers of Asia**—"the Asian priests who presided over the public games, which they were then celebrating in honour of Diana"—WESLEY.

"These officers, called Asiarchs, were persons of wealth, annually appointed to preside over the public worship, and to exhibit games in honour of the gods, at their own expense. In the province of Asia there were ten selected by the cities, and approved by the proconsul. As the priests of Diana took no prominent part against the apostle, while the Asiarchs, officers connected with the old religion, were his friends, it may be inferred (1) that the intelligent part of the community had no zeal in behalf of the old religion; (2) that S. Paul had not so much sought to attack the established system (ver. 37) as to set up another which should quietly displace it"—W. W.

32. **The greater part did not know for what they were come together**—"which is commonly the case in such assemblies"—WESLEY.

33. **And they thrust forward**—'namely, the artificers and workmen—**Alexander**—probably some well-known Christian whom they saw in the crowd. **The Jews pushing him on**—to expose him to the more danger. **And Alexander waving with his hand**—in token of desiring silence—**would have made a defence**—for himself and his brethren"—WESLEY.

This incident is by many otherwise understood. "Alexander, who is perhaps the same mentioned, 2 Tim. 4. 14, was put forward by the Jews as of the same craft, a coppersmith, to disclaim any approbation on their part of S. Paul's proceedings. His appearance was misunderstood, and only served to increase the uproar, for it would appear that the Jews were not more popular at Ephesus than at Rome, Philippi, or Corinth"—W. W.

34. **But when they knew that he was a Jew**—"and consequently an enemy to their worship of images"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Perceived that he was a Jew." "The stamp of his nationality was on his face, and no doubt on his dress also"—C. B. **Great is Diana of the Ephesians.** "This cry was thought a sufficient confutation of S. Paul's doctrine, 'that they are no gods which are made with hands'; thus the most sacred truths are often run down with nothing but noise and clamour"—B.

35. **The town-clerk had appeased the people** (R.V. "had quieted the multitude"). "'The register'—probably the chief governor of the public games"—WESLEY.

"A magistrate of great authority, in a very high and public position"—C. H. **Worshipper of the great goddess** (R.V. "Temple-keeper of the great Diana"). **The image which fell down from Jupiter.** "They believed that very image of Diana, which stood in her temple, fell down from Jupiter in heaven. Perhaps he designed to insinuate as if, falling down from Jupiter, it was not made with hands, and so was not that sort of idol which S. Paul had said were no gods"—WESLEY.

"Many images, having no historical record, were said to have fallen from the sky; the Trojan Palladium, the most ancient Minerva of the Athenian Acropolis, and many others"—G.

37. **Neither robbers of churches** (R.V. "of temples"). The temple at Ephesus had a great treasure-chamber. **Blasphemers of your goddess** (R.V. "our goddess"). "They simply declared the one God, and the vanity of idols in general"—WESLEY.

"The method of exposing to the heathen what is irrational and foolish in their religion in an

offensive and irritating manner has not the precedent of the great apostle for it. His procedure was positive, not negative; the testimony of the true God and of His Christ, the publication of the gospel, is the power of God which illuminates, edifies, and saves"—L.

38. **The law is open** (R.V. "The courts are open"). **There are proconsuls** — "one in every province. There was one at Ephesus"—WESLEY.

"Proconsuls are an imperial institution. In every province like ours there exists such a supreme magistrate, and so there is no fear about obtaining redress for real injuries"—C. B.

39. **In a lawful assembly** (R.V. "In the regular assembly"). "The ordinary city court, as distinguished from the assize of the proconsul"—C. B. "In such a regular assembly as has authority to judge of religious and political affairs"—WESLEY.

40. **To be accused concerning this day's riot** (or rather, as R.V. *margin*, "To be accused of riot concerning this day, there being no cause for it; and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse"). "He wisely calls it by an inoffensive name"—WESLEY.

He hints, however, that others might call it a riot, which might lead to a curtailment of the privileges of the city. With this last and strongest argument he had no difficulty in dismissing the assembly.

CHAPTER XX.

Vers. 1-16. PAUL'S VISIT TO THE CHURCHES IN EUROPE, AND HIS RETURN AS FAR AS MILETUS.—1. **After the tumult was ceased.** "So Demetrius gained nothing; S. Paul remained there till all was quiet"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them." **Departed . . . Macedonia**—in fulfilment of the purpose mentioned in ch. 19. 11. (1 Cor. 16. 5; 1 Tim. 1. 3.)

2. **Gone through those parts**—"visiting the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea"—C. B. **He came into Greece**—"that part of it which lay between Macedonia and Achaia"—WESLEY.

In these two verses S. Luke sums up the history of many months. To understand, even imperfectly, the nature of the business he had to do in Greece, it will be necessary to study the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written from Ephesus, and the Second, which was written from Philippi. The condition of that church had caused him much anxiety, and he evidently feared that his visit to them might not be entirely peaceful and pleasant.

3. **When the Jews laid wait for him** ("On his way to the ship"—WESLEY; R.V. "A plot was laid against him")—**he purposed** (R.V. "determined"). It is probable that he purposed at first to sail direct from Cenchrea to some port of Syria; but being informed of "the lying in wait of the Jews," he suddenly changed his plans. The Jews would find it the easier to find agents for their murderous designs, as it was known that S. Paul carried a considerable sum of money with him, the contribution from Macedonia and Achaia for the poor at Jerusalem. (Ch. 9. 23; 23. 12; 25. 3; 2 Cor. 11. 26.)

4. **To Asia.** "There some of them left him; but Trophimus went with him to Jerusalem (ch. 21. 29), and Aristarchus even to Rome (ch. 27. 2)"—WESLEY. (Ch. 19. 29; 27. 2; Col. 4. 10; ch. 19. 29; 16. 1; Eph. 6. 21; Col. 4. 6; 2 Tim. 4. 12; Titus 3. 12; ch. 21. 29; 2 Tim. 4. 20.)

5. **But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas** (R.V.).

6. **We set sail.** "S. Luke was now with S. Paul again, as we learn from his manner of expressing himself"—WESLEY.

S. Paul had apparently left him at Philippi at his first visit, six years before. **To Troas in five days.** "The voyage *from* Troas to Neapolis, the port of Philippi, had been made before in two days (ch. 16. 11); but then they had a 'straight course,' and therefore a fair wind"—W. W. (Ex. 12. 14, 15; 23. 15; ch. 16. 8; 2 Cor. 2. 12; 2 Tim. 4. 13.)

7. **To break bread**—"that is, to celebrate the Lord's Supper. **Continued his discourse**—through uncommon fervour of spirit"—WESLEY. (1 Cor. 16. 2; Rev. 1. 10; ch. 2. 42, 46; 1 Cor. 10. 16; 11. 20.)

8. **There were many lamps in the room where they were assembled**—"to prevent any possible scandal"—WESLEY. (Ch. 1. 13.)

9. **In the window** (so R.V.). "Doubtless kept open to prevent heat both from the lamps and the number of people"—WESLEY.

Fallen into a deep sleep (R.V. "Borne down with deep sleep"). **Was long preaching** (R.V. "Discoursed yet longer"). **Third loft** (R.V. "story").

10. **Paul fell on him.** "It is observable, our Lord never used this gesture, but Elijah and Elisha did, as well as S. Paul. **His life is in him.** He is alive again"—WESLEY. (1 Kings 17. 21; 2 Kings 4. 34.)

11. **Gone up, and had broken the bread** (R.V.) **and talked a long while.** "The verb implies the talking of persons one with another, the talk of friendly intercourse, as distinguished from the previous discourse on more solemn subjects"—C. B. **So departed**—"without taking any rest at all"—WESLEY.

12. **They brought the young man alive** (R.V. "the lad"). "But, alas! how many of those who have allowed themselves to sleep under sermons, or, as it were, to dream awake, have slept the sleep of eternal death, and fallen to rise no more"—WESLEY.

13. **And we** (R.V. "But we, going before")—"before S. Paul's departure from the congre-

gation—**set sail for Assos—being himself to go on foot** (R.V. 'by land')—that he might enjoy the company of his Christian brethren a little longer; although he had passed the night without sleep, and Assos was of difficult and dangerous access by land"—WESLEY.

He would cut off the angle of a promontory, which the ship must double. The distance is about twenty miles, and, as the R.V. intimates, there may have been means of travelling.

14. **Mitylene**—"was a city and port of the isle of Lesbos, about seven miles distant from the Asiatic coast"—WESLEY.

"The voyage was a coasting voyage, the nights being each spent in some harbour"—C. B.

15. R.V. omits "And tarried at Trogyllium."

16. **For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus** (R.V. "past Ephesus")—which lay on the other side of the bay—**that he might not have to spend time in Asia** (R.V.). "In the midst of a large Christian congregation, like that in Ephesus, causes of delay would have arisen, which in this hurried journey he was anxious to avoid"—C. B. **He hasted to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost**—"because then was the greatest concourse of people"—WESLEY.

"Besides, the feast of Pentecost had been rendered famous among the Christians, by the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit at that time"—B. (Ch. 18. 21; 19. 21; 21. 4, 12; 24. 17; 2. 1; 1 Cor. 16. 8.)

Vers. 17–38. PAUL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS.—17. **And from Miletus** — on the coast of Caria, twenty or thirty miles south of Ephesus. **Sending to Ephesus, he called the elders of the Church** (R.V. "called to him"). "These are called bishops in the twenty-eighth verse, rendered 'overseers' in our translation (A.V.). Perhaps elders and bishops were then the same, or no otherwise different than are the rector of a parish and his curates"—WESLEY.

"It is well established that the titles 'presbyter' and 'bishop' were in the early days of the Church synonymous"—C. B.

18. **Ye know.** "Happy is he who can thus appeal to the consciences of his hearers"—WESLEY.

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time (R.V.). (Ch. 18. 19; 19. 1, 10.)

19. **Serving**—"see the picture of a faithful servant!—**the Lord**—whose the Church is—**with all humility, and with tears, and trials.** These are the concomitants of it. The service itself is described more particularly in the following verse. This humility he recommends to the Ephesians themselves (Eph. 4. 2). His tears are mentioned again (ver. 31); as also, 2 Cor. 2. 4; Phil. 3. 18. These passages, laid together, supply us with the genuine character of S. Paul. Holy tears, from those who seldom weep on account of natural occurrences, are no mean specimen of the efficacy, and proof of the truth, of Christianity. Yet joy is well consistent therewith (ver. 24). The same person may be 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing'"—WESLEY.

With trials that befel me by the plots of the Jews (R.V.). (Ver. 3.)

20. **Kept back nothing** (R.V. "Shrank not from declaring"). "**I have preached**—publicly. **And taught**—from house to house; else he had not been pure from their blood; for even an apostle could not discharge his duty by public preaching only. How much less can an ordinary pastor"—WESLEY. (Ver. 27.)

21. **Repentance towards God**—"the very first motion of the soul towards God is a kind of repentance"—WESLEY.

"The repentance (which they ought to have) towards God, etc."—C. H. This is the summary of the apostolic ministry; he that fully preaches repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ keeps back nothing that is profitable. (Ch. 18. 5; Mark 1. 15; Luke 24. 47; ch. 2. 38.)

22. **Bound by the Spirit**—"strongly impelled by Him"—WESLEY.

The verb implies that he felt there was no freeing himself from the impulse to go; by such a figure he clearly expresses his own feelings on the subject. (Ch. 19. 21.)

23. **Save that**—"only this I know in general—**the Holy Ghost witnesseth**—by other persons. Such was God's good pleasure, to reveal these things to him, not immediately, but by the ministry of others"—WESLEY. (Ch. 21. 4, 11; 1 Thess. 3. 3.)

24. **None of these things move me** (R.V. "But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself"). "It adds great force to this and all the other passages of Scripture, in which the apostles express their contempt of the world, that they were not uttered by persons like Seneca and Antoninus, who talked elegantly of despising the world, in the full affluence of all its enjoyments; but by men who daily underwent the greatest calamities, and exposed their lives in proof of their assertions"—WESLEY.

Finish my course (R.V. omits "with joy"). The metaphor of the race-course was very familiar to S. Paul. Indeed, there are very many turns of thought and of expression, throughout the whole speech, which remind us of similar passages in the Epistles. **The ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus.** The apostle was jealous, with a godly jealousy, of his call to apostolic office and work by Christ Himself. (Ch. 21. 13; Rom. 8. 35; 2 Cor. 4. 16; 2 Tim. 4. 7; ch. 1. 17; 2 Cor. 4. 1; Gal. 1. 1; Titus 1. 3.)

25. **Ye shall see my face no more.** "He wisely inserts this, that what follows might make the deeper impression"—WESLEY.

"The 'all' includes not only the Ephesian presbyters, but also the brethren from Macedonia. The expectation expressed by S. Paul must be regarded as a human inference from the danger which he knew to be before him. If (as many think) he was liberated after his first imprisonment in Rome, he did see some of his present audience again"—C. H. (Ver. 38; Rom. 15. 23.)

26. **I take you to record** (R.V. "I testify unto you"). (Ch. 18. 6; 2 Cor. 7. 2.)

27. **For I have not shunned.** "Otherwise, if any had perished, their blood would have been on his head"—WESLEY. (Ezek. 33. 8; ver. 20; Luke 7. 30; John 15. 15; Eph. 1. 11.)

28. **Take heed therefore.** "I now devolve my care upon you; first **to yourselves**; then **to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers**—for no man or number of men upon earth can constitute an overseer, bishop, or any other Christian minister. To do this is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. **To feed the Church of God**—that is, the believing, loving, holy children of God. **Which He hath purchased**—how precious is it, then, in His sight!—**with His own blood**—for it is the blood of the only-begotten Son of God"—WESLEY. (1 John 1. 7.)

R.V. "Made you bishops," *margin* "overseers." "'Which He purchased.' The verb implies the making of what is bought, peculiarly one's own; it is not the usual word for 'buying'"—C. B. (1 Tim. 4. 16; 1 Pet. 5. 2; 1 Cor. 12. 28; Eph. 1. 7, 14; Col. 1. 14; Heb. 9. 12; 1 Pet. 1. 19; Rev. 5. 9; Heb. 9. 14.)

29. **Grievous wolves** — "from without, namely, false apostles. They had not yet broke in on the Church at Ephesus"—WESLEY.

"He seems to mean those Judaising teachers who had before this time done much mischief at Corinth and elsewhere, but had not yet got any footing at Ephesus"—B. **Not sparing the flock**—as wolves, reckless how the flock was scattered or destroyed. (Matt. 7. 15; 2 Pet. 2. 1.)

30. **Yea, from among yourselves men will arise.** "Such were the Nicolaitanes, of whom Christ complains. (Rev. 2. 6.) **To draw away disciples**—from the purity of the gospel, and the unity of the body"—WESLEY. (1 Tim. 1. 20; 1 John 2. 19.)

31. **Therefore watch, and remember** (R.V. "Wherefore watch ye, remembering"). "The watchfulness which the apostle enjoins is enforced by his example"—C. B. **I ceased not to warn every one, night and day.** "This was watching indeed! Who copies after this example?"—WESLEY.

With tears. (See 2 Cor. 2. 4, and Phil. 3. 18.) "From which we may learn some of the occasions of his tears"—W. W. (Ch. 19. 10.)

32. **The word of His grace.** "It is the grand channel of it, to believers as well as unbelievers. **Who is able to build you up**—to confirm and increase your faith, love, holiness. God can thus build us up, without any instrument. But He does build us up by them. Oh beware of dreaming that you have less need of human teachers after you know Christ than before! **And to give you an inheritance**—of eternal glory—**among all them that are sanctified**—and so made meet for it. A large number of these S. Paul doubtless knew, and remembered before God"—WESLEY.

"'Which is able to build you up.' This must refer to God, and not to the intervening explanatory clause concerning 'the word of God's grace.' It is God who can build up His people, and give them their heavenly inheritance"—C. B. (Heb. 13. 9; ch. 9. 31; 26. 18; Eph. 1. 18; Col. 1. 12; 3. 24; Heb. 9. 15; 1 Pet. 1. 4.)

33. **I have coveted.** "Here the apostle begins the other branch of his farewell discourse, like old Samuel (1 Sam. 12. 3) taking his leave of the children of Israel"—WESLEY. (1 Cor. 9. 12; 2 Cor. 7. 2; 11. 9; 12. 17.)

34. **These hands**—"callous, as you see, with labour. Who is he that envies such a bishop or archbishop as this?"—WESLEY.

Them that were with me. "Aquila and Priscilla were with him at Ephesus, as they had been at Corinth. And when we read of Timothy's many infirmities we may conjecture that there were those among the companions of S. Paul who were less able to work with the hands than he was"—C. B. (Ch. 18. 3; 1 Cor. 4. 12; 1 Thess. 2. 9; 2 Thess. 3. 8.)

35. **I have showed you all things** (R.V. "In all things I gave you an example"). "'I have showed you'—bishops, by my example. 'All things'—and this among the rest. **That thus labouring**—so far as the labours of your office allow you time—**ye ought to help the weak**—those who are disabled by sickness, or any bodily infirmity, from maintaining themselves by their own labour. **And to remember**—effectually, so as to follow it—**the word which He Himself said**—without doubt His disciples remembered many of His words which are not recorded—**It is happier to give**—to imitate God, and have Him, as it were, indebted to us"—WESLEY.

Ye ought. "It is your duty. Benevolence is to be systematic, not sentimental. Its principle is obedience to the Master, and imitation of Him"—W. W. **More blessed.** This is the only word of the Lord Jesus to be found in the New Testament, beyond what is recorded in the Gospels. It recalls the first days of His ministry, the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. (Rom. 15. 1; 1 Cor. 9. 12; 2 Cor. 11. 9, 12; 12. 23; Eph. 4. 28; 1 Thess. 4. 11; 5. 14; 2 Thess. 3. 8.)

36. **He kneeled down and prayed.** "Kneeling marks the special solemnity of the prayer. It has often been remarked that the historian who gives the speech with unusual fulness does not venture to record the prayer"—C. B.

With them all—all joining in the prayer. (Ch. 7. 60; 21. 5.)

37. **They all wept.** "Of old, men, yea the best and bravest of men, were easily melted into tears; a thousand instances of which might be produced from profane as well as sacred writers. But now, notwithstanding the effeminacy which almost universally prevails, we leave those tears to women and children"—WESLEY.

Kissed him. The tense of the verb means, "kissed him repeatedly or in succession." (Gen. 45. 14; 46. 29.)

38. **Sorrowing most for that word which he spake, that they should see his face no more.** "What sorrow shall be in the great day when God shall speak that word to all who are found on the left hand, that they shall see His face no more!"—WESLEY.

"See his face" (R.V. "Behold his face"). **They accompanied him** (R.V. "brought him on his way"). The harbour was some little distance from the town. (Ver. 25.)

CHAPTER XXI.

Vers. 1–14. PAUL SAILS FROM MILETUS, LANDS AT TYRE, AND GOES ON TO CÆSAREA.—1. **And when we were torn away from them**—"not without doing violence both to ourselves and to them"—WESLEY.

Coos (R.V. "Cos"), a small island on the coast. **Rhodes**—a much larger and more important island. **Patara**—a seaport town on the coast of Lycia. Here the coasting voyage ended, and S. Paul's company had to find another and probably a larger vessel.

2. **Finding a ship** (R.V. "Having found a ship crossing . . . set sail").

3. **We landed at Tyre**—"that there should be Christians there was foretold (Ps. 87. 4). What we read in that psalm of the Philistines and Ethiopians also may be compared with ch. 8. 40; 27. 4"—WESLEY.

4. **And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days**—"in order to spend a Sabbath with them. **Who told Paul by the Spirit**—that afflictions awaited him at Jerusalem. This was properly what they said by the Spirit. They themselves advised him **not to go up.** The disciples seemed to understand their prophetic impulse to be an intimation from the Spirit, that S. Paul, if he were so minded, might avoid the danger, by not going to Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

And having found the disciples (R.V.)—the members of the church at Tyre, not simply some Christians who were by chance at Tyre. We read of brethren from Phenicia (ch. 15. 3). **Not go up to Jerusalem** (R.V. "Not set foot in"). (Ver. 12; ch. 20. 23.)

5. **We departed and went our way**—"S. Paul deliberately judging that the sufferings he might meet with would tend to the furtherance of the gospel"—B. **With wives and children**—another intimation of the existence of a settled Christian community in Tyre. (Ch. 20. 36.)

7. **Having finished our voyage**—"from Macedonia (ch. 20. 6). **We came to Ptolemais**—a celebrated city on the sea-coast, anciently called Accos. It is now, like many other once noble cities, only a heap of ruins"—WESLEY.

It has been restored, and is again one of the principal towns on the coast; it is known in modern history as *St. Jean d'Acre*, or more simply *Acre*. **Saluted the brethren.** There was therefore a Christian society here also.

8. **We came to Cæsarea**—"so called from a stately temple which Herod the Great dedicated there to Augustus Cæsar. It was the place where the Roman governor of Judea generally resided and kept his court. **The evangelist, who was one of the seven**—deacons. An evangelist is a preacher of the gospel to those who had never heard it, as S. Philip had done to the Samaritans, to the Ethiopian eunuch, and to all the towns from Azotus to Cæsarea. (Ch. 8. 5, 26, 40.) It is not unlikely he spent the following years preaching in Tyre and Sidon, and the other heathen cities, in the neighbourhood of Galilee, his house being at Cæsarea, a convenient situation for that purpose. **We abode with him.** We lodged at his house during our stay at Cæsarea"—WESLEY. (Eph. 4. 11; 2 Tim 4. 5; ch. 6. 5; 8. 26, 40.)

9. **Four daughters . . . prophesy** — an example of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, in reference to the new dispensation. Doubtless these women were evangelists also. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were frequently communicated to women as well as to men. (Joel 2. 28; ch. 2. 17.)

10. **A certain prophet came.** "The nearer the event was, the more express were the predictions which prepared S. Paul for it"—WESLEY.

Probably the same who foretold the famine (ch. 11. 8); in both cases he warns of approaching trials.

11. **Binding his own feet and hands**—"in the manner that malefactors were wont to be bound when apprehended. **So shall the Jews bind the man whose girdle this is.** S. Paul's bonds were first particularly foretold at Cæsarea, to which he afterwards came in bonds (ch. 23. 33)"—WESLEY.

"Symbolic actions of this kind were usual among the ancient prophets. The prophecy was fulfilled, but not literally; S. Paul was imprisoned or bound by the Romans at the instigation of the Jews. It is unfair to insist upon every verbal expression in brief narrative or prophecy"—W. W. (Ver. 33; ch. 20. 23.)

12. **Both we**—"his fellow-travellers—**and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.** S. Paul knew that this prediction had the force of a command. They did not know this"—WESLEY.

"It must have cost S. Paul much to withstand the solicitations of the brethren at Cæsarea;

but the trial was far greater when his intimate friends and fellow-travellers united their entreaties. He could not but be aware that he was taking them into danger"—W. W.

13. **Breaking my heart**—"for the apostles themselves were not void of human affections. **I am ready not only to be bound, but to die**—and to him that is ready for it the burden is light"—WESLEY.

R.V. "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?" "I am ready." *I* is emphatic. (Ch. 20. 24.)

14. **And when he would not be persuaded.** "This was not obstinacy, but true Christian resolution. We should never be persuaded, either to do evil, or to omit doing any good which is in our power. **Saying, The will of the Lord be done**—which they were satisfied S. Paul knew"—WESLEY.

"Their prayer, and our Lord's in Luke 22. 42, give authority for this use of the petition in the Lord's Prayer"—W. W. (Matt. 6. 10; 26. 42; Luke 11. 2.)

Vers. 15–40. PAUL GOES TO JERUSALEM, IS WELCOMED BY THE CHURCH, ASSAULTED BY THE MOB, RESCUED BY THE ROMAN SOLDIERS.—15. **We took up our carriages**—"or baggage, which probably went by sea before. What they took with them now in particular was the alms they were carrying to Jerusalem"—WESLEY. (Ch. 24. 17.)

16. **Mnason, a Cyprian, an old disciple.** "He was a native of Cyprus, but an inhabitant of Jerusalem, and probably one of the first converts there"—WESLEY.

R.V. "An early disciple." Jerusalem was certain to be full of people at the feast, and by the arrangement made in Cæsarea, S. Paul's party were saved much trouble.

17. **The brethren received us gladly.** "It is not a public reception which is spoken of, for however welcome S. Paul might be to individuals, the heads of the Church were manifestly apprehensive of trouble which might arise from his presence in Jerusalem"—C. B. (Ch. 15. 4.)

18. **Paul went in with us**—"that it might appear, we are all of one mind—**to James**—commonly called the Lord's brother; the only apostle then presiding over the churches in Judea"—WESLEY. (Ch. 15. 13; Gal. 1. 19; 2. 9.)

19. **Saluted them.** This implies that the present was his formal reception by the recognised authorities of the Church. **Declared particularly** (R.V. "Rehearsed one by one"). (Ch. 15. 4, 12; Rom. 15. 18, 19; ch. 1. 17; 20. 24.)

20. **Thou seest, brother** — their anxiety makes itself apparent at once — **how many thousands** (*literally*, "myriads"). Of course the word is used indefinitely. **They are all zealous for the Law.** "For the whole Mosaic Dispensation. How astonishing is this! Did none of the apostles, beside S. Paul, know that this dispensation was now abolished? And if they did both know and testify this, how came their hearers not to believe them?"—WESLEY. (Ch. 22. 3; Rom. 10. 2; Gal. 1. 14.)

21. **They have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest the Jews not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after the customs**—"of the Mosaic Law. And so undoubtedly he did. And so he wrote to all the churches in Galatia, among whom were many Jews. Yea, and S. James himself had long before assented to S. Peter, affirming before all the apostles and all the brethren (ch. 15. 10), that this very Law was 'a yoke which,' said he, 'neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.' Amazing, that they did not know this! or that, if they did, they did not openly testify it, at all hazards, to every Jewish convert in Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

"It was a misunderstanding or a slander, when S. Paul was accused of teaching the Jews of the Dispersion apostasy from Moses. His doctrine was the gospel of grace in Christ Jesus, of salvation in Christ only, and not of the righteousness of the Law. But it was not his business to attack the Law and the Mosaic religion in themselves. He only opposed the tendency which recognised no other form of the Christian Church than the Jewish. He combated the doctrine that the observance of the Law was necessary for salvation"—L. "From anything that appears in the course of this book, this information was incorrect; we do not find S. Paul preaching thus to the Jews. In his epistles, some of which were written before this time, he showed that circumcision and uncircumcision were equally unavailable for the salvation of the soul; and that by the deeds of the Law no man could be justified; but he had not yet said to any Jew, 'Forsake Moses, and do not circumcise your children.' Their ceremonies were useless, but not destructive; they were only dangerous when they depended on them for salvation"—C.

22. **What is it therefore?** "What is to be done? **The multitude must needs come together.** They will certainly gather together in a tumultuous manner, unless they be some way pacified"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits "The multitude must come together." "The rest of the speech gives no hint of a crowd to be gathered, but recommends a policy by which the Jewish Christians might learn gradually in their own visits to the Temple that the apostle against whom they had heard such reports was there himself, taking part in the observance of the Mosaic customs"—C. B.

23. **Therefore**—"to obviate their prejudice against thee—**do this that we say to thee.** Doubtless they meant this advice well; but could S. Paul follow it in godly sincerity? Was not the yielding so far to the judgment of others too great a deference to be paid to any mere man?"—WESLEY.

Four men—"converts to the gospel—**which have a vow upon them**—'of Nazariteship'"—B.

24. **Be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads**—offering the sacrifices which the Law has appointed (Num. 6. 13); it was not uncommon among the Jews for the rich to assist those Nazarites who were poor. **And all will know—that thou thyself walkest orderly, keeping the Law.** "Ought he not, without any reverence to man, where the truth of God was so deeply concerned, to have answered plainly, I do not keep the Mosaic Law; neither need any of you. Yea, S. Peter doth not keep the Law. And God Himself expressly commanded him not to keep it; ordering him to 'go in to men uncircumcised, and to eat with them' (ch. 11. 3), which the Law utterly forbids"—WESLEY.

"Perhaps this advice meant no more than, Show them by such means as are now in thy power, that thou art not an enemy to Moses; that thou dost still consider the Law to be holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good"—C. (Ch. 18. 18.)

25. **As touching the Gentiles.** "The elders, while urging on S. Paul the course they describe in consideration of Jewish prejudices, are careful to distinguish from this, and to confirm the liberty of the Gentiles"—C. B. (Ch. 25. 20, 29.)

26. **Then Paul took the men**—"yielding his own judgment to their advice, which seemed to flow not out of spiritual but carnal wisdom; seeming to be what he really was not; making as if he believed the Law still in force. **Declaring**—giving notice to the priests in waiting, that he designed to accomplish **the days of purification**, till all the sacrifices should be offered, as the Mosaic Law required. (Num. 6. 13)"—WESLEY.

"These brethren of the Church of Jerusalem, to whom S. Paul joined himself, were Christians, and therefore were not clinging to legal observances as of merit towards salvation, but as ordinances of Divine origin, which education had made them careful to observe. The same spirit had actuated the apostle when, on occasion probably of some deliverance, he took a similar vow on himself. (Ch. 18. 18.) The observance of the Ceremonial Law was not needful for the Gentiles; therefore the apostle opposed those who would have enforced it. That Law was abolished for the Jew also in Christ, but it had a Divine warrant for those who had been trained in it from their youth up; therefore all that the apostle here desired was that their true value only should be set upon externals"—C. B. (Num. 24. 18; 6. 13.)

27. **And when the seven days were about to be accomplished**—"when, after giving notice to the priests, they were entering upon the accomplishment of those days; it was toward the beginning of them that S. Paul was seized. **The Jews that were from Asia**—some of those Jews who came from Asia to the feast"—WESLEY.

R.V. "When the seven days were almost completed." (Ch. 24. 18; 26. 21.)

28, 29. **Against the people**—"the Jewish nation—**and the Law**—of Moses—**and this place**—the Temple. **Yea, and hath even brought Greeks into the Temple**—they might come into the outer court. But they imagined S. Paul had brought them into the inner temple, and had thereby polluted it"—WESLEY.

"How great a change since Saul of Tarsus joined with those who charged S. Stephen with speaking blasphemous words against this holy place and the Law. Now a like multitude brings similar charges against him"—C. B. (Ch. 24. 5, 6.) **Trophimus an Ephesian.** "They had seen one Greek with him in the city; and they said that he had brought Greeks into the Temple. This is exactly what happens in times of excitement"—W. W. (Ch. 20. 4.)

30. **Drew him out of the Temple** (R.V. "Dragged him"). **And immediately the gates were shut**—"both to prevent any further violation of the Temple, and to prevent S. Paul's taking sanctuary at the horns of the altar"—WESLEY. (Ch. 26. 21.)

31. **And as they went about to kill him** (R.V. "were seeking to kill him"). "The object was to beat him to death in the crowd, and thus avoid a charge of murder against any individual"—C. B. "It was a rule among the Jews, that any uncircumcised person who came into the inner temple might be stoned without further process. And they seemed to think S. Paul, who brought such in thither, deserved no better treatment. **Word came to the tribune.** A cohort or detachment of soldiers belonging to the Roman legion, which lodged in the adjacent castle of Antonia, were stationed on feast days near the Temple, to prevent disorders. It is evident Lysias himself was not present when the tumult began. Probably he was the oldest Roman tribune (or colonel) then at Jerusalem; and as such he was the commanding-officer of the legion quartered at the castle"—WESLEY.

32. **Ran down unto them** (R.V. "upon them"). The tower was on the height above the Temple. (Ch. 23. 27; 24. 7.)

33. **Then the tribune**—"having made his way through the multitude—**came near and took him.** And how many great ends of Providence were answered by this imprisonment! This was not only a means of preserving his life, after he had suffered severely for worldly prudence, but gave him an opportunity of preaching the gospel safely, in spite of all tumult (ch. 22. 22); yea, and that in those places, to which otherwise he could have had no access (ver. 40). **And commanded him to be bound with two chains**—taking it for granted, he was some notorious offender. And thus the prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled, though by the hands of a Roman"—WESLEY.

Took him (R.V. "Laid hold on him"). **Demanded** (R.V. "Inquired"). "The chief captain did not come to relieve S. Paul, but to find out what was the matter, and seeing the apostle in the hands of a mob, himself arrested him, that he might not be killed without a hearing"—C. B. (Ver. 11; ch. 20. 23.)

35. **When he came upon the stairs.** "The castle Antonia was situate on a rock fifty cubits high, at that corner of the outward temple where the western and northern porticoes joined, to each of which there were stairs descending from it"—WESLEY.

The stairs were not covered in, for S. Paul was able to address the multitude from them.

36. **Away with him.** So in the case of our Lord. (Luke 23. 18; John 19. 15; ch. 22. 22.)

37. **As Paul was about to be brought into the castle.** "The wisdom of God taught him to make use of that very time and place"—WESLEY.

Canst thou speak Greek? (R.V. "Dost thou know Greek?"). Greek was the universal language of educated men. The chief captain believed S. Paul to be the Egyptian who had recently caused so much trouble, and he appears to have heard that impostor could not even speak Greek.

38. **Art thou not that Egyptian**—"who came into Judea when Felix had been some years governor there? Calling himself a prophet, he drew much people after him; and, having brought them through the wilderness, led them to Mount Olivet, promising that the walls of the city should fall down before them. But, Felix marching out of Jerusalem against him, his followers quickly dispersed; many of whom were taken or slain; but he himself made his escape"—WESLEY.

Art not thou then the Egyptian, . . . the four thousand men of the Assassins (R.V.). The Assassins, or Sicarii, were a band of plunderers who infested Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. The name is derived from the small dagger which they wore. (Ch. 5. 36.)

40. **In the Hebrew tongue**—"in that dialect of it which was then commonly spoken at Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

"The apostle, while yet in danger of his life, and after he has been unmercifully treated by the Jews, displays so much composure, moral courage, and love to his people, as to address them without the slightest feeling of bitterness. His heart is humbled; he had formerly been as those Jews now are, and only the grace of Him, who on the cross prayed for his murderers, had changed him"—L.

CHAPTER XXII.

Vers. 1–21. PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE MULTITUDE.—1. **Hear ye now my defence**—"which they could not hear before for the tumult"—WESLEY. (Ch. 7. 2.)

2. **The Hebrew tongue.** "The beckoning with the hand (ch. 21. 40) had procured silence enough for the apostle's first words to be heard, and now they caught the sound of their own dialect"—C. B.

3. **I am verily.** "This defence answers all that is objected (ch. 21. 28). As there, so here also, mention is made of the person of S. Paul (ver. 3); of the people and the Law (vers. 3, 5, 12); of the Temple (ver. 17); of teaching all men (vers. 15–17, 21); and of the truth of his doctrine (ver. 6). But he speaks closely and nervously, in few words, because the time was short. **But brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.** The scholars usually sat on low seats, or upon mats on the floor, at the feet of their masters, whose seats were raised to a considerable height. **Accurately instructed.** The learned education which S. Paul had received was once, no doubt, the matter of his boasting and confidence. Unsanctified learning made his bonds strong, and furnished him with numerous arguments against the gospel. Yet when the grace of God had changed his heart, and turned his accomplishments into another channel, he was the fitter instrument to serve God's wise and merciful purposes, in the defence and propagation of Christianity"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and learned in all that concerned his own people. He makes frequent allusions to Jewish customs, laws, and festivals, and reckons his time by the Jewish calendar"—C. B. (Ch. 21. 39; 2 Cor. 11. 22; Phil. 3. 5; Deut. 32. 3; 2 Kings 4. 38; Luke 10. 39; ch. 5. 34; 26. 5; 21. 20; Gal. 1. 14; Rom. 10. 2.)

4. **And I persecuted this way**—"with the same zeal that you do now—**binding both men and women.** How much better was his condition now he was bound himself"—WESLEY. (Ch. 8. 3; 26. 9–11; Phil. 3. 6; 1 Tim. 1. 13.)

5. **The high priest is my witness**—"is able to testify. **The brethren**—Jews; so this title was not peculiar to the Christians"—WESLEY.

It was twenty years since S. Paul's conversion, but it was not improbable that some members of the Sanhedrim that granted him his commission were still alive. **To bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem** (R.V. "To bring them also which were there unto Jerusalem in bonds"). (Luke 22. 66; ch. 4. 5; 9. 2; 26. 10, 12.)

6. **About noon**—"all was done in the face of the sun—**a great light shone.** By whatever method God reveals Himself to us, we shall have everlasting cause to recollect it with pleasure. Especially when He has gone in any remarkable manner out of His common way, for this gracious purpose. If so, we should often dwell on the particular circumstances, and be ready, on every proper occasion, to recount those wonders of power and love, for the encouragement and instruction of others"—WESLEY. (Ch. 9. 3; 26. 12, 13.)

9. **They did not hear the voice** — "distinctly, but only a confused noise"—WESLEY.

"His companions saw and heard enough to confirm the reality of the vision; but were not permitted to see the person and to hear the words of our Lord"—W. W. (Ch. 9. 7; Dan. 10. 7.)

12. **A devout man according to the Law**—"a truly religious person, and though a believer in Christ, yet a strict observer of the Law of Moses"—WESLEY.

The character given to Ananias was well calculated to conciliate S. Paul's hearers. In ch. 9. 10 he is simply called a certain disciple. (Ch. 9. 17; 10. 22; 1 Tim. 3. 17.)

14. **The God of our fathers.** "Ananias speaks as one Jew to another, both relying on the promises made to the fathers. **See that Just One** (R.V. 'See the Righteous One'), **and hear a voice from His mouth.** Jesus is called 'the Holy One and the Just' (ch. 3. 14), and 'the Just one' (ch. 7. 52), in both which places the R.V. reads 'Righteous,' thus connecting all the passages with 1 John 2. 1, 'We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous'"—C. B. (Ch. 3. 13; 5. 30; 9. 15; 26. 16; 1 Cor. 9. 1; 15. 18; 3. 14; 7. 52; 1 Cor. 11. 23; Gal. 1. 12.)

16. **Be baptized, and wash away thy sins.** "Baptism, administered to real penitents, is both a means and a seal of pardon. Nor did God ordinarily in the primitive Church bestow this on any, unless through this means"—WESLEY.

"Take now the profession of Christ's faith most solemnly upon thee, by being baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Let this washing of thy body represent to thee the washing away of thy sins; and know that this washing away of sins can be received only by invoking the name of the Lord"—C. (Ch. 2. 38; Heb. 10. 22; ch. 9. 14; Rom. 10. 13.)

17. **When I was returned to Jerusalem**—"from Damascus—**and was praying in the Temple**—whereby he shows that he still paid the Temple its due honour, as the house of prayer. **I was in a trance**—perhaps he might continue standing all the while, so that any who were near him would hardly discern it"—WESLEY.

We learn from Gal. 1. 18 that three years had elapsed between the conversion of Saul and this visit to Jerusalem. It must have been the same visit which is recorded in ch. 9. 26, etc. (2 Cor. 12. 2.)

18. "**And I saw Him**, Jesus, **saying to me, Depart quickly out of Jerusalem**—because of the snares laid for thee; and in order to preach where they will hear"—WESLEY.

They will not receive thy testimony (R.V. "receive of thee testimony"). "The apostle, as appears from the next verse, considered that he would be a messenger specially likely to persuade and convince his countrymen of the truths of the Christian faith. The Lord, in the vision, points out that this will not be so"—C. B. (Ver. 14; Matt. 10. 14.)

19. **And I said.** "It is not easy for a servant of Christ, who is himself deeply impressed with Divine truths, to imagine to what a degree men are capable of hardening their hearts against them. He is often ready to think with S. Paul, it is impossible for any to resist such evidence. But experience makes him wiser, and shows that wilful unbelief is proof against all truth and reason"—WESLEY.

Lord, they know (R.V. "they themselves know")—"that is, Lord, my former zeal against those who believed in Thee is so well known to them all, that they must be convinced that it is upon certain and irresistible grounds that I now am become a preacher of the faith I formerly destroyed"—B. (Ver. 14; ch. 8. 3; Matt. 10. 17.)

20. **When the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed** (R.V. "Stephen, Thy witness") **I also was standing by.** "A real convert still retains the remembrance of his former sins. He confesses them, and is humbled for them, all the days of his life"—WESLEY. (Ch. 7. 58.)

21. **But He said to me**—overruling my plea by the renewal of His charge—**Depart**—reason no further on this subject, but go thy way immediately according to My direction. Accordingly we find, from Gal. 1. 18, that he was only fifteen days in Jerusalem at that visit. **For I will send thee far hence** (R.V. "send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles"). He had kept back the word, which he knew would rouse their anger, as long as ever he could; now he is interrupted at once, and his end would have been the same as S. Stephen's, had he not been under the protection of the Roman officer. The salient point of the enmity against him was not the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, but the admission of the Gentiles to equal privilege with the Jews themselves.

Vers. 22-30. PAUL ESCAPES SCOURGING BY ASSERTING HIS PRIVILEGE AS A CITIZEN OF ROME, AND IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM. — 22. **And they heard him to this word**—"till he began to speak of his mission to the Gentiles; and this, too, in such a manner as implied that the Jews were in danger of being cast off"—WESLEY.

"No sooner did he mention this, than the multitude, especially such of them as had come from Asia, became perfectly enraged" — B. (Ch. 26. 36; 25. 24.)

23. **They rent their garments**—"in token of indignation and horror at this pretended blasphemy"—WESLEY.

R.V. "They threw off their garments." "Perhaps, as in the case of S. Stephen, that they might be ready to stone him"—B. **And cast dust into the air**—"through vehemence of rage, which they knew not how to vent"—WESLEY.

24. **The chief captain commanded**—"probably he understood nothing of what S. Paul had been saying, and would conclude, from the outbreak of popular rage, that there was some serious charge against him, which he would most easily ascertain by subjecting the prisoner to torture till he should confess"—C. B. "In modern history, the euphemism for torture was 'to put to the question'"—W. W.

25. **And as they**—"the soldiers ordered by the tribune—**were binding him with thongs.** A freeman of Rome might be bound with a chain, and beaten with a staff; but he might not be bound with thongs, neither scourged, nor beaten with rods"—WESLEY.

R.V. "When they had tied him up with the thongs." **Paul said to the centurion**—"the captain who stood by to see the orders of the tribune executed"—WESLEY.

A man that is a Roman. It was an offence, punishable with the severest penalties, for a man to claim to be a Roman citizen, if he were not. (Ch. 16. 37.)

26. **Consider what thou art about to do; for this man is a Roman.** "Yea, there was a stronger reason to consider; for this man was a servant of God"—WESLEY.

The R.V., following the oldest MSS., omits one word, and makes the centurion's question more blunt and military, "What art thou about to do?" There were various laws for the protection of Roman citizens; it was forbidden under heavy penalty, by the *Lex Poreia*, to scourge them.

28. **With a great sum obtained I this citizenship** (R.V.). "I" is emphatic. "I know not how you became so; *for my part*, I had to pay well for my citizenship." "He insinuates that it was not likely S. Paul could have commanded such a sum. Dio Cassius informs us that, in the reign of Claudius, the freedom of the city, and even the great offices of the State, were commonly sold by Messalina. **But I was free born.** The apostle meets the implied doubt of the chief captain. The original implies superiority to a man whose citizenship was only by purchase"—W. W. "Free born—not barely as being born at Tarsus; for this was not a Roman colony. But probably either his father or some of his ancestors had been made free of Rome for some military service. We learn hence, that we are under no obligations, as Christians, to give up our civil privileges (which we are to receive and prize as the gift of God) to every insolent invader. In a thousand circumstances, gratitude to God, and duty to men, will oblige us to insist upon them; and engage us to strive to transmit them improved, rather than impaired, to posterity"—WESLEY.

Tarsus was a place of considerable importance; it was renowned under the early Roman emperors as a place of education; it had also been constituted by Augustus a free city, having its own laws and magistrates. To this S. Paul referred when he said to the chief captain that he was a citizen of no mean city. That he had also a right to call himself a citizen of Rome was quite another matter.

29. **Then straightway they departed.** Very graphic; as if on hearing this, without waiting for orders, the soldiers made off as from a danger.

30. **He loosed him** ("from his bands" is omitted in R.V.). "The meaning of this is, that he placed him before the Council, not as a prisoner of his; he set him at liberty as far as he was concerned; and he gave him up to be judged by the Council as a court of inquiry; taking his own position, evidently where he could observe the proceedings, and rescue his fellow-citizen from any illegal violence"—W. W.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Vers. 1-11. A TUMULT IN THE SANHEDRIM—PAUL AGAIN RESCUED BY THE SOLDIERS.—1. **And Paul, earnestly beholding the Council**—"professing a clear conscience by his very countenance; and likewise waiting to see whether any of them was minded to ask him any question—**said, I have lived in all good conscience before God till this day.** He speaks chiefly of the time since he became a Christian; for none questioned him concerning what had been before. And yet even in his unconverted state, although he was in error, yet he had acted from conscience. **Before God**—whatever men may think or say of me"—WESLEY.

"I have lived." "The word signifies the discharge of the duties of a citizen. He means that he had always acted conscientiously as a member of the commonwealth of Israel, both natural and spiritual"—W. W. (Ch. 24. 16; 1 Cor. 4. 4; 2 Cor. 1. 12; 4. 2; 2 Tim. 1. 3; Heb. 13. 18.)

2. **Smite him on the mouth**—"perhaps on the tacit pretext that he had no right to speak yet. This punishment is accounted the greatest disgrace, and is generally inflicted in the East with the high-heeled slipper"—W. W. (1 Kings 22. 24; Jer. 20. 2; John 18. 22.)

3. **Then said Paul**—"being carried away by a sudden and prophetic impulse—**God is about to smite thee, thou whited wall**—fair without; full of dirt and rubbish within. And he might well be so termed, not only as he committed this outrage, while gravely sitting on the tribunal of justice; but also as, at the same time that he stood high in the esteem of the citizens, he cruelly defrauded the priests of their legal subsistence; so that some of them even perished for want. And God did remarkably smite him; for, about five years after this, his house being reduced to ashes, in a tumult begun by his own son, he was besieged in the royal palace, where, having hid himself in an old aqueduct, he was dragged out, and miserably slain"—WESLEY.

"Considering the provocation received, and the expression used by the apostle, we may suppose that he spoke under a feeling of resentment. More edification may be derived from observing how speedily and gracefully he recovers his equanimity, than from attempting to argue that he was altogether exempt from human weakness"—W. W. (Lev. 19. 25; Deut. 25. 1, 2; John 7. 51.)

5. **I was not aware, brethren, that it was the high priest.** "He seems to mean, I did not advert to it in the prophetic transport of my mind. But he does not add, that his not adverting to it proceeded from the power of the Spirit coming upon him, as knowing they were not able to bear it. This answer admirably shows the situation of mind he was then in, partly with regard to the bystanders, whom he thus softens, adding also the title of 'brethren,' and justifying their reproof by the prohibition of Moses; partly with regard to himself, who, after that singular transport subsided, was again under the direction of the general command"—WESLEY.

"Several explanations have been given of this statement. Some think that S. Paul, from defect of sight, with which he is supposed to have been afflicted, could not distinguish that the speaker was the high priest; others, that the high priest was not in his official position as president of the court; or that, owing to the troublous times, and S. Paul's recent arrival in Jerusalem, he was not aware who was high priest; or that he was speaking in irony, and meant to imply that the action of the judge was of such a character that no one would have supposed him to be high priest; or that he meant by 'I wist not,' that for the moment he was not thinking of what he was saying. It is most consonant with S. Paul's character to believe that either his own physical deficiency, or some lack of the usual formalities or insignia, made him unable to distinguish that he who had given the order was really the high priest"—C. B. Note that this statement, though it has caused much discussion since, was not questioned at the time. (Ch. 24. 17; Ex. 22. 28; 2 Pet. 2. 10; Jude 8.)

6. **I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee** (R.V. "the son of Pharisees"); **for the hope of the resurrection of the dead am I called in question.** "So he was in effect, although not formally or explicitly"—WESLEY.

"The whole teaching of the Christian Church rested upon the truth of the resurrection; and therefore with much wisdom, and without any thought of deception, he cries, 'I am a Pharisee, and for teaching the doctrine of the resurrection, which they hold, I am now called in question'"—C. B. (Ch. 26. 5; Phil. 3. 5; ch. 24. 15, 21; 26. 6; 28. 20.)

8. **The Sadducees.** "As we meet them in the New Testament, they are mainly members of the priestly order, and appear to have accepted only the written Law, as distinct from tradition. At the same time they denied the existence of any spiritual beings except God Himself. In political matters they were on the side of Rome, and are therefore found uniting at times with the Herodians"—C. B. **The Pharisees confess both**—"both the resurrection and the existence of angels and separate spirits"—WESLEY. (Matt. 22. 23; Mark 12. 18; Luke 20. 27.)

9. **The scribes of the Pharisees' side** (R.V. "Some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part"). "Every sect contains both learned and unlearned. The former used to be the mouth of the party. **If a spirit**—S. Paul in his speech from the stairs had affirmed that Jesus, whom they knew to have been dead, was alive; and that He had spoken to him from heaven, and again in a vision. So they add nothing; only they construe it in their own way, putting **an angel**, or 'spirit,' for Jesus"—WESLEY.

The latter part of the verse in R.V. reads, "And what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?"—words calculated to exasperate the Sadducees. (Ch. 25. 25; 26, 31; 22. 7, 17, 18; 5. 39.)

10. **Pulled in pieces of them.** "The Pharisees had constituted themselves his protectors, and so the possession of his person had become the object of a struggle between them and their opponents"—C. B. "What must the heathen have thought, when he saw this assembly of chief priests, scribes, and rulers of Israel, forgetful of their sacred character, and carried away by such unbridled rage in a religious contest, as the Roman senators and magistrates would have been ashamed of, in their most eager competition for authority"—B.

11. **And the night following, the Lord Jesus.** "What S. Paul had before purposed in spirit (ch. 19. 21), God now in due time confirms. Another declaration to the same effect is made by an angel of God (ch. 27. 23); and from the twenty-third chapter the sum of this book turns on the testimony of S. Paul to the Romans. How would the defenders of S. Peter's supremacy triumph, could they find but half as much ascribed to him! **Be of good courage, Paul.** As he laboured under singular distresses and persecutions, so he was favoured with extraordinary assurances of the Divine assistance. **Thou must testify.** Particular promises are usually given when all things appear desperate. **At Rome also.** Danger is nothing in the eyes of God; all hindrances further His work. A promise of what is afar off implies all that necessarily lies between. S. Paul shall testify at Rome; therefore he shall come to Rome, therefore he shall escape the Jews, the sea, the viper"—WESLEY.

This encouragement was given in the time of depression and loneliness. So at Corinth, "Be not afraid, but speak, for I am with thee" (ch. 18. 9), and in the height of the tempest at sea, "Fear not; thou must stand

before Cæsar" (ch. 27. 24). It was probably now for the first time that he was made aware that he was not to die at Jerusalem, as he probably expected (ch. 21. 13), but that he had to go to Rome.

Vers. 12-35. ON THE DISCOVERY OF A PLOT TO MURDER HIM, PAUL IS SENT TO CÆSAREA WITH A STRONG ESCORT.—12. **Some of the Jews bound themselves.** "Such execrable vows were not uncommon among the Jews; and if they were prevented from accomplishing what they had vowed, it was an easy matter to obtain absolution from their rabbis"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits "Some of." **When it was day.** "While S. Paul was receiving comfort from the Lord, the Jews were plotting to secure his destruction. Their plans were ready by the next day"—C. B. "How much trouble do people take to hinder the kingdom of God! How much good might have been effected, if they made the same sacrifices for its promotion"—L. (Vers. 21, 30; ch. 25. 3.)

14. **The chief priests and elders**—"who were of the sect of the Sadducees, and S. Paul's greatest enemies"—B. **That we will eat nothing** (R.V. "To taste nothing"). "The high priest, who, according to his office, should bear holiness upon his forehead, and light and justice on his breast, is turned into a ringleader of sworn assassins. This is the fruit of false religious zeal, in an evil and unregenerate heart"—L.

15. **Now therefore ye**—"which they never scrupled at at all, as not doubting but they were 'doing God service'"—WESLEY.

Or ever he come near. They were prepared to attack the escort which would bring S. Paul down from the castle, and, with the probable loss of other lives, to take him from the midst of them, and to kill him. Thus the chief priests and elders would not appear at all concerned in the murder.

16. **Paul's sister's son.** "We have no other mention of the family of S. Paul in the history. It is not probable that the sister and her son were settled inhabitants of Jerusalem, or we should have heard of them in connection with some of his visits"—C. B. And if he had been a well-known resident, his relationship to S. Paul would probably have been known also; in which case he would not have heard of the conspiracy.

17. **And Paul.** "Though he had an express promise of it from Christ, was not to neglect any proper means of safety"—WESLEY.

This principle is of very wide application, in reference to things temporal and spiritual. S. Paul was in the hands of Roman officers who cared more for the safety of a Roman citizen than for the whole Jewish Council; hence he had no difficulty in securing the good offices of one of the centurions.

18. **Paul the prisoner**—a name which he was often afterwards to apply to himself. (See Eph. 3. 1; 4. 1; Philem. 1. 9, etc.)

19. **And the tribune taking him by the hand**—"in a mild, condescending way. Lysias seems to have conducted this whole affair with great integrity, humanity, and prudence"—WESLEY.

Went with him aside privately and asked him (R.V. "Going aside, asked him privately").

20. **As though they would enquire** (R.V. "As though thou wouldst enquire").

23. **Two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea**—"the residence of the Roman governor, and the seat of the civil and military power. The two hundred soldiers mentioned were regular infantry; the two hundred spearmen were probably light armed troops. The strength of the escort and the secret manner in which it departed, show Lysias's sense of the desperate character of a band of Jewish fanatics, which is entirely in accordance with what we read of them in Josephus and others"—W. W.

24. **Provide beasts**—"if a change should be necessary—**to set Paul on.** "So we read of his riding once; but not by choice"—WESLEY.

Felix the governor—"Antonius Felix made procurator of Judea and Samaria, together with Cumanus, A.D. 48. Upon the banishment of Cumanus in 51, he was sole procurator"—W. W.

26. **Claudius Lysias.** Claudius was the Roman name, probably assumed when he bought his citizenship. Lysias was his Greek name. **Most excellent.** This epithet is applied to Felix by Lysias and by the orator Tertullus, and by S. Paul to Porcius Festus. It was the appropriate address to a magistrate. S. Luke, in the introduction of his Gospel, uses the same term in reference to Theophilus.

27. **Then came I with an army** (R.V. "When I came upon them with the soldiers"). **Having learned that he was a Roman**—"true; but not before he rescued him. Here he uses art"—WESLEY.

"Lysias not only conceals the binding of S. Paul, and the command to scourge him, but represents the rescue as the effect of his own zeal in vindicating the safety and honour of a Roman citizen. This is just what we might expect from a clever worldling, who had more regard for the favour of his superiors than for the truth"—W. W.

29. **Accused of questions of their Law**—whether he had profaned the Temple (ch. 24. 6), and whether he held orthodox views on the resurrection (ch. 23. 6-9). Lysias would look on all this much as Gallio did. But Jerusalem was a very different place from Corinth.

30. **That the Jews laid wait** (R.V. "That there would be a plot against the man").

31. **The soldiers brought him by night to Antipatris**—"but not the same night they set out; for Antipatris was about thirty-eight of our miles north-west of Jerusalem. Herod the Great rebuilt it, and gave it this name, in honour of his father Antipater. Cæsarea was

near seventy miles from Jerusalem, about thirty from Antipatris"—WESLEY.

"Starting by night, they must have halted at Nicopolis, and reached Antipatris in the course of the day. This forced march shows the extent of Lysias's fears"—W. W.

32. **They left the horsemen to go with him.** Now that they were so far from Jerusalem, and in no fear of a surprise, seventy horsemen were guard enough for the remainder of the way. But it may give us some idea of the dangerous state of the country when we consider that the chief captain thought it needful to send with this one prisoner a guard of four hundred and seventy soldiers.

33. **And they, when they came** (R.V.), viz. the horsemen. The promise of heavenly protection in ver. 11 was very speedily fulfilled. However remorseless the enmity against the apostle, however numerous the conspirators, however well contrived their plots, yet the almighty protection of the Redeemer conducts His servant in safety.

34. **And when he had read it** (R.V). **What province?** The first question which a Roman governor would ask, in order to avoid trespassing on another jurisdiction. (Luke 23. 6, 7.)

35. **I will hear thee** (R.V. "I will hear thy cause"). The word means the complete and thorough hearing of a case. Probably Felix had given a similar promise on previous occasions. **When thine accusers are also come**—assuming that they would appear, since they had been bidden to do so by the chief captain, as he had explained in his letter. Of course, Lysias had not said a word of this to the Jews when his letter was written, but intended to do so when S. Paul was safely on his road to Cæsarea. **Herod's judgment hall** (R.V. "Herod's palace"). "This was a palace and a court, built by Herod the Great. Probably some tower belonging to it might be used as a kind of state prison"—WESLEY. (Mark 27. 27.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

Vers. 1-9. PAUL'S ACCUSERS ARRIVE—ORATION OF TERTULLUS.—1. **Ananias**—"who would spare no trouble on this occasion—**with several of the elders**—members of the Sanhedrim"—WESLEY.

A certain orator (R.V. "And with an orator, one Tertullus"). (Ch. 23. 2, 30, 35; 25. 2.)

2. **Tertullus began**—"a speech how different from S. Paul's, which is true, modest, solid, and without paint. Felix was a man of the most infamous character, and a plague to all the provinces over which he presided"—WESLEY.

He was a freedman of the Emperor Claudius, and his brother Pallas was Nero's favourite. Tacitus says that Felix exercised the power of a prince with the spirit of a slave. Tertullus was apparently a Roman, and was chosen and employed because of his acquaintance with Roman law, and his ability to put the case in such a way as to make it seem that S. Paul was dangerous to the Roman power. Of course, he speaks in the name of his clients.

3. **With all thankfulness.** "In this oration almost every word is false,—the encomium on the government of Felix, the accusation of S. Paul, and the declaration of a lawful intention in what they had done and attempted"—B.

4. **But that I may not trouble thee any further**—"by trespassing either on thy patience or modesty. The eloquence of Tertullus was as bad as his cause: a lame introduction, a lame transition, and a lame conclusion! Did not God confound the orator's language?"—WESLEY.

5. **A pestilent fellow**—"or rather, a 'pestilence' or 'plague,' as the word signifies, a man infecting others with pernicious principles, and spreading mischief wherever he goes"—B. **A mover of sedition** (R.V. "insurrection"). In coming to particular charges the orator puts that foremost which would most touch the Roman power. **Among all the Jews throughout the world.** It will be remembered that S. Paul had been assailed at a time when Jerusalem was full of strangers come to the feast. From these visitors particulars had doubtless been gathered about the apostle's troubles at Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, and elsewhere, which had repeatedly brought him under the notice of the tribunals. "The world" at this time meant the Roman empire. **The sect of the Nazarenes**—a term of reproach—followers of Him of Nazareth. **Ringleader** (*lit.* "front-rank man"). (Luke 23. 2; ch. 6. 13; 16. 20; 17. 6; 21. 28; 1 Pet. 4. 12, 15.)

6. **Gone about to profane the Temple** (R.V. "who moreover assayed"). The reference is to Trophimus the Ephesian, whom S. Paul was falsely represented to have brought into the Temple. **Whom we took.** Here R.V., following nearly all the oldest MSS., omits part of ver. 6, the whole of ver. 7, and part of ver. 8, and reads, "On whom also we laid hold; from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge." (Ch. 21. 28.)

9. **The Jews also assented** (R.V. "joined in the charge, affirming"). "Thus after a fawning preface, Tertullus prefers charges against S. Paul for which there was not the shadow of foundation, except that he was a leading person among the Nazarenes or Christians. For that he had moved the Jews to sedition against the Government, or that he went about to profane the Temple, was utterly false"—B.

Vers. 10-27. PAUL REPLIES TO THE ACCUSATION—FELIX DEFERS JUDGMENT.—10. "**Knowing for several years thou hast been a judge over this nation**—and so not un-

acquainted with our religious rites and customs, and consequently more capable of understanding and deciding a cause of this nature. There was no flattery in this; it was a plain fact. He governed Judea six or seven years. **I answer for myself**—and it may be observed his answer exactly corresponds with the three articles of Tertullus's charge: sedition, heresy, and profanation of the Temple. As to the first, he suggests that he had not been long enough at Jerusalem to form a party and attempt an insurrection, for it was but twelve days since he came up thither, five of which he had been at Cæsarea (ver. 1), one or two were spent in his journey thither, and most of the rest he had been confined at Jerusalem; and he challenges them, in fact, to produce any evidence of such practices (vers. 11–13). As to the second, he confesses himself to be a Christian, but maintains this to be a religion perfectly agreeable to the Law and the Prophets, and therefore deserving a fair reception (vers. 14–16). And as for profaning the Temple, he observes that he behaved there in a most peaceful and regular manner, so that his innocence had been manifest even before the Sanhedrim, where the authors of the tumult did not dare to appear against him"—WESLEY.

The governor had beckoned. The original is still more graphic, "The governor having nodded to him."

11. **Because that thou mayest understand** (R.V. "Seeing that thou canst take knowledge"). "The apostle means that it was easy to find evidence about all that had happened in such a short space of time"—C. B. **Yet but twelve days** (R.V. "Not more than twelve days"). The time may be accounted for thus: the day of S. Paul's arrival, the interview with S. James on the second day, five days may be given to the separate life in the Temple during the vow, then the hearing before the Council, next day the conspiracy, the tenth day S. Paul reached Cæsarea, and on the thirteenth day (which leaves five days, as Jews would reckon, from the conspiracy to the hearing in Cæsarea) S. Paul is before Felix. (Ver. 27; ch. 21. 26.)

12. **They neither found me.** Charged with sedition against the Government, and with an attempt to pollute the Temple, he denies both charges, and shows that no attempt has been made to adduce the slightest evidence of either. (Ch. 25. 8; 28. 17.)

14. **After the way which they call heresy.** "This appellation S. Paul corrects. Not that it was then an odious word, but it was not honourable enough. A party or sect (so that word signifies) is formed by men; this way was prescribed by God. The apostle had now said what was sufficient for his defence; but, having a fair occasion, he makes an ingenious confession of his faith in this verse, his hope in the next, and his love in the seventeenth. **So worship I the God of my fathers.** This was a very proper plea before a Roman magistrate, as it proved that he was under the protection of the Roman laws, since the Jews were so. Whereas, had he introduced the worship of new gods, he would have forfeited that protection. **Believing all things which are written**—concerning the Messiah"—WESLEY.

"After the way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers" (R.V.). The apostle refers to the accusation, and repeats the word of Tertullus. He acknowledges that he has joined what they call a sect, but declares that by so doing he has not in any sense forsaken "the God of his fathers," literally the ancestral God, but still believes in all the ancient faith of his nation. This was a fair plea before a Roman governor. (Amos 8. 14; ch. 9. 2; 2 Tim. 1. 3.)

15. **And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow** (R.V. "look for"). Both parties of the Sanhedrim probably were present. The apostle appeals to his accusers as holding the doctrine of the resurrection, knowing that it was held by the great majority of the nation whom they professed to represent. **Both of the just and unjust.** "In a public court this was particularly proper to be observed"—WESLEY.

And, considering the character of the judge, it was a word fitly spoken. Probably it was the influence which accompanied and followed that word which prepared the procurator for a serious conversation on the judgment to come. (Ch. 23. 6; 26. 6, 7; 28. 20; Dan. 12. 2; John 5. 28, 29.)

16. **For this cause**—"with a view to this"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Herein"—"on this account, because I cherish this hope"—W. W. **I also exercise myself**—"as well as they"—WESLEY.

"Comp. 2 Cor. 5. 9, where the same conclusion is drawn from the same premises"—C. H. "'I exercise myself'—I make it my constant business, and govern myself by this intention; I discipline myself, and live by rule (those that did so were called ascetics, from the word here used), abstain from many a thing which my inclination leads me to, and abound in all the exercises of religion that are most spiritual, with this in my eye, that I may keep peace with my conscience. I am as careful not to offend my conscience, as I am not to offend a friend I daily converse with; nay, as I am not to offend a magistrate to whom I am accountable; for conscience is God's deputy in my soul"—M. H. (Ch. 23. 1.)

17. **I came to bring alms to my nation.** "This is the only mention in the Acts of this collection, of which we read repeatedly in the Epistles. The allusion to it here is a striking undesigned coincidence"—C. H. **And offerings**—by assisting certain Nazarites to perform their vow according to the Law. (Ch. 11. 29, 30; 20. 16; Rom. 15. 25; 2 Cor. 8. 4; Gal. 2. 10.)

18. **Whereupon** (R.V. "Amidst which they found me"). "So that it was very unreason-

able (1) to accuse him as an enemy of their nation, when, after long absence, he came to bring alms to it, money which he had collected among his friends for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem; and (2) to accuse him of having profaned the Temple, when he brought offerings to the Temple, and was found purifying himself therein according to the Law, and that in a very quiet and orderly manner"—B. (Ch. 21. 26, 27; 26. 21.)

19. **Who ought to have been** (R.V. "But there were certain Jews from Asia—who ought," etc.). "And they who found me were not these men, but certain Jews from Asia, etc."—W. W. "But the world never commits greater blunders, even against its own laws, than when it is persecuting the children of God"—WESLEY. (Ch. 23. 30; 25. 16.)

20. **Or else let these same here say.** The Greeks from Asia, who were the only witnesses against him in reference to what took place in the Temple, had failed to appear, and S. Paul knew that Felix would not be likely to condemn him on that point in the absence of their testimony. And he was willing to invite the testimony of the members of the Sanhedrim themselves as to his conduct before them.

21. **Unless** they think me blamable **for this one word**—"which, nevertheless, was the real truth"—WESLEY.

Touching the resurrection. "If my affirming this be a fault for which I must suffer, I acknowledge it, and there needs no other proof. But as that was one of the articles of the national faith he could not be blamed, either for maintaining it, or for asserting that God had given proof of it in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead"—B. (Ch. 23. 6; 28. 20.)

22. **And when Felix**—"having a better knowledge of Christianity than he could learn from the high priest, the elders, and their orator, and knowing it not to be so mischievous a thing as they represented: it is easy to imagine that, having his residence at Cæsarea, where Cornelius and his friends were converted, where Philip the Evangelist lived, and where there were many disciples, he had become in a measure acquainted with the way of Christianity"—B. "**After I have been more accurately informed**—which he afterwards was. And he doubtless (as well as Festus and Agrippa) transmitted a full account of these things to Rome"—WESLEY.

R.V. "But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter." It will be noted that the translation which Mr. Wesley adopted, following Beza, Grotius, and others, differs considerably from the common translation, which is also sanctioned by the accurate scholarship of the R.V. Felix did not adjourn the case in order to obtain more accurate information; he put them off, because he knew too much about it to decide in their favour. The reference to Lysias was adverse to the Jews, who had spoken of him as treating them roughly, in his interference to save S. Paul. (Ver. 7.)

23. **Commanded a centurion** (R.V. "the centurion")—"probably the centurion who brought S. Paul to Cæsarea, the other having been left at Antipatris"—W. W. **That he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence** (R.V.). "Though Felix did not find any crime proved against S. Paul, yet he did not acquit him, because he was afraid of displeasing the Jews. Being, however, fully convinced of his innocence, he ordered that he should not be confined too closely"—B. "There were three kinds of imprisonment under the Roman law: *Public custody* was confinement in the common gaol, of which we have an example in the case of S. Paul and Silas at Philippi. *Free custody* was the committal of an accused person to the charge of a magistrate or senator, who was responsible for his appearance. This species of detention was only employed in the case of men of high rank. The third kind was *military custody*, in which the prisoner was given in charge to a soldier, who was responsible with his own life for his safe keeping. This was further secured by chaining the prisoner's right hand to the soldier's left. The soldiers, of course, relieved each other in this duty. Their prisoner was usually kept in the barracks, but sometimes allowed to reside in a private house under their charge. It was under the latter species of custody that S. Paul was now placed by Felix"—C. H. **To let him have liberty**—"to be only a prisoner at large. Hereby the gospel was spread more and more, not to the satisfaction of the Jews; but they could not hinder it"—WESLEY.

It will be remembered that S. Paul had friends in Cæsarea (ch. 21. 8–16), and that he would be able to communicate through them with the outer world, so that the two years of imprisonment may not have been uselessly spent. (Ch. 27. 3; 28. 16.)

24. "**And after** Paul had been kept **some days** in this gentle confinement at Cæsarea, **Felix**, who had been absent for a short time, **coming** thither again, **with Drusilla his wife**—the daughter of Herod Agrippa, one of the finest women of that age. Felix persuaded her to forsake her husband, Azizus, king of Emesa, and to be married to himself, though a heathen. She was afterwards, with a son she had by Felix, consumed in an eruption on Mount Vesuvius"—WESLEY.

Three children of that King Herod, whose miserable end is recorded in ch. 12. 23, appear in the closing chapters of the Acts,—Drusilla, Bernice, and King Agrippa. Both the daughters are credited with considerable personal beauty, which is all that Mr. Wesley means by calling Drusilla one of the finest women of her age. "The summons to S. Paul doubtless occurred

at the wish of Drusilla, who, as a Jewess of the Herodian family, had heard much of Christianity, and might be curious to see and hear one of the chief leaders of the Church. This is manifestly implied, as on this occasion S. Paul was not heard specially upon the accusations brought against him"—L. **Concerning the faith in Christ**—"that is, the doctrine of Christ"—WESLEY.

25. **And as he reasoned.** "Felix perhaps expected some philosophical dissertation on the subject of the resurrection, and the life after death. His own conduct, which Tacitus describes as mean and cruel and profligate, would make the subjects on which S. Paul addressed him peculiarly disturbing"—C. B. "**Of justice, temperance, and the judgment to come.** This was the only effectual way of preaching Christ to an unjust, lewd judge. **Felix being terrified.** How happily might this conviction have ended, had he been careful to pursue the views which were then opening upon his mind! But, like thousands, he deferred the consideration of these things to a **more convenient season**—a season which, alas! never came. For though he heard again, he was terrified no more. In the meantime, we do not find Drusilla, though a Jewess, was thus alarmed. She had been used to hear of a future judgment; perhaps, too, she trusted to the being a daughter of Abraham, or to the expiation of the Law, and so was proof against the convictions which seized on her husband, though a heathen. Let this teach us to guard against all such false dependences as tend to elude those convictions that might otherwise be produced in us by the faithful preaching of the word of God. Let us stop our ears against those messengers of Satan, who appear as angels of light, who would teach us to reconcile the hope of salvation with a corrupt heart or an unholy life. **Go thy way for this time.** Oh, how will every damned soul one day lament his having neglected such a time as this!"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul preaches of righteousness to the venal judge, of chastity to the adulterous pair, and of a judgment to come to the unrighteous judge, on whom the imperial judgment of Rome was impending. However, he did not speak directly of the sins of the governor, but discoursed on the solemn matters in general. The express application was unnecessary; the Holy Ghost applied them to the heart of Felix"—L.

26. **He hoped also**—"an evil hope. So when he heard, his eye was not single; no marvel then that he profited nothing by all S. Paul's discourses. **That money would be given**—by the Christians for the liberty of so able a minister; and, waiting for this, unhappy Felix fell short of the treasure of the gospel"—WESLEY.

That he might loose him—omitted in R.V., though implied in the narrative. **Communed with him.** The words convey the idea of friendly or familiar intercourse, with the object of giving an opportunity for arranging the terms of release. (Ex. 23. 8.)

27. **But after two years**—"after S. Paul had been two years a prisoner. **Felix, desiring to gratify the Jews, left Paul bound.** Thus men of the world, to gratify one another, stretch forth their hands to the things of God! Yet the wisdom of Felix did not profit him, did not satisfy the Jews at all. Their accusations followed him to Rome, and had utterly ruined him but for the interest which his brother Pallas had with Nero"—WESLEY.

Bound (R.V. "In bonds"). "This seems to indicate that before his departure Felix withdrew the indulgence which had been previously granted to S. Paul, and left him in bonds, so as to give to his successor the impression, which the Jews desired, that he was deserving of punishment"—C. B. (Ex. 23. 2; ch. 12. 3; 25. 9, 14.)

CHAPTER XXV.

Vers. 1–12. PAUL ACCUSED BEFORE THE NEW GOVERNOR—APPEALS TO CÆSAR. 1. **Festus . . . after three days.** "When a Roman governor came to his province, his first step would be to make himself acquainted with the habits and prevalent feelings of the people he had come to rule. The Jews were the most remarkable people in the whole extent of the Roman provinces, and no city was to any other people what Jerusalem was to the Jews. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that three days after his arrival at the political metropolis, Festus went up to Jerusalem"—C. H.

2. **Then the high priest and chief of the Jews appeared against Paul.** "In so long a time their rage was nothing cooled. So much louder a call had S. Paul to the Gentiles"—WESLEY. (Ch. 24. 1; ver. 15.)

3. **Desired favour against him.** They seem to have made interest with Festus to pronounce judgment at once against S. Paul (vers. 15, 16, 24). Failing in this, they then requested that he should be tried at Jerusalem, thinking that a new governor would not think it necessary to send so strong an escort as Lysias provided. (Ch. 23. 12, 15.)

4. **But Festus answered.** "So Festus's care to preserve the imperial privileges was the means of preserving S. Paul's life. By what invisible springs does God govern the world! with what silence, and yet with what wisdom and energy"—WESLEY.

That Paul was kept in charge (R.V.)—that he had been placed by his predecessor in a certain state of custody, and that it would be inconvenient to remove him, especially as he was himself returning to Cæsarea almost immediately.

5. **Let those of you who are able**—"who are best able to undertake the journey and manage the cause. **If there be any wickedness in him.** So he does not pass sentence before he hears the cause"—WESLEY.

R.V. for "who are able" has "which are of power." He asks for men of influence and character. **Any wickedness** (R.V. "Anything amiss").

6. **Not more than ten days** (R.V. "Not more than eight or ten days"). "A short space for a new governor to stay at such a city as Jerusalem. He could not, with any convenience, have heard and decided the cause of S. Paul within that time"—WESLEY.

He went down to Cæsarea—several of the Jews attending him in accordance with his invitation.

7. **The Jews . . . stood round about.** No mention is made of a hired advocate on this occasion; indeed, there had hardly been time to instruct one. Besides, Festus had intimated that he wished to hear what those "who were of power" among them had to say on the case. **Bringing many accusations.** "When many accusations are heaped together, frequently not one of them is true"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Bringing against him many and grievous charges." "Since they last saw him they had gathered up every rumour they could collect, and these they brought forward, even though they could not support them by evidence"—C. B. (Mark 15. 3; Luke 23. 2, 10; ch. 24. 5, 13.)

8. **While he answered.** "To a general charge, a general answer was sufficient"—WESLEY.

"In this instance S. Luke gives only a general account, both of the accusations and of S. Paul's defence. But from the words in this verse, the charges appear to have been threefold:—(1) That he had broken the Jewish Law; (2) That he had defiled the Temple; (3) That he had dealt in treasonable practices—to all of which he no doubt answered particularly"—C. (Ch. 6. 13; 24. 12; 28. 17.)

9. **Art thou willing to go up to Jerusalem?** "Festus could have ordered this without asking S. Paul; but God secretly overruled the whole, that he might have an occasion of appealing to Rome"—WESLEY.

Willing to do the Jews a pleasure (R.V. "Desiring to gain favour with the Jews"). He gives a different reason to Agrippa for his proposition (ver. 20). "What Festus proposed was equivalent to acquitting the apostle of any charge under Roman law. He is therefore appealed to in reference to the other accusations. The offences against the Law of the Jews and against the Temple must be dealt with by the Sanhedrim. Would S. Paul accept an acquittal by one count, and submit to a trial before his own people on the rest? And Festus would be present to see that right was done"—C. B. "He must have remembered how Jesus said, 'I send ye forth as sheep among wolves, be ye therefore wise as serpents'"—G. (Ch. 24. 27; ver. 20.)

10. **I am standing at Cæsar's judgment seat**—"for all the courts of the Roman governors were held in the name of the emperor, and by commission from him"—WESLEY.

He reminds the governor that he had been in custody of the Roman authority for two years, and he refuses to be handed over to another tribunal, where his judges would be those who now accused him, and who, two years ago, had been privy to a plot to murder him.

11. **For if I be an offender, I refuse not to die.** He declares that he does not ask for mercy; if the Roman law pronounce him guilty, he is prepared to pay the penalty of his fault. On the other hand, if the accusation is groundless, he claims as a right the protection of the law.

No man can give me up (so R.V.). "He expresses it modestly. The meaning is, Thou canst not"—WESLEY.

The full idea is expressed by the *margin* of R.V., "No man can grant me by favour." S. Paul saw distinctly the motive which actuated Festus; he was trying to do this as a favour to the Jews.

I appeal unto Cæsar—"which any Roman citizen might do, before sentence was passed"—WESLEY.

It was evident that Festus was wavering, and that the apostle was in very serious danger. The appeal to Cæsar relieved Festus of responsibility, and removed S. Paul out of the reach of his enemies. (Ver. 25; ch. 18. 14; 23. 29; 26. 31, 32; 28. 19.)

12. **When he had conferred with the Council.** "It was customary for a considerable number of persons of distinction to attend the Roman governors. These constituted a kind of council, with which they frequently advised"—WESLEY.

"There were a few cases in which the right of appeal was disallowed; a bandit, or a pirate, for example, taken in the fact might be condemned and executed by the proconsul, notwithstanding his appeal to the emperor. We read, accordingly, that Festus took counsel with his assessors, concerning the admissibility of S. Paul's appeal. But no doubt could be entertained on this head; and he immediately pronounced the decision of the Court, 'Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar thou shalt go' (R.V.)"—C. H. 'The falsehood and deceit of his accusers, and the manifest weakness of the judge, left the imprisoned apostle no other choice but this appeal to the emperor. The moment in which the procurator formally declared that the appeal was allowed, is a decisive turning-point in the life of the apostle. Henceforth the signal is 'to Rome.' To this he had looked forward for years; it had been the subject of special revelation from the Lord; and it was now in near prospect. What men meant for evil, God intended for good"—L.

Vers. 13–27. VISIT OF AGRIPPA AND BERNICE TO FESTUS—THEY AGREE TO HEAR PAUL SPEAK. —13. **Agrippa**—"the son of Herod Agrippa (ch. 12. 1). **And Bernice**—his sister, with whom he lived in a scandalous familiarity. This was

the person whom Titus Vespasian so passionately loved, that he would have made her empress, had not the clamours of the Romans prevented it"—WESLEY.

Bernice was the elder of the two sisters, Drusilla being the younger. Her career may illustrate the morality of the age, and the need of Christianity to purify it. She was first married to her uncle, Herod, king of Chalcis, and after his death she lived under circumstances of great suspicion with her own brother Agrippa, with whom she visited Festus. She was a second time married, to Polemon, king of Cilicia, but soon left him, and returned to her brother. She afterwards became the mistress of Vespasian, and of his son Titus. This was the woman whom Titus, described in history as the best of the Roman emperors, desired to make his wife. The visit referred to in the text was a visit of compliment, paid by the vassal king to the representative of Rome.

14. **Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king.** In the course of conversation, Festus mentioned this as a matter which caused him a little embarrassment, and in which the peculiar knowledge of his visitor might assist him. (Ch. 24. 27.)

15. **Desiring judgment against him**—"as upon a previous conviction, which they falsely pretended"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Asking for sentence." (Vers. 2, 3.)

16. **It is not the custom of the Romans.** "How excellent a rule, to condemn no one unheard! A rule which, as it is common to all nations (courts of inquisition only excepted), so it ought to direct our proceedings in all affairs, not only in public, but private life"—WESLEY.

To deliver any man to die (R.V. "To give up any man," omitting "to die"). "The word is the same as in ver. 11, and implies the granting of a favour. The Jews thought their influence ought to be sufficient to secure the condemnation of this prisoner, whatever might be the merits of the case"—C. B.

18. **Such things as I supposed**—"from their passion and vehemence"—WESLEY.

19. **Questions of their own superstition** (R.V. "religion"). The word is cognate with that used by S. Paul to the Athenians (ch. 17. 22). It must be remembered that Agrippa and Bernice were themselves Jews, and Festus would not use a word that would give offence.

19. **But had certain questions**—"how coldly does he mention the things of the last importance! **And about one Jesus**—thus does Festus speak of Him to whom every knee shall bow! **Whom Paul affirmed to be alive.** And was this a doubtful question? But why, O Festus, didst thou doubt concerning it? Only because thou didst not search into the evidence of it. Otherwise, that evidence might have opened to thee, till it had grown up into full conviction; and thy illustrious prisoner have led thee into the glorious liberty of the children of God"—WESLEY.

The name of Jesus does not occur in S. Luke's report of the proceedings, either before Felix or before Festus. It is evident, however, that S. Paul had not only stated the doctrine of the resurrection in general terms, but had asserted the fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, with all that such a fact implied. At all events, Festus, brief as his acquaintance with the apostle had been, was able to put his finger on the one great question which was in dispute between him and his accusers, as it is between the Christian and the unbeliever still. (Ch. 18. 15; 23. 29.)

20. **And because I doubted**—(R.V. "And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things")—**I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem**—"I proposed that the case should be referred to the Jewish ecclesiastical courts, as best able to take cognisance of an affair of this nature"—B.

21. **To be reserved to the hearing of Augustus . . . Cæsar.** The family name of the first emperors was Cæsar, and it was assumed by later emperors, though not connected with the family. The name "Augustus" was originally conferred by the senate on Octavius, and was assumed by the later emperors as a title rather than a name. Hence the R.V. reads, "the decision of the emperor." The emperor at this time was Nero.

22. **Then Agrippa said, I would also hear the man myself** (R.V. "could wish," or "was wishing"). "This request Agrippa made, because he was well acquainted with the religious tenets and expectations of the Jews, and because many wonderful things had been reported to him concerning Jesus and His disciples; and he had heard of S. Paul, and knew of what vast concern the question was that Felix made so light of, namely, whether Jesus was alive or not. He would not, on any account, have gone to a synagogue, or religious meeting, to hear S. Paul preach, no more than Herod to hear Jesus; but they were both glad to have these persons brought before them, if only to gratify their curiosity"—B. **To-morrow thou shalt hear him.** "There was a gracious providence in this, for the encouragement of S. Paul, who had seemed buried alive in his imprisonment, and deprived of almost all opportunity of doing good. He has now an opportunity of preaching Christ to a great congregation, and that of great ones"—B. (Ch. 9. 15.)

23. **Agrippa and Bernice, with great pomp.** The children follow in the steps of their father, who sat upon his throne, in Cæsarea, in royal apparel, to listen to the flatteries of the Tyrian deputation. (Ch. 12. 21.) **With the tribunes and the principal men of the city**—"the chief officers, both military and civil"—WESLEY.

"This was the most dignified and influential

audience S. Paul had yet addressed, and the prediction in ch. 9. 15 was fulfilled, though afterwards yet more remarkably at Rome"—W. W. "S. Paul's bonds in so good a cause were more glorious than their chains of gold, and his guards than their equipage. Who would be fond of worldly pomp that here sees so bad a woman loaded with it, and so good a man loaded with the reverse of it"—B. It must not be supposed that Bernice and Drusilla were regarded as exceptionally bad women; there were worse in the imperial family itself. The truth is, that the entire fabric of society was ruinously corrupt. The only hope of the world was in the truth represented by that one chained prisoner.

26. **Unto my lord.** Octavius and Tiberius rejected the title of *Dominus*, Lord. The earlier emperors desired to maintain republican forms while wielding practically absolute power. The instance in the text shows how inevitably the system broke down.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Vers. 1-23. PAUL SPEAKS BEFORE AGRIPPA AND FESTUS.—1. **Agrippa said.** He spoke, as being the person nominally of highest rank, as well as the guest of Festus. **And Paul stretching forth his hand**—"chained as it was; a decent expression of his own earnestness, and proper to engage the attention of his hearers. **Answered for himself.** Not only refuting the accusation of the Jews, but enlarging upon the faith of the gospel"—WESLEY.

S. Luke frequently introduces the speeches of the apostles with a description of the attitude or action of the speaker. (See ch. 1. 15; 10. 34; 12. 17; 13. 9.)

2. **King Agrippa.** "There is a peculiar force in thus addressing a person by name. Agrippa felt this"—WESLEY.

I think myself happy. This was not a court of justice, but a preliminary inquiry only. S. Paul knew, as well as Agrippa or Festus, that nothing could now prevent his being sent to Rome, to take his trial there. But at Rome itself much would depend upon the manner in which the case against him was presented; and he hoped, from Agrippa's acquaintance with Jewish customs and habits of thought, that he would assist Festus to place the matter intelligibly and impartially before the imperial court.

3. **Who art accurately acquainted**—"which Festus was not—**with the customs**—in practical matters—**and questions**—in speculative. This word Festus had used in the absence of S. Paul (ch. 25. 19); who, by the Divine leading, repeats and explains it. Agrippa had had peculiar advantages for an accurate knowledge of the Jewish customs and questions, from his education under his father Herod, and his long abode at Jerusalem. Nothing can be imagined more suitable or more graceful than this whole discourse of S. Paul before Agrippa; in which the seriousness of the Christian, the boldness of the apostle, and the politeness of the gentleman and the scholar, appear in a most beautiful contrast, or rather a most happy union"—WESLEY.

"Agrippa was probably well acquainted with these matters, as his father was zealous in defending the Law, and strict in observing it. Moreover, this Agrippa had obtained from Claudius the control of the Temple, and the sacred treasure, and the power of appointing the high priests"—W. W.

4. **From my youth, which was from the beginning**—"that is, which was from the beginning of my youth"—WESLEY.

"He was not born among the Jews at Jerusalem, but he was bred among them. And though he had of late years been conversant with the Gentiles, which had given great offence to the Jews, yet at his setting out in the world he had been intimately acquainted with the Jewish nation, and entirely devoted to their interests. His education was neither foreign nor obscure; i was among his own people at Jerusalem, where religion and learning flourished"—B.

5. **If they would testify**—"which they would not; for they well knew what weight his former life would add to his present testimony"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify." "The sentence appears to intimate that there were some, even among his accusers, who could give evidence about his earlier years, if they were so minded"—C. B. (Ch. 22. 3; 23. 6; 24. 15, 22; Phil. 3. 5.)

6. **And now.** "This and the two following verses are a kind of parenthesis, and show that what the Pharisees rightly taught concerning the resurrection, S. Paul likewise asserted at this day. The ninth verse is connected with the fifth. For Pharisaism impelled him to persecute. **I stand in judgment for the hope of the promise**—of the resurrection. So it was in effect; for unless Christ had risen there could have been no resurrection of the dead. And it was chiefly for testifying the resurrection of Christ, that the Jews still persecuted him"—WESLEY.

The hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers. "S. Paul intends to say, All pious Israelites hope for the Messiah promised by God, and he himself also believes in the fulfilment of this promise by the appearance and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth"—L. (Ch. 23. 6; Gen. 3. 15; 22. 18; 26. 4; 49. 10; Deut. 18. 15; 2 Sam. 7. 12; Ps. 132. 11; Isa. 4. 2; 7. 14; 9. 6; 40. 10; Jer. 23. 5; 33. 14-16; Ezek. 34. 23; 37. 24; Dan. 9. 24; Micah 7. 20; ch. 13. 32; Rom. 15. 8; Titus 2. 13.)

7. **Our twelve tribes.** "For a great part of the ten tribes also had, at various times, returned from the east to their own country"—WESLEY. (Jas. 1. 1; 1 Pet. 1. 1.)

Worshipping continually night and day—"that is, this is what they aim at, in all their public and private worship"—WESLEY.

Twelve tribes. "The Jews regarded themselves as representing the whole race, and not merely the two tribes of the kingdom of Judah. Tribal names continued to be preserved, and with the people of Judah there doubtless came back many members of the previous captivity of Israel. Thus we read that Anna the prophetess was of the tribe of Aser (Luke 2. 36), and S. Paul himself was of the tribe of Benjamin"—C. B. **Instantly serving** (R.V. "Earnestly serving"). The word refers especially to worship. **Accused by the Jews.** He puts it to Agrippa that it was utterly unreasonable for Jews to accuse him on such grounds. (Jas. 1. 1.)

8. **Is it judged by you an incredible thing?** "It was by Festus (ch. 25. 19), to whom S. Paul answers, as if he had heard him discourse"—WESLEY.

"This was specially addressed to the Jews, represented by Agrippa, as well as by the crowd in 'the place of hearing.' Their own Scriptures furnished them with cases where the dead had been raised, as, for example, by Elisha"—C. H. **If God doth raise the dead** (R.V.). "'Doth raise' is significant; not past, referring to the resurrection of Christ; nor future, referring to the general resurrection; but *present*, indicating that it refers not to a single fact, but to a permanent attribute or power of God"—L.

9. **I thought**—"when I was a Pharisee"—**that I ought to do many things**—"which he now enumerates"—WESLEY.

"With this S. Paul takes up again the narrative of his own life, dropped for an instant at the word Pharisee (ver. 5). **The name of Jesus of Nazareth**—"or 'Jesus the Nazarene,' whom under that title I impiously derided, esteeming His claim to be the Messiah at once false and contemptible"—B. (John 16. 2; 1 Tim 1. 13.)

10. **I shut up many of the saints**—"men not only innocent, but good, just, holy"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul here calls Christians 'the saints,' which he avoided doing in his speech before the people at Jerusalem; but here, before an unbiassed audience, he designedly so expresses himself, in order to bear witness for Christ and His Church"—L. "This speech throughout should be compared with that in ch. 22, with the view of observing S. Paul's judicious adaptation of his statements to his audience. The Jews in the Temple would not have tolerated his calling the Christians, saints"—C. H. **Gave my voice** (R.V. "my vote")—"that is, I joined with those who condemned them. Perhaps the chief priests did also give him power to vote on the occasion"—WESLEY.

"There are strong grounds for believing that, if he was not a member of the Sanhedrim at the time of S. Stephen's death, he was elected into that powerful senate soon after"—C. H. (Ch. 8. 3; Gal. 1. 13; ch. 9. 14, 21; 22. 5.)

11. **I compelled them**—"that is, some of them—**to blaspheme.** This is the most dreadful of all! Repent, ye enemies of the gospel. If Spira, who was compelled, suffered so terribly, what will become of those who compel, like Saul, but do not repent like him?"—WESLEY.

R.V. "I strove to make them blaspheme." Mr. Wesley has for once missed the precise meaning of the Greek tense. He very frequently has anticipated the best emendations of the R.V. **Strange cities** (R.V. "Foreign cities"). (Ch. 22. 19.)

12. **With the authority and commission of the chief priests** (R.V.). They were the presidents of the twenty-four classes, into which the priests were divided, and were *ex officio* members of the Sanhedrim. In ch. 22. 5, accordingly, he says he received his commission from the high priest and the Sanhedrim. (Ch. 9. 3.)

13. **O king.** "Most seasonably, in the height of his narrative, does he thus fix the king's attention. **Above the brightness of the sun**—and no marvel. For what is the brightness of this created sun to the Sun of Righteousness, 'the brightness of the Father's glory'?"—WESLEY.

"There would be no question about the supernatural character of a light which overpowered the midday glare of an Eastern sun"—C. B.

14. **In the Hebrew tongue**—"S. Paul was not now speaking in Hebrew. When he was, he did not add, 'in the Hebrew tongue' (ch. 22. 7). Christ used this tongue both on earth and in heaven"—WESLEY.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (R.V. "the goad"). This is the only place where the oldest MSS. give these words. (See note on ch. 9. 5.) "The words would imply that God had been guiding Saul towards the true light for some time before, and that this zeal for persecution was a resistance of the Divine urging"—C. B. And to us the lesson is, that we must never lose heart or hope, even in the case of those who appear increasingly hardened against the truth, for it may well be that the very violence of their resistance indicates how strong is the influence they resist.

16. **To make thee a minister and a witness** (R.V. "To appoint thee"). S. Paul proceeds to relate all that the Lord revealed to him, both at the moment of his conversion, and subsequently, by the voice of Ananias, and by the vision at Jerusalem. (Ch. 22. 15.)

17. **Delivering thee from the people**—"the Jews—**and the Gentiles, to whom**—both Jews and Gentiles—**I now send thee.** S. Paul gives them to know that the liberty he enjoys even in bonds was promised to him, as well as his preaching to the Gentiles. 'I' denotes the authority of the sender. 'Now' the time

when his mission was dated. For his apostleship as well as his conversion commenced at this moment"—WESLEY.

C. H. translates "*choosing* thee" instead of "delivering thee." S. Paul may be said to be chosen not only from among Jews, but among Gentiles, as being a native of Cilicia, and a citizen of Rome. But R.V. retains the old translation. "Now" is omitted in R.V. "I send." The word is peculiar, implying the commission to be an apostle, which S. Paul always claimed to have received from Christ Himself.

18. **To open**—"He opens them who sends Paul; and He does it by Paul who is sent—**their eyes**—both of the Jews and Gentiles. **That they may turn**—through the power of the Almighty—**from** the spiritual **darkness** wherein they are involved, **to the light** of Divine knowledge and holiness, **and from the power of Satan**, who now holds them in sin, guilt, and misery, **to** the love and happy service of **God, that they may receive through faith** (he seems to place the same blessings in a fuller light) pardon, holiness, and glory"—WESLEY.

"The object of his mission is to open their eyes—that is, to open and awaken the mind to the truth, and this in order to their conversion. The change is denoted by a twofold contrast—by that between darkness and light, and by that between the ruling power of Satan and the liberating fellowship of God. Finally, the ultimate design of God in their conversion consists in the forgiveness of sins, and the bestowal of an inheritance, that is, a share in the glory among the sanctified. Both forgiveness and holiness, however, can only be obtained by faith in Jesus"—L. The reader will not overlook the allusion to the passage of Isaiah read by our Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4. 18). (Isa. 35. 5; 42. 7; Luke 1. 79; John 8. 12; 2 Cor. 4. 4; Eph. 1. 18; 1 Thess. 5. 5; 2 Cor. 6. 14; Eph. 4. 18; 5. 8; Col. 1. 13; 1 Pet. 2. 9, 25; Luke 1. 77; Eph. 1. 11; Col. 1. 12.)

19. **From that time**—"having received power to obey—**I was not disobedient**—I did obey; I used that power (Gal. 1. 16), so that even this grace whereby S. Paul was influenced was not irresistible"—WESLEY.

The thought goes back to the "kicking against the pricks," the opposition of previous times. That was now at an end.

20. **I declared**—"from that hour to this, both to Jew and Gentile—**that they should repent.** This repentance, we may observe, is previous both to inward and outward holiness"—WESLEY.

"Without repentance, even Christ avails us nothing"—L. **First to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem.** "Where we have given the greatest offence, there we must seek first of all to remove it"—L. (Ch. 9. 20; 22. 29; 11. 26; 13.; 14. 19–28; Matt. 3. 8.)

21. **For these things.** "The apostle now applies all that he has said"—WESLEY.

The Jews caught me (R.V. "seized me"). The word implies violence. (Ch. 21. 30, 31.)

22. **Having obtained help from God.** "When all other help failed God sent the Romans from the castle, and so fulfilled the promise He had made (ver. 17)"—WESLEY.

I continue (R.V. "stand unto this day"). "The apostle has in mind the many attempts to cast him down, made both by Jews and Gentiles. The word for 'help' means the succour of an ally; he has been rescued in many ways, and he does not forget human agency, but this, whatever it was, was all sent of God"—C. B. **To small and great.** "He was now before two who would be named great, and he knew that God had declared he should testify 'before kings' (ch. 9. 15)"—C. B. **The prophets and Moses.** He is careful to maintain that he has not introduced a new doctrine. (Luke 24. 27, 44; ch. 24. 14; 28. 23; Rom. 3. 21; John 5. 46.)

23. **How that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles** (R.V.). "Christ was spoken of in like terms by the aged Simeon. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel"—C. B. "These are the three chief points in the writings of the prophets; Christ's sufferings and resurrection, and the publication of them among all nations. And it was precisely these three points that the Jews were most against; they were offended at the first, denied the second, and grudged the third"—L. (Luke 24. 26, 46; 1 Cor. 15. 20; Col. 1. 18; Rev. 1. 5; Luke 2. 32.)

Vers. 24–32. PAUL INTERRUPTED BY FESTUS, APPEALS TO AGRIPPA—THE KING'S OPINION OF THE CASE.—24. **Festus said, Paul, thou art beside thyself**—"to talk of men's rising from the dead; and of a Jew enlightening not only his own nation but the polite and learned Greeks and Romans! Nay, Festus, it is thou that art beside thyself; thou strikest quite wide of the mark. And no wonder: he saw that nature did not act in S. Paul; but the grace that acted in him he did not see. And therefore he took all this ardour which animated the apostle for a mere start of learned frenzy"—WESLEY.

"The extraordinary nature of the disclosures, the narrative of the conversion, the vision of Jesus (the dead man, ch. 25. 19), the mention of the resurrection, would produce this effect on the mind of Festus, who, like many Romans of education, was probably a philosophical sceptic in reference to spiritual existences and a future state. The eloquent and fluent Greek of S. Paul, together with his manifestly deep acquaintance with the literature of his country, will account for the procurator's opinion of his much learning"—W. W. (2 Kings 9. 11; John 10. 10; 1 Cor. 1. 23; 2. 13, 14; 4. 10.)

25. **I am not mad, most excellent Festus**—"the style properly belonging to a Roman pro-prætor. How inexpressibly beautiful is this reply! how strong! yet how decent and respectful! Madmen seldom call men by their names, and titles of honour. Thus also S. Paul refutes the charge. **But utter the words of truth**—confirmed in the next verse—**and soberiety**—the very reverse of madness. And both these remain, even when the men of God act with the utmost vehemence"—WESLEY.

With perfect calmness and due respect, but with all firmness, the apostle disclaims the reproach, and declares that his speech was (objectively) truth, and (subjectively) soberness.

26. **For the king knoweth of these things.** "S. Paul, having refuted Festus, pursues his purpose, returning naturally, and as it were step by step, from Festus to Agrippa. **To whom I speak with freedom.** This freedom was probably one circumstance which Festus accounted madness"—WESLEY.

This thing was not done in a corner. "Of the truth of this we may be sure from the excitement caused both in the religious and the political world by the work of Jesus during His life, by the efforts put forth to stop His teaching, which culminated in a trial in which both Jewish and Roman magistrates were consulted, and by the exclamation of the Pharisees, 'The world is gone after Him' (John 12. 19), and the declaration, 'These that have turned the world upside down' (ch. 17. 6)"—C. B.

27. **King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?** "He that believes these, believes Paul—yea, and Christ. The apostle now comes close to his heart. What did Agrippa feel when he heard this? **I know that thou believest.** Here S. Paul lays so fast hold on the king, that he can scarce make any resistance"—WESLEY.

"The apostle answers his own question, for he is sure that Agrippa would not have given a different answer, seeing how anxious all his family were, in spite of their relations with Rome, to be accepted by the Jewish nation"—C. B. He implies that a belief in the prophets ought consistently to be followed by a belief in Jesus and the resurrection; the rhetoric and the logic of S. Paul are equally admirable; he fixes Agrippa either to a denial of his belief in his own religion, or to a refutation of the argument from that religion just addressed to him.

28. **Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.** "See here, Festus altogether a heathen, S. Paul altogether a Christian, Agrippa halting between both. Poor Agrippa! but almost persuaded! So near the mark, and yet fall short!—another step, and thou art within the veil! Reader, stop not with Agrippa, but go on with S. Paul"—WESLEY.

R.V. "With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian." "The phrase here cannot mean 'almost,' as it is in A.V. It might mean either 'in few words' (Eph. 3. 3), or 'in a small measure,' or 'in a small time.' We might render the passage thus, 'Thou thinkest to make me a Christian with little persuasion.' The verb is in the present tense, and the title 'Christian' was one of contempt (1 Pet. 4. 16)"—C. H. "The king despised the attempt which had been made to convince him, and mocked at the language of S. Paul in so readily taking it for granted that the king was in accord with him"—C. B.

29. **I would to God.** "Agrippa had spoken of being a Christian as a thing wholly in his own power. S. Paul gently corrects this mistake; intimating, it is the gift and the work of God. **That all that hear me.** It was modesty in S. Paul not to apply directly to them all; yet he looks upon them and observes them. **Were such as I am**—Christians indeed; full of 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' He speaks from a full sense of his own happiness, and an overflowing love to all"—WESLEY.

R.V. "I would to God that whether with little or with much." "The king spoke ironically and in contempt; S. Paul took his words as though they had been spoken in earnest, and made this noble answer, which expresses, as no other words ever expressed them, that union of enthusiastic zeal with genuine courtesy, which is the true characteristic of 'a Christian'"—C. H. **Except these bonds.** "The apostle was probably chained to the soldier who guarded him. There is great pathos in this, for if he could conscientiously wish all men present to be such as he was, possessed of his privileges and character, why should such an one be in bonds?"—W. W. (1 Cor. 7. 7.)

30. **The king rose up**—"an unspeakably precious moment to Agrippa; whether he duly improved it or no, we shall see in that day"—WESLEY.

"In the last Romano-Jewish war Agrippa took part with the Romans, and after the fall of Jerusalem, which took place A.D. 70, he retired with Bernice to Rome, where he died thirty years afterwards. The appearance of S. Paul before him offers several characteristic traits. He is known to have been intimate with Festus; the pomp with which the king came into the audience-chamber was in accordance with his general bearing; and the cold irony with which he met the impassioned words of the apostle suits the temper of one who was contented to take part in the destruction of his nation"—*Smith's Dict.* **They that sat with them** — the chief captains and principal men of Cæsarea (ch. 25. 23). The authorities withdrew to consult on what they had heard, and to advise Festus as to the character of the communication he should send to Rome.

31. **This man doeth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds.** "They speak of his whole life, not of one action only. And could ye learn nothing more than this from that discourse? A favourable judgment of such a

preacher is not all that God requires"—WESLEY.

"This appearance of S. Paul before Agrippa took place previous to the first persecution under Nero, and there was at this time no law against the Christians"—W. W. (Ch. 23. 9, 29; 25. 25.)

32. **This man.** "Agrippa gives his opinion, both as the highest in rank, and as the one who was equally familiar with Jewish and Roman law. There is a tone of contempt in the expression 'this man.' (See ch. 16. 35; 23. 27.) **If he had not appealed unto Cæsar.** The appeal had taken the matter out of the hands of Festus. Only the imperial court could now decide either his punishment or his release. But the declaration of Agrippa would undoubtedly be of some service to the apostle, in securing him greater comfort on his journey, if not in suggesting such a report of the case as would not be likely to imperil his life"—C. B. "The speech of S. Paul before Agrippa is distinguished by a peculiar joyfulness and confidence, by a lofty tone and a courage certain of victory. In form a defence, this speech is aggressive in the noblest sense, whereas that in ch. 22 is peculiarly defensive. In both speeches the apostle apprehends Christianity in its unity with the old covenant; in both, his peculiar conversion to Christ, and the appearance of Jesus on the way to Damascus, the cause of that conversion, form the centre point of the discussion. Only, in his speech to the Jews, he lays stress on the communication of the legally pious Ananias at Damascus; in his speech before Agrippa he passes him over in silence, and relates as a revelation of Christ what the Lord spoke to him through Ananias. This was the last public testimony which the apostle delivered in Palestine; and this was the most splendid worldly assembly which he ever had before him, embracing the king over part of Canaan, the governor under the Roman emperor, and a large number of military and civil officers, the principal people of Cæsarea"—L.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Vers. 1–44. PAUL SAILS FOR ROME, AND IS SHIPWRECKED.—1. **As soon as it was determined to sail**—"as being a shorter and less expensive passage to Rome"—WESLEY.

"The resolution which was now adopted referred not to the purpose, but to the manner and time, of the journey to Italy, namely, that it should be made by sea, and immediately. It was now late in the harvest, A.D. 60"—L. "About August"—C. H. "The text, 'That *we* should sail,' re-introduces S. Luke. The last passage where the first person is used is ch. 21. 18. We may presume, therefore, that he had been the companion of S. Paul at Cæsarea; and he may have profited by the advantages of that situation, such as proximity to Jerusalem, and access to those whom he calls 'eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word,'—and occupied himself in writing the Gospel which bears his name"—W. W. (Ch. 25. 12–25.)

2. "**Adramyttium** was a seaport of Mysia. **Aristarchus** and S. Luke went with S. Paul by choice, not being ashamed of his bonds"—WESLEY.

R.V. "And embarking into a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia." "The ship was homeward bound, and was yet to visit several seaports along the coast of proconsular Asia. The object was to change into another ship at one of these seaports, and to get an opportunity of sailing to Italy"—L. "Aristarchus"—mentioned (ch. 19. 29) as one of those whom the mob in Ephesus seized in their fury against S. Paul. He went, it seems, with the apostle into Europe; at least, he accompanied him on his return (ch. 20. 4). After the present notice, we learn only, from Col. 4. 10 and Philem. 24, that he remained with the apostle during his first Roman imprisonment.

3. **Sidon**—the well-known seaport on the coast of Phenicia. **Julius treating Paul courteously** — "perhaps he had heard him make his defence"—WESLEY.

His friends to refresh himself. The apostle no doubt knew that Christian brethren were to be found at Sidon. He had passed through with S. Barnabas on their return from their first victorious journey among the Gentiles (ch. 15. 3). (Ch. 24. 23; 28. 16.)

4. **We sailed under Cyprus**—"leaving it on the left hand"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Under the lee of Cyprus." "How strangely must S. Paul, at the close of his missionary course, have contemplated this island, in which he had gathered the first-fruits of his harvest"—L.

5. **Myra, a city of Lycia**—a flourishing port, distant twenty stadia from the sea, on a navigable river.

6. **A ship of Alexandria.** "Egypt was at that time the granary of Italy. Corn was usually shipped thence in vessels of great size. The same westerly winds which hindered S. Paul's progress from Cæsarea to Myra had probably caused the Alexandrian ship to stand to the north"—C. H.

7. "**Cnidus** was a cape and city of Caria"—WESLEY.

Sailed slowly many days. Kept back by the same head winds, they only made 130 miles in "many days." **Under Crete** (R.V. "Under the lee of Crete"), now Candia.

8. **Hardly passing it** (R.V. "With difficulty coasting along it"). **The Fair Havens** still retain the name; but the city of Lasea is now utterly lost, together with many more of the hundred cities, for which Crete was once so renowned"—WESLEY.

"The Fair Havens." "This place, though mentioned nowhere else in literature, is known by the same name still. It is four or five miles

east of Capa Matala. The ruins of Lasea were discovered in 1856, a few miles eastward"—C. B.

9. **When much time was spent**—"waiting for a change of wind, and debating what course should next be taken"—C. B. **The fast**—"or day of atonement, was kept on the tenth of Tisrî, that is, the twenty-fifth of September (Lev. 23. 27, 29). This was to them an ill time of sailing; not only because winter was approaching, but also because of the sudden storms which are still common in the Mediterranean, at that time of year. **Paul exhorted them**—not to leave Crete. Even in external things, faith exerts itself with the greatest presence of mind and readiness of advice"—WESLEY.

"The Greeks and Romans were ignorant of the use of the compass; the instruments with which they took observations must have been rude compared with modern quadrants and sextants; and we have no reason to believe that their vessels were provided with nautical charts; and thus, when neither sun nor stars appeared, and the sky gave indications of danger, they hesitated to try the open sea"—C. H.

10. **Saying to them**—"to the centurion and other officers"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul had much experience in sailing on the Mediterranean, and had seen much more of peril by sea than we should gather from the Acts. Some time before this voyage to Rome, he wrote to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11. 25), 'Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep.' The word **I perceive** implies personal observation only; he does not now speak as having received any supernatural communication. This is clear also from the end of the verse, where he speaks of hurt to the lives of those on board, which did not come to pass"—C. B.

11. **The centurion regarded the master**—"and indeed it is a general rule, believe an artificer in his own art. Yet when there is the greatest need, a real Christian will often advise even better than he"—WESLEY.

The centurion. "Hence it appears that Julius could have controlled the ship authorities if he had pleased. Probably the ship had been pressed into the service of the State, and the owner wished to finish the business as soon as possible"—W. W.

12. **And because the haven**—the Fair Havens—**was not commodious to winter in.** And this they would most likely have to do, wherever they stopped. **Phenice** (R.V. "Phœnix"). **Which is a haven of Crete**—"having a double opening, one to the south-west, the other to the north-west"—WESLEY.

R.V. "Looking north-east and south-east"; Greek—"Down the south-west wind, and down the north-west wind." "Of course a north-west wind blows towards the south-east. The haven of Lutro answers these conditions, being open to the east"—C. B.

14. **There rose against it**—"the south wind—**a tempestuous wind, called** in those parts **Euroclydon.** This was a kind of hurricane, not carrying them any one way, but tossing them backward and forward. These furious winds are now called Levanters, and blow in all directions from the north-east to the south-east"—WESLEY.

R.V. "There beat down from it"—that is, down from Crete—"a tempestuous wind, called Euraquilo." This reading is supported by the oldest MSS. The word Euraquilo is a hybrid, half Greek and half Latin, and means a north-easter. The form Euroclydon gives it a look of being all Greek.

16. **We were hardly able to get masters of the boat**—"to prevent its being staved"—WESLEY.

"The boats were in general taken in tow, and in stormy weather would be in danger of being washed away. As soon as they gained the shelter of the little island, Clauda or Cauda, they set about hauling it on board, which they did not accomplish without much difficulty"—C. B.

17. **Used helps**—"strong cables, which were drawn several times round the hull, to help in keeping the timbers from parting. It is only in modern times, and especially since the use of iron in shipbuilding, that the process has been abandoned"—C. B. **Fall into the quicksands** (R.V. "Should be cast upon the Syrtis")—a large and dangerous quicksand on the African coast. **Strake sail** (R.V. "Lowered the gear").

18. **They lightened the ship**—"casting the heavy goods into the sea"—WESLEY.

R.V. "They began to throw the freight overboard." The ship was probably carrying corn, and if so the load would be a heavy one, and its removal a great relief to the labouring vessel.

19. **We cast out the tackling of the ship**—"cutting away even those masts that were not absolutely necessary"—WESLEY.

"The word is closely akin to that translated 'gear' (ver. 17, R.V.). It seems to mean all that could be removed from the deck and hull"—C. B. (Jonah 1. 5.)

20. **Neither sun nor stars appeared for many days**—"which they could the less spare before the compass was found out"—WESLEY.

In a modern ship, however dark the weather might be, there would be always a light in the binnacle, and the ship's course would be known. In an ancient vessel under such circumstances they had no means of knowing in what direction they were being carried.

21. **After long abstinence** (R.V. "When they had been long without food"). "Partly the impossibility of cooking food properly, and partly the constant exertion, and the mental distress, prevented them from coming to meals"—L. **This loss**—"which is before your eyes"—WESLEY.

22. **No loss of any man's life.** "He now speaks in the confidence of a revelation. In

ver. 10 he had reasoned from the probabilities of the case"—C. B.

23. **The angel of God** (R.V. "An angel of the God")—**whose I am, and whom I serve.** "How short a compendium of religion! yet how full! comprehending both faith, hope, and love"—WESLEY.

S. Paul is addressing heathens, some of whom had perhaps been calling in their trouble on their idols. Compare the language of Jonah among the heathen sailors in a storm. (Jonah 1. 9.) (Ch. 23. 11; Dan. 6. 16; Rom. 1. 9; 2 Tim. 1. 3.)

24. **God hath given.** "S. Paul had prayed for them; and God gave him their lives, perhaps their souls also. And the centurion, subserving the providence of God, gave to S. Paul the lives of the prisoners. How wonderfully does His providence reign in the most contingent things! And rather will many bad men be preserved with a few good (so it frequently happens), than one good man perish with many bad. So it was in this ship; so it is in the world. **Thee.** At such a time as this there was not the same danger, which might otherwise have been, of S. Paul's seeming to speak out of vanity what he really spoke out of necessity. **All the souls**—not only all the prisoners, as Julius afterwards did (ver. 43). Ask for souls; they shall be given thee; yea, more than thou hopest for. **That sail with thee**—so that S. Paul, in the sight of God, was the master and pilot of the ship"—WESLEY.

25. **I believe God.** "He implies, I would have you do so too. In the midst of danger, few things could be more inspiriting than such an address. And by this time all in the ship must have learned that in S. Paul they had no common prisoner"—C. B. (Luke 1. 45; Rom. 4. 20, 21; 2 Tim. 1. 12.)

26. **A certain island**—not on any part of the continent of Europe or of Africa; so much appears to have been made known to him by the angel. (Ch. 28. 1.)

27. **The fourteenth night**—"since they left Crete (vers. 18, 19). **In the Adriatic Sea**—so the ancients called all that part of the Mediterranean which lay south of Italy"—WESLEY.

The shipmen deemed (R.V. "surmised"). The roar of breakers is a peculiar sound, which can be detected by a practised ear, even amid the howling of the wind and all the other noises of the storm.

28. **They sounded . . . twenty fathoms . . . fifteen fathoms.** Modern seamen use the lead as carefully as their predecessors. The rapid decrease in the depth of the water showed them that they would soon be ashore.

29. **Fearing lest** (R.V. "lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground"). **Out of the stern.** If they had anchored by the bow, there was good ground for apprehending that the vessel would have swung round and gone on the rocks. **Wished** (or prayed) **for the day.** "A remark that hardly would have been made except by one who was present, and retained a vivid recollection of the length of that night, and the terrors of that darkness"—W. W.

30. **The sailors were attempting to flee out of the ship**—"supposing the boat would go more safely over the shallows"—WESLEY.

"The sailors doubtless considered the ship to be in such a woeful plight, that they feared it would not last the night. They also feared that the coast might be of such a nature, that the ship might not be able to be run ashore without being dashed to pieces. Therefore they endeavoured to escape in the boat, leaving the ship and its company to their fate"—L.

31. **Unless these** mariners **abide in the ship.** "Without them ye know not how to manage her. **Ye cannot be saved.** He does not say *we;* that they would not have regarded. The soldiers were not careful for the lives of the prisoners; nor was S. Paul careful for his own. We may learn hence, to use the most proper means for security and success, even while we depend on Divine providence, and wait for the accomplishment of God's own promise. He never designed any promise should encourage rational creatures to act in an irrational manner; or to remain inactive when He has given them natural capacities of doing something, at least, for their own benefit. To expect the accomplishment of any promise, without exerting these, is at best vain and dangerous presumption, if all pretence of relying upon it be not profane hypocrisy"—WESLEY.

The centurion and soldiers were now willing to obey every admonition of S. Paul; and they were strong enough to take the matter into their own hands.

33. **While the day was coming on.** S. Paul urges them now to take a proper meal, that when the time for work arrives they may be in a condition to undertake it. Note the character of the man, inured to perils, and fortified by habitual faith in God—"serene amidst alarms." **Ye continue fasting, having taken nothing**—"no regular meal; through a deep sense of their extreme danger. Let us not wonder then if men, who have a deep sense of the extreme danger of everlasting death, for a time forget even to eat their bread, or to attend their worldly affairs. Much less let us censure that as madness, which may be the beginning of true wisdom"—WESLEY.

34. **Take some meat** (R.V. "food"). **This is for your preservation**—"that ye may be the better able to swim to shore"—WESLEY.

There shall not a hair fall. The phrase was proverbial for complete deliverance. (1 Kings 1. 52; Matt. 10. 30; Luke 12. 7; 21. 18.)

35. **He gave thanks to God in the presence of them all.** This was our Lord's constant practice, and had now become general among Christians. (Rom. 14. 6; 1 Cor. 10. 30, 31; 1

Tim. 4. 3, 4.) By this the apostle made open profession of his belief and trust in God, as the Giver of all good things as well as the Disposer of all events. (1 Sam. 9. 13; Matt. 15. 36; Mark 8. 6; John 6. 11.)

36. **Then were they all encouraged**—"by his example, as well as words"—WESLEY.

They also partook of food, and made themselves ready for the labour which awaited them.

37. **Two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.** "The occasion of the numbering was probably the near expectation of coming ashore; it was needful to have all told, for the captain in respect of the crew, and for the centurion, that of all his prisoners and soldiers none might be allowed to escape or be missing. The mention of the number at this point of the history is one of the many very natural features of the narrative"—C. B. (Ch. 2. 41; 7. 14; Rom. 13. 1; 1 Pet. 3. 20.)

38. **Casting out the wheat.** "So firmly did they now depend on what S. Paul had said"—WESLEY.

Having refreshed themselves they cast out as much of the remaining cargo (wheat from Egypt) as they could, to enable them by the lighter draught of water to run into any small harbour, or at least to come closer to the dry land. This work would occupy some time; and when it was accomplished the day had dawned, and the land was visible.

39. **They did not know the land**—"which they saw near them; **having a** level **shore**"—WESLEY.

R.V. "They perceived a certain bay with a beach, and took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it."

40. **Taken up the anchors** (R.V. "Casting off the anchors they left them in the sea"). **Loosed the rudder bands.** "Their ships had frequently two rudders, one on each side. These were fastened while they let the ship drive; but were now loosened, when they had need of them to steer her into the creek"—WESLEY.

Hoised the mainsail (R.V. "Hoisting up the foresail"). The mainsail was probably gone; in any case, with the wind dead on shore, the foresail was the best for their purpose.

41. **A place where two seas met**—"probably by reason of a sand-bank running parallel with the shore"—WESLEY.

"This is one of the features in the narrative by which the locality can almost certainly be identified. The little island of Salmonetta forms, with the coast near S. Paul's Bay, exactly such a position as is here described. From the sea, at a little distance, it appears as though the land were continuous, and the current between the island and the mainland is only discovered on a nearer approach. This current by its deposits has raised a mud bank, and into this bank, just where the current meets the sea waves, was the ship driven, the force of the water preventing the vessel from reaching the beach just beyond. So, though they got much nearer the shore than at first, yet after all they had to swim for their lives"—C. B. "So they suffered shipwreck almost in the harbour, teaching us never to be secure"—B. (2 Cor. 11. 25.)

42. **The counsel**—"cruel, unjust, ungrateful"—WESLEY.

But not unnatural, considering that under the Roman law they were answerable with their own lives for prisoners entrusted to them. And it may be doubted how far the private soldiers would know their obligations to S. Paul.

43. **The centurion willing** (R.V. "desiring to save"). He could not fail to feel a degree of admiration for his prisoner, after all that he had seen of him, whether in the audience-chamber of Agrippa and Festus, or on the deck of the storm-tossed merchantman, the same fearless, godly, ready-witted man. **Kept them**—the verb is more forcible (R.V. "stayed them"). "He was in full command of his men, and had not lost his own presence of mind in the confusion"—C. B.

44. **They escaped all safe to land**—"and some of them doubtless received the apostle as a teacher sent from God. These would find their deliverance from the fury of the sea but an earnest of an infinitely greater deliverance; and are, long ere this, lodged with him in a more peaceful harbour than Malta, or than earth could afford"—WESLEY.

"A learned Englishman, Smith of Jordanhill, in his work entitled *The Voyage and Shipwreck of S. Paul*, has thrown much light upon this chapter. In particular, he has shown in the clearest manner, that the author of the narrative could not be himself a sailor, as his language on nautical matters is not that of a professional man; and also, still more certainly, both from the narrative of the proceedings in the ship itself, and from the geographical details interwoven with it, that he must have been an eye-witness, inasmuch as a man who was not professionally acquainted with nautical affairs could not possibly have composed a description of such a voyage, so consistent in all its parts, unless he described it from his own experience and actual observation"—L.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Vers. 1-16. PROCEEDINGS AT MALTA, AND JOURNEY TO ROME.—1. **Melita**—"or Malta, is about twelve miles broad, twenty long, and sixty distant from Sicily to the south. It yields abundance of honey (whence its name was taken), with much cotton; and is very fruitful, though it has only three feet depth of earth above the solid rock. The Emperor Charles the Fifth gave it, in 1530, to the knights of Rhodes, driven out of Rhodes by the Turks. They are a thousand in number, of whom five hundred always reside on the island"—WESLEY.

In the year 1798 the French, under Bonaparte, took the island; and in 1800 it was captured by the English, under whose dominion it still remains. (Ch. 27. 26.)

2. **The barbarous people.** "So called in reference to their language, because they spoke neither Greek nor Latin. The expression did not in any degree imply moral barbarism, or even want of culture"—L. "'And the barbarians'—so the Romans and Greeks termed all nations but their own. But surely the generosity shown by these uncultivated inhabitants of Malta was far more valuable than all the varnish which the politest education could give, where it taught not humanity and compassion"—WESLEY.

Received us every one—took us under their care. At first their hospitality was shown by kind treatment on the beach, and by lighting a fire. Afterwards, as the stay was of three months' duration, the sailors and prisoners would find quarters in the dwellings of the natives. S. Paul, the centurion, and some others, were received for a time at least into the house of the chief magistrate. (Rom. 1. 14; 1 Cor. 14. 11; Col. 3. 11.)

3. **A viper out of the heat.** "The creature had been benumbed by the cold. There are no vipers now in Malta; it is well known that in proportion as woods are cleared, and the cultivation of the soil is increased, poisonous reptiles disappear. And there is perhaps nowhere a surface of equal extent which is so completely cultivated, and in so artificial a state, as Malta in the present day"—L.

4. **And when the barbarians saw . . . they said**—"seeing also his chains—**Doubtless this man is a murderer.** Such rarely go unpunished even in this life. **Whom vengeance hath not suffered to live**—they look upon him as a dead man already. It is with pleasure we trace among these barbarians the force of conscience, and the belief of a particular Providence, which some people of more learning have stupidly thought it philosophy to despise. But they erred in imagining that calamities must always be interpreted as judgments. Let us guard against this, lest like them we condemn not only the innocent, but 'the excellent of the earth'"—WESLEY.

5. **Having shaken off the venomous animal, he suffered no harm.** "The words of an eminent modern historian are, 'No venomous kind of serpent now breeds in Malta, neither hurts if it be brought thither from another place. Children are seen there handling and playing even with scorpions: I have seen one eating them.' If this be so, it seems to be fixed by the wisdom of God, as an eternal memorial of what He once wrought there"—WESLEY. (Mark 16. 18; Luke 10. 19.)

6. **They changed their minds, and said he was a god.** "Such is the stability of human reason! A little before he was a murderer; and, presently, he is a god. Just as the people of Lystra—one hour sacrificing, and the next stoning. Nay, but there is a medium. He is neither a murderer nor a god, but a man of God. But natural men never run into greater mistakes than in judging of the children of God"—WESLEY.

"The multitude know no moderation; it either exalts one to heaven, or thrusts him down to hell. Here the apostle went very impressively through honour and dishonour. At one moment he was a murderer, in the next he is called a god. But it is remarkable that the passage does not suggest the slightest emotion which the one or the other produced on S. Paul. Thus it must be with us, through the grace of God. We must not be easily affected, either by the world's smiles or frowns"—L. (Ch. 14. 11.)

7. **The chief man of the island**—"in wealth, if not in power also." **Three days**—"the first three days of our stay in the island"—WESLEY.

The word translated *chief* indicates office and authority. Two inscriptions have been discovered in Malta, one in Greek, and the other in Latin, which contained the same title, a title which is not known to have been used anywhere excepting in Malta. Thus an additional corroboration is given to S. Luke's narrative.

8. **A fever and a bloody flux** (R.V. "dysentery"). "The expressions are technical, and are such as a physician, as S. Luke is reported to have been, would be likely to use"—C. B. "The miracle might be said to be an ordinary one; yet the apostle proceeds to a formal act of prayer before performing it. The reason for this may be found in the prevalent opinion as to his divinity, which he wished to counteract"—W. W.

9. **Others also** (R.V. "The rest also"). "During the three months of their stay, all who were in sickness, and who heard of what had been done for the father of the chief magistrate, came to be cured"—C. B. (Jas. 5. 14, 15; Mark 6. 5; 7. 32; 16. 18; Luke 4. 40; ch. 19. 11, 12; 1 Cor. 12. 9, 28.)

10. **Honoured us with many honours.** "The word includes *presents* as well as demonstrations of respect. S. Paul neither preached nor worked miracles for hire, yet it would seem that he accepted the offerings of the people of Malta, as he did those of the Philippians"—W. W.

They laded us (R.V. "They put on board such things as we needed"). They had lost everything in the shipwreck.

11. **And after three months**—"which time S. Paul doubtless improved, as a true labourer in the Lord's vineyard"—B. **Whose sign was.** "It was the custom of the ancients to have images on the head of their ships, from which they took their names. **Castor and Pollux**—two heathen gods who were thought favourable to mariners"—WESLEY.

R.V. "The Twin Brothers." The Greek is

Dioscuri, the name given to Jupiter's twin sons, born of Leda, who were translated to heaven and became the constellation Gemini.

13. **Fetched a compass** (R.V. "Made a circuit"). "Either following the bend of the coast, or, more probably, tacking on account of the wind"—W. W.

14. **Puteoli, where we found brethren**—"that is, there was a Christian church established at Puteoli, and so far well known, that the apostle on his arrival at once heard of its existence. Of course, in such a place as Puteoli the Jews were likely to congregate for the sake of trade; and from their body the earliest converts to Christianity must have been made. But that, without any previously recorded visit of an apostle, there should already be in Puteoli a numerous band of Christians, is evidence of the zeal with which the new faith was being propagated. For it was now only about twenty-eight years since the death of Jesus"—C. B. "Though it is probable there were but few brethren at Puteoli, yet S. Paul found them out; either they heard of him, or he inquired them out; but as it were by instinct, they got together. Brethren in Christ should find out one another, and keep up communion with each other, as those of the same country do in a foreign land"—M. H. **Tarry seven days.** "It seems strange that they were permitted to remain so long there, at the request of their Christian friends. But as the whole ship's company landed here, it is probable it was convenient for the centurion to wait till he could arrange, or receive orders, for his passage to Rome"—W. W.

15. **The brethren**—"that is, the Christians—**came out thence to meet us.** It is remarkable that there is no certain account by whom Christianity was planted at Rome. Probably some inhabitants of that city were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (ch. 2. 10), and being then converted themselves carried the gospel thither at their return. **Appii Forum** was a town fifty-one miles from Rome; **The Three Taverns** about thirty. **He took courage.** He saw Christ was at Rome also, and now forgot all the troubles of his journey"—WESLEY.

"The gratitude and encouragement which S. Paul manifested in speech and look, so as to be noted by his companion and biographer, he frequently expressed as arising from the same cause, the fidelity and Christian charity of believers. (Rom. 1. 8; Eph. 1. 15, 16; Phil. 1. 3, 5; Col. 1. 3, 4; 1 Thess. 3. 6–10.) On this occasion he doubtless met many of those who are mentioned in Rom. 16, written three years before"—W. W. "How would the hearts of the apostle and his companions beat, in anxious expectation, when the heathen imperial city, with its cupolas and battlements, lay before their eyes! But also, how would the heart of Cæsar, in his palace, have beat if he could have imagined that at this hour, in the form of a Jewish prisoner, a power entered the gates, before which the Roman empire and the heathen world was to sink into dust!"—L.

16. **With the soldier**—"to whom he was chained, as the Roman custom was"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul entered Rome by the Appian Way, through the Porta Capena, from which the Prætorian camp lay not far distant on the east. He was permitted to **dwell by himself**, not only apart from other prisoners, but in a private dwelling, doubtless in the immediate neighbourhood of the Prætorium. This favour he probably owed to the information sent with him by Festus, as well as to the personal influence of the centurion Julius"—L. (Ch. 24. 25; 27. 3.)

Vers. 17–31. PAUL IN ROME—INTERVIEW WITH LEADING JEWS—REMAINS A PRISONER.—17. **And after three days**—"given to rest and prayer—**Paul called the chief of the Jews together.** He always sought the Jews first; but, being now bound, he could not so conveniently go round to them. **Though I have done nothing.** Seeing him chained they might have suspected he had, therefore he first obviates this suspicion"—WESLEY.

"The decree of Claudius, by which the Jews were banished from Rome (ch. 18. 2), was evidently no longer enforced. S. Paul had reason to suppose that they might be offended, and prejudiced against him, when they heard that he had appealed from the courts in Judea to Cæsar; and he judged it would be proper for him to make an apology to them for so doing; and in order to prepare their minds for receiving the gospel, to suffer nothing to be wanting to assure them of the affectionate regard that he had for them"—B. (Ch. 24. 12, 13; 25. 8; 21. 33.)

18. **Who would have let me go** (R.V. "desired to set me at liberty"). Alluding evidently to Agrippa's remark (ch. 26. 32), and the statement of Festus (ch. 25. 25). (Ch. 22. 24; 24. 10; 25. 8; 26. 31.)

19. **When the Jews opposed it.** "He speaks tenderly of them, not mentioning their repeated attempts to murder him. **Not that I had anything to accuse my nation of**—not that I had any design to accuse others, but merely to defend myself"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul showed that his enemies were guilty of this very appeal to the foreign power, of which he had been suspected. He had committed no offence, yet his enemies had delivered him, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, into the hands of the Romans. So evidently unfounded was the accusation, that even the Roman governor had been ready to release him, but his Jewish enemies had opposed his liberation. They strove to keep a child of Israel in Roman chains. So that he was compelled, as his only hope of safety, to appeal unto Cæsar. He brought no accusation against his countrymen at the tribunal of the stranger; that was the deed of his antagonists"—C. H. (Ch. 25. 11.)

20. **For the hope of Israel**—"what Israel

hopes for, namely, the Messiah and the resurrection"—WESLEY.

In Jesus, S. Paul believed that the expected Saviour had appeared, and for preaching this he had been attacked and made a prisoner. He held the same faith as all the Jews, only going farther than they, in that he believed the ancient promise was now fulfilled. We can see from the reply of the Jews that they understood his position exactly. (Ch. 26. 6, 7, 29; Eph. 3. 1; 4. 1; 6. 30; 2 Tim. 1. 16; 2. 9; Philem. 10, 13.)

21. **We have neither received letters concerning thee.** "There must have been a peculiar providence in this. **Nor hath any of the brethren**—the Jews—**related**—professedly, in a set discourse—**or spoke**—occasionally, in conversation—**any evil of thee.** How must the bridle then have been in their mouth!"—WESLEY.

"Before S. Paul's appeal, the heads of the Sanhedrim had no reason to write to the Jews in Rome about him, because this turn of events was completely unexpected by them; and after the appeal there was not sufficient time to inform the Roman Jews before the personal arrival of S. Paul, as his departure probably took place soon after his appeal. They do not say that they had heard nothing whatever of S. Paul; they had heard of Christianity, and of the disputes to which it gave rise; and assuredly must have heard of the preachers of the gospel, and of S. Paul in particular. What they affirm is only that they had heard nothing evil, nothing morally bad, of him"—L. Evidently they were not anxious to move in the matter of S. Paul's trial; they may have feared that anything which called the attention of the imperial government to the Jews might lead to a renewal of the edict of Claudius.

22. **This sect we know is everywhere spoken against.** "This is no proof at all of a bad cause, but a very probable mark of a good one"—WESLEY.

They knew Christianity as a new sect (ch. 24. 14), and they knew how violently their countrymen had opposed it; but they profess to have an open mind, and to desire such information as shall enable them to judge for themselves. (Luke 2. 34; ch. 24. 5, 14; 1 Pet. 2. 12; 4. 14.)

23. **To whom he expounded, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus.** "These were his two grand topics—(1) that the kingdom of the Messiah was of a spiritual, not temporal, nature; (2) that Jesus of Nazareth was the very Person foretold as the Lord of that kingdom. On this head he had as much need to persuade as to convince, their will making as strong a resistance as their understanding"—WESLEY.

"In the early years of Nero, which were distinguished for a mild and lenient government of the empire, the Jews in Rome seem to have enjoyed complete toleration, and to have been a numerous, wealthy, and influential community"—C. H. "Their willingness to meet S. Paul gave him a great opportunity, which he endeavoured to use to the best advantage. He continued his discourse **from morning till evening**—probably eight or ten hours"—B. (Luke 24. 27; ch. 17. 3; 19. 8; 21. 6, 22.)

24. **And some believed the things that were spoken** — "with the heart as well as understanding"—WESLEY.

"The result was a division among the auditors, 'not peace, but a sword,' the division which has resulted ever since, when the truth of God has encountered, side by side, earnest conviction with worldly indifference, honest investigation with bigoted prejudice, trustful faith with the pride of scepticism"—C. H.

25. **They agreed not among themselves.** "No doubt the Sadducees and the Pharisees had their representatives here, as well as among the population of Jerusalem"—C. B. **Well spake the Holy Ghost to your fathers** — "which is equally applicable to you"—WESLEY.

One word. "After so many words, one more, but that a most weighty word"—L.

26. **Hearing ye shall hear** — that is, ye shall most surely hear—**and shall not understand.** "The words manifestly denote a judicial blindness, consequent upon a wilful and obstinate resistance of the truth. First they would not, afterwards they could not, believe"—WESLEY.

"We may observe here, that this passage of Isaiah is quoted oftener in the New Testament than any other taken from the Old, namely, no fewer than six times; and yet in such a variety of expression as proves that the apostles did not confine themselves exactly, either to the words of the original Hebrew or of the Greek version"—B. "This hardening of the heart is not only a natural consequence of long-continued rejection of Divine grace, but also a Divine judgment which befalls those who hold the truth in unrighteousness. We must preach this doctrine, but be on our guard that we do not speak harshly respecting God, or repel thereby darkened minds"—L. (Isa. 6. 9; Jer. 5. 21; Ezek. 12. 2; Matt. 13. 14, 15; Mark 4. 12; Luke 8. 10; John 12. 40; Rom. 11. 8.)

28. **The salvation** (R.V. "this salvation") **of God is sent to the Gentiles** — "namely, from this time. Before this no apostle had been at Rome. S. Paul was the first"—WESLEY.

They will hear it (R.V. "They will also hear"). "The apostle does not wish to convey a taunt to the Jews, that they come behind the Gentiles"—C. B. (Matt. 21. 41, 43; ch. 13. 46, 47; 18. 6; 22. 21; 26. 17, 18; Rom. 11. 11.)

29. Omitted in R.V.

30. **And Paul continued two whole years.** "After which this book was written, long before S. Paul's death, and was undoubtedly published,

with his approbation, by S. Luke, who continued with him to the last. (2 Tim. 4. 11.) **And received all that came to him**—whether they were Jews or Gentiles. These two years completed twenty-five years after our Saviour's passion. Such progress had the gospel made by that time in the parts of the world which lay west of Jerusalem, by the ministry of S. Paul among the Gentiles. How far eastward the other apostles had carried it at the same time, history does not inform us"—WESLEY.

"Of these two years we have no history, except such as we can gather from the four epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon), which were written during this time. We know that from first to last the chain galled both his body and his mind (Eph. 3. 1; 4. 1; Phil. 1. 13, 16; Col. 4. 18; Philem. 1, 9, 10), and that his case was at times an object of much anxiety (Phil. 2. 23, 24). We also learn from the same letter that, beside S. Luke and Aristarchus (ch. 27. 27), he had also the fellowship, for some time at least, of Tychicus, who was the bearer of his letter to Ephesus, and of Timothy, whom he joins with himself in the greetings to the churches of Philippi and Colosse, and also in that to Philemon. Epaphroditus came with the Philippian contributions to his relief. (Phil. 4. 18.) Onesimus found out S. Paul when, in flight from his master, he made his way to Rome. (Col. 4. 9; Philem. 10.) Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, and Jesus, called Justus, were with him for a while. Last of all, Demas was there, soon to be mentioned as having forsaken the good way through love of this present world. (Col. 4. 14; 2 Tim. 4. 10.) More than this, and the few words in this verse, we do not know of this first imprisonment"—C. B. **In his own hired house** (R.V. "dwelling"). "The means for such hiring were provided by the liberality of the Philippians and others. With one hand always chained to a soldier he could no longer minister even to his own necessities"—C. B.

31. **No man forbidding him.** "Such was the victory of the word of God. Whilst S. Paul was preaching at Rome, the gospel shone with its highest lustre. Here, therefore, the Acts of the Apostles end; and end with great advantage. Otherwise S. Luke could easily have continued his narrative to the apostle's death"—WESLEY.

INTRODUCTION TO
THE STUDY OF S. PAUL'S EPISTLES.

HIS LIFE.

THE exact date of S. Paul's birth cannot be determined. It probably took place, however, about the same time as the birth of our Lord. His father was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, and at the same time a Roman citizen. He resided at Tarsus, then one of the three great academies of the world. The name *Paul* was probably bestowed upon the future apostle in infancy, for use in the Gentile world; while his circumcision name was Saul, after the first king (himself a Benjamite). It will be remembered that the latter name is used in the New Testament, whenever its owner stands before us as the champion of Judaism, and that, as soon as he is transformed into the Apostle of the Gentiles, his Gentile name takes its place. When about thirteen years of age, he was sent to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel, the greatest Pharisee of the time. Young Saul proved himself an apt pupil, soon making some acquaintance with Greek poetry and philosophy, as well as mastering the rabbinical learning of the day. And with his lessons he imbibed the particularism and bigotry of the Pharisaic sect to such an extent that when, years afterwards, the Christian faith began to spread in Jerusalem, "beyond measure he persecuted the Church of God, and made havoc of it." He was elected a member of the great Sanhedrim, and when S. Stephen was stoned and killed, "Saul was consenting unto his death." This part of his life is described by his own pen in Gal. 1. 13–14; Phil. 3. 4–6.

It was while journeying to Damascus (about A.D. 36) for the express purpose of exterminating Christianity that he was led to embrace it. The risen Lord appeared to him, and broke his heart with the tender reproach, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (See the account in Acts, ch. 9.) His conversion was conscious, thorough, permanent. Saul the Pharisee had become Paul the Christian. He received the sacrament of baptism, and then withdrew, that prolonged meditation

and frequent intercourse with God might fit him for his life-work, to the fastnesses of Sinai. And where God had delivered the precepts of the Law to Moses, He revealed the inmost meaning of the gospel to Paul. Returning to Damascus, he at once plunged into his work. But very naturally the indignation of the Jews stirred up persecution against him, and he was compelled to escape from the city, "being let down in a basket by the wall." Making his way to Jerusalem, his friend Barnabas introduced him to Peter and James, but after a fortnight he was again compelled to flee, rather than fall a prey to assassins. Having revisited Tarsus, he laboured for at least three years as a missionary in Cilicia. Then, with Barnabas, he helped to build up a strong Church of Gentile believers in Antioch, where "the disciples were first called Christians." From Antioch, after a flying visit to Jerusalem with alms for the poor saints there, the two friends set out on their first great missionary tour, partially described by S. Luke in Acts (chaps. 13, 14). Some time after their return to Antioch, there came down from Jerusalem certain Pharisaic Christians, insisting that Gentile converts should submit to circumcision. To S. Paul the granting of such a demand meant disloyalty to the spirit of the gospel, and he therefore proceeded to Jerusalem with Titus and Barnabas, and obtained a settlement of the question. (See the notes on Gal. chaps. 1, 2, in this Commentary for a fuller account and explanation.) S. Paul's victory on this occasion was not, however, an unmixed happiness to him, as it brought down upon his head the hatred of a strong party in the Church, which never wholly abated. Even when he lay a prisoner at Rome, these persecutors strove to "raise up affliction for him in his bonds."

About A.D. 52 the apostle started on his second missionary tour. A difference of opinion with Barnabas led each of the two friends to choose an independent course. Hence S. Paul's travelling companion on this occasion was Silas (or Silvanus). For an account of this journey, see Acts, chaps. 16–18. It is memorable for S. Paul's meeting with Timothy, and more especially for the first planting of Christianity in Europe. Another fact of great importance is, that while on this tour (during his stay in Corinth) S. Paul wrote the Epistles to the Thessalonians.

The third missionary tour was undertaken about A.D. 55. (See Acts, chaps. 18, 19, 20.) Passing through Galatia and Phrygia, he reached Ephesus, and laboured there about three years with power and great success. Shortly before this period expired, sad news from Corinth drew from him the First Epistle to the Corinthians. From Ephesus, also, he wrote his great letter to the Galatians. Shortly afterwards, when in Macedonia, he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and at Corinth composed the most comprehensive of all his writings, the Epistle to the Romans. After various labours and adventures he reached Jerusalem in A.D. 59, where he narrowly escaped death in the Temple (Acts 21, etc.). Conveyed as a prisoner to Cæsarea, Felix at once heard his case, but, hoping to receive a bribe, left the apostle in prison for two years, without coming to a decision. (Some scholars date the letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon from this Cæsarean captivity, but others from the subsequent Roman captivity.) Felix being succeeded by the far worthier Festus, S. Paul was heard again.

But justice was still withheld. The prisoner, therefore, appealed to the emperor, and in the autumn of A.D. 61 was taken on board ship for Rome. The ship was wrecked, and the rescued crew wintered at Malta. Reaching Rome in the spring of 62, S. Paul, in the hired lodging he was allowed to occupy, spent two whole years in ceaseless efforts to spread the truth. With his unfailing and joyous faith he would have it that his captivity was providentially ordained. "My affairs," he told the Philippians, "have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." With tongue and pen he laboured bravely and believingly on to extend Christ's empire. No one but S. Paul could have written the light-hearted Epistle to the Philippians, with the chain confining him at the very moment of greatest opportunity. What the sequel to his imprisonment and trial may have been we do not know. S. Luke never wrote his projected continuation of the Acts, or if he did it has not been preserved. But it is fairly safe to conclude that his appeal was favourably received, and that he was liberated. There is a tradition, with some show of plausibility, that he worked in Spain; and another tradition, quite without support, that he also visited England. Probably the true account of these after-years is, that he revisited his first plantings, performing such labours of organisation as are implied in First Timothy and Titus, written during this period. In 66 he was again a captive at Rome,—this time in a dungeon,—whence he wrote Second Timothy, the last of his immortal Epistles. About 67, Nero being emperor, he won the martyr's crown "without the gate" at Rome.

HIS WORK.

The story of S. Paul's life is also the story of his work. Both before and after his conversion he threw himself heart and soul into the performance of what he believed to be his duty.

Always excepting the God-Man, no one has so influenced the course of history as S. Paul. His conversion, sound and thorough, from a persecutor of Christ to a disciple, did more than any other one thing to authenticate Christianity, and to compel the attention of the Jews to its claims. Under God, his adamantine firmness in the great controversy respecting circumcision, saved the gospel from being blighted by Jewish particularism, and secured to it the qualities essential to a universal religion. His missionary labours, persevered in through long years of hardship and persecution, form the most fascinating, the most momentous, and the most successful campaign in all history. To S. Paul Europe owes Christ. But for his faith and zeal and breadth of view, Christianity would probably have remained for centuries just one more Oriental religion. And, like John Wesley, who resembled him in many particulars, he was not only a great missionary, but a great administrator and organiser. He was a pastor as well as a preacher. But S. Paul's most signal service to the Church was his work as a thinker. He was the first to apprehend and expound the inmost significance of the teaching of Christ. The Epistles he wrote are monuments of his greatness, far more precious and

enduring than even the Churches which he founded. With the exception of the Gospels no writings have so profoundly influenced human thought and conduct. And this influence has been continually increasing. Almost all the revivals of Church life since apostolic times have coincided with the republication of the most characteristic doctrines of S. Paul. The Protestant Reformation and the Evangelical Revival are striking cases in point. But the Epistles properly belong to the next section.

HIS WRITINGS: AND HOW TO READ THEM.

Whoever would understand and profit by the writings of S. Paul must bear in mind the circumstances of their origin. Although, as for instance in Romans, they abound in elaborate arguments, or, as in Ephesians, they present us with the deepest meanings of divine truth, they are all truly and properly *letters*. None of them are mere treatises. S. Paul never wrote a compendium of Christian theology. But the exigencies of Church life and of doctrinal controversy drew from him Epistles in which all the Christian doctrines are set forth in turn; and of these Epistles all orthodox compendiums will be mainly the systematic exposition. Necessity was laid upon S. Paul to write letters as well as to preach sermons, and in reading them we are reading the greatest thoughts of the greatest thinker who has ever lived.

In studying these wonderful letters it will be best to use a Bible printed in paragraphs. The division into short verses makes it often difficult to follow the course of the argument. The paragraphing of the Revised Version is in almost all cases correctly executed and exceedingly helpful. And, although it may seem a small point, let the *type* be as large as the student can afford. Many Christians persist in using editions of the Scriptures with almost microscopical letters, and are then distressed because they have not enjoyed the exercise; often going on to believe they must be in a low state of grace or they would enjoy their Bibles more. A paragraph Bible, with large clear type having been secured, the reader of S. Paul's Epistles should study them in the following order:—

First Group, ...	1 and 2 Thessalonians.
Second Group, ...	1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans.
Third Group, ...	Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, Philippians.
Fourth Group, ...	1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy.

According to some scholars, the order of the letters in the second and third groups is somewhat different from the above, but the student who wishes to trace the development of S. Paul's philosophy, theology, ethics, and Church polity cannot do better than take them in the order given. God was continually teaching S. Paul more and more of His truth, and the Epistle to the Ephesians, for example, is consequently much richer and fuller than those to the Thessalonians. The order of the Authorised and most other Versions is unfortunate.

The next point to be borne in mind is the necessity of understanding the

circumstances of each Epistle's birth. As soon as we know *when*, *where*, to *whom*, and *why* S. Paul wrote it, we shall be in a position to enjoy and explain chapters which would else be barren and obscure. As furnishing the historical background and connection we most strongly recommend an admirable and inexpensive little Manual by Rev. G. G. Findlay, B.A.—*The Epistles of Paul the Apostle* (2s. 6d., C. H. Kelly). This should be always at hand.

One other hint. Except for a striking verse here and there, the reader who "dips" will get very little from S. Paul. His writings must be prayerfully, patiently, honestly *worked at*, before they will yield their secrets up. It will not do to run through stray chapters here and there. Each letter must be perseveringly studied as a whole, beginning at the very beginning and searching on to the very end. It cannot be denied that there will be much to discourage. S. Paul's style is difficult—sometimes very difficult. It is often a speaking rather than a writing style, and hence he occasionally begins a sentence and forgets to finish it. Sometimes before one thought has done expressing itself another pushes it unceremoniously aside. *Our brother Paul* has indeed written many *things hard to be understood.* But an unfailing resoluteness to know the truth, and above all the aid of the illuminating Spirit, will unveil the holy mystery of the ages, enshrined in these precious writings, to all who are pure in heart.

HIS DOCTRINE.

The limits assigned to this Introduction forbid any detailed account of S. Paul's teaching. But such an account, if given, could only supplement and not replace the patient study urged in the last section. Here it must suffice to say that S. Paul's doctrine is broadly at one with the theology of Protestantism in general, and that it is in very striking accord with the theology of Methodism in particular. The vindication of the latter assertion is found in the fact that both the Pauline and the Methodist teaching are pre-eminently *experimental.* To S. Paul, as to Methodism, Christianity was not a round of priestly rites, or a scholastic set of propositions, but a conscious spiritual life, a wonderful personal experience. And the doctrine is just a clear statement of the contents of that experience, with all the causes, results, and implications. S. Paul's doctrines of repentance, faith, sanctification, the witness of the Spirit, were drawn from his own experience of these things. Before his conversion he had "gone about to establish his own righteousness," relying on this, and on his descent from Abraham, for salvation; at his conversion he had seen the crucified and risen Son of God; after his conversion he tasted all the privileges of Christian life and service; and, guided by the Holy Spirit, he wrought out all these experiences into his characteristic doctrines of justification by faith, salvation for the Gentiles, the power of the resurrection, the person of Christ, the design of the Law, and all those other great doctrines we associate with his name. This relation of his theology to his experience will, if borne constantly in mind, vastly help the reader. It will also explain the conspicuous failure to reconcile their teachings with the Epistles, on the one

hand, of those who would reduce Christianity to a barren sacerdotalism, and on the other hand of those who would regard it as nothing more than a system of moral precepts. To S. Paul, as to his Master, "the kingdom of God is within" us.

To those who wish to acquaint themselves more fully with S. Paul's doctrine, we warmly commend the careful and lucid Commentaries of Dr. J. A. Beet.

[It is hoped that the readers of this volume will use it as a stepping-stone to larger and more elaborate works. In addition to the writings of Professors Findlay and Beet, already referred to, we therefore recommend *The Life of S. Paul*, by Rev. James Stalker (1s. 6d., T. & T. Clark); *The Life and Epistles of S. Paul*, by Conybeare & Howson (3s. 6d., Longmans), and the volumes on S. Paul's Epistles in the *Cambridge Bible* (2s., 2s. 6d., and 3s. 6d. per vol., University Press). The expenditure for these scholarly yet readable works may be, as the study of them *must* be, spread over several years, and it will then be very little felt even by the slenderest purse.]

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

"MANY of the writings of the New Testament are written in the form of Epistles. Such are not only those of Paul, James, Peter, Jude, but also both the treatises of Luke, and all the writings of John. Nay, we have seven Epistles herein which the Lord Jesus Himself sent by the hand of John to the seven churches; yea, the whole Revelation is no other than an Epistle from Him.

"S. Paul writes in a very different manner to those churches which he had planted himself, and to those who had not seen his face in the flesh. In his letters to the former, a loving or sharp familiarity appears, as their behaviour was more or less suitable to the gospel. To the latter, he proposes the pure, unmixed gospel, in a more general and abstract manner.

"As to the time wherein he wrote his Epistles, it is probable he wrote about the year of Christ, according to the common reckoning.[1]

48.	From Corinth, . . .	The Epistle to the Thessalonians.
49.	From Phrygia, . . .	To the Galatians.
52.	From Ephesus, . . .	The First Epistle to the Corinthians.
	From Troas, . . .	The First Epistle to Timothy.
	From Macedonia, . . .	The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and that to Titus.
	From Corinth, . . .	To the Romans.
57.	From Rome, ...	To the Philippians, to Philemon, the Ephesians, and Colossians.
58.	From Italy, ...	To the Hebrews.
66.	From Rome, ...	The Second Epistle to Timothy.

"That S. Paul wrote this Epistle from Corinth we may learn from his commending to the Romans, Phebe, a servant of the church of Cenchrea (ch. 16. 1), a port of Corinth; and from his mentioning the salutations of Caius and Erastus (ch. 16. 23), who were both Corinthians.

[1] The following dates are probably more correct than those given by Mr. Wesley:—53, Thessalonians; 58, 59, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans; 62–64, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians; 66, Timothy and Titus.

Those to whom he wrote seem to have been chiefly foreigners, both Jews and Gentiles, whom business drew from other provinces; as appears, both by his writing in Greek, and by his salutations of several former acquaintance.

"His chief design herein is to show—1. That neither the Gentiles by the law of nature, nor the Jews by the Law of Moses, could obtain justification before God; and that therefore it was necessary for both to seek it from the free mercy of God, by faith. 2. That God has an absolute right to show mercy on what terms He pleases, and to withhold it from those who will not accept it on His own terms.

"The Epistle consists of Five Parts

I. The Introduction,	Chap i. 1–15.
II. The Proposition briefly proved:	
1. Concerning Faith and Justification,	
2. Concerning Salvation,	
3. Concerning the equality of believers, Jews or Gentiles.	
III. The Treatise—	
1. Concerning Justification, which is—	
(1) Not by works, for	Chap. i. 18.
The Gentiles,	,, ii. 1–10.
The Jews, and	,, ,, 11–29.
Both together are under sin,	,, iii. 1–20.
(2) But by faith,	,, ,, 21–31.
As appears by the example of Abraham, and the testimony of David,	,, iv. 1–25.
2. Concerning Salvation,	,, v.–viii.
3. Concerning the equal privileges of Jewish and Gentile believers,	,, ix.–xi.
IV. The Exhortation,	,, xii. 1–2.
1. Concerning Faith and its fruits, Love and practical Holiness,	,, ,, 3–21.
	,, xiii. 1–10.
2. Concerning Salvation,	,, ,, 11–14.
3. Of the Conjunction of Jews and Gentiles,	,, xiv. 1; xv. 13.
V. The Conclusion,	,, xv. 14; xvi. 25.

"The apostle labours throughout to fix in those to whom he writes a deep sense of the excellency of the gospel, and to engage them to act suitably to it. For this purpose, after a general salutation (ch. 1. 1–7), and profession of his affection for them (vers. 8–15), he declares he shall not be ashamed openly to maintain the gospel at Rome, seeing it is the powerful instrument of salvation, both to Jews and Gentiles, by means of faith (vers. 16, 17). And, in order to demonstrate this, he shows:—

"1. That the world greatly needed such a dispensation, the Gentiles being in a most abandoned state (vers. 18–32), and the Jews, though condemning others, being themselves no better (ch. 2. 1–29), as, notwithstanding some cavils, which he obviates (ch. 3. 1–8), their own Scriptures testify (vers. 9–19). So that all were under a necessity of seeking justification by this method (vers. 20–31).

"2. That Abraham and David themselves sought justification by faith and not by works (ch. 4. 1–25).

"3. That all who believe are brought into so happy a state, as turns the greatest afflictions into matter of joy (ch. 5. 1–11).

"4. That the evils brought on mankind by Adam are abundantly recompensed to all that believe in Christ (vers. 12–21).

"5. That, far from dissolving the obligations to practical holiness, the gospel increases them by peculiar obligations (ch. 6. 1–23).

"In order to convince them of these things the more deeply, and to remove their fondness for the Mosaic Law, now they were married to Christ by faith in Him (ch. 7. 1–6), he shows how unable the motives of the Law were to produce that holiness which believers obtain by a living faith in the gospel (ch. 7. 7–25; 8. 1, 2), and then gives a more particular view of those things which rendered the gospel effectual to this great end (vers. 3–39).

"That even the Gentiles, if they believed, should have a share in these blessings, and that the Jews, if they believed not, should be excluded from them, being a point of great importance, the apostle bestows the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters in settling it. He begins the ninth chapter by expressing his tender love and high esteem for the Jewish nation (vers. 1–5), and then shows:—

"1. That God's rejecting great part of the seed of Abraham, yea, and of Isaac too, was undeniable fact (vers. 6–13).

"2. That God had not chosen them to such peculiar privileges for any kind of goodness either in them or their fathers (vers. 14–24).

"3. That His accepting the Gentiles, and rejecting many of the Jews, had been foretold both by Hosea and Isaiah (vers. 25–33).

"4. That God had offered salvation to Jews and Gentiles on the same terms, though the Jews had rejected it (ch. 10. 1–21).

"5. That though the rejection of Israel for their obstinacy was general, yet it was not total; there being still a remnant among them who did embrace the gospel (ch. 11. 1–10).

"6. That the rejection of the rest was not final, but in the end all Israel should be saved (vers. 11–31).

"7. That, meantime, even their obstinacy and rejection served to display the unsearchable wisdom and love of God (vers. 32–36).

"The rest of the Epistle contains practical instructions and exhortations. He particularly urges—1. An entire consecration of themselves to God, and a care to glorify Him by a faithful improvement of their several talents (ch. 12. 1–11). 2. Devotion, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, peace, and meekness (vers. 12–21). 3. Obedience to magistrates, justice in all its branches, love the fulfilling of the Law, and universal holiness (ch. 13. 1–14). 4. Mutual candour between those who differed in judgment, touching the observance of the Mosaic Law (ch. 14. 1–23; 15. 1–17); in enforcing which he is led to mention the extent of his own labours, and his purpose of visiting the Romans; in the meantime recommending himself to their prayers (vers. 18–33). And, after many salutations (ch. 16. 1–16), and a caution against those who caused divisions, he concludes with a suitable blessing and doxology (vers. 17–27)." [Read also the "Introduction to S. Paul's Epistles" in this volume.]

ABBREVIATIONS.—C. B. (Cambridge Bible), S. C. (Speaker's Commentary).

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.—Vers. 1–7. GREETING.—**1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.** "To this introduction the conclusion answers, ch. 15. 15, etc. **Called to be an apostle**—and made an apostle by that calling. While God calls, He makes what He calls. As the Judaising teachers disputed his claim to the apostolical office, it is with great propriety that he asserts it in the very entrance of an Epistle wherein their principles are entirely overthrown. And various other proper and important thoughts are suggested in this short introduction; particularly the prophecies concerning the gospel, the descent of Jesus from David, the great doctrines of His Godhead and resurrection, the sending the gospel to the Gentiles, the privileges of Christians, and the obedience and holiness to which they were obliged in virtue of their profession. **Separated**—by God, not only from the bulk of other men, from other Jews, from other disciples, but even from other Christian teachers, to be a peculiar instrument of God in spreading the gospel"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul, a commissioned messenger of the predicted and now exalted Messiah, greets the saints at Rome. **S. Paul, a servant**—strictly a *bond-servant* (so Phil. 1. 1; Tit. 1. 1; Jas. 1. 1; 2 Pet. 1. 1)—**of Jesus Christ** (1 Cor. 7. 22; Eph. 6. 6, etc.). To S. Paul, the Divine Son, as truly as the Father, is his absolute

Master and Possessor. **Called**—at his conversion. (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 1.) For the terms of the call, see Acts 26. 17, 18. This call is distinct from the *call to be a Christian*, on which see vers. 6, 7; 8. 28; 1 Cor. 1. 24. **An apostle** — *lit.* an 'envoy.' S. Paul often insisted on the fact and rights of his apostleship. (1 Cor. 9. 1, 2; 2 Cor. 12. 12; Gal. 1. 1.) **The gospel of God**—the messages of good sent from God and revealing Him. (So ch. 15. 16; 2 Cor. 11. 7; 1 Thess. 2. 2, etc.)"—C. B. "The first seven verses of this chapter are but one complete period, representing, to the mind of the devout reader, some august mystery and edifying moral of our holy religion. **A servant**—the absolute property of his Master, and bound to Him for life"—COKE. "Writing as a stranger to the Christians at Rome, S. Paul begins by telling them his name, his position in the Church, the work for which he was placed in that position, and how this work brings him into contact with them"—BEET.

2. **Which He promised before** — "of old time, frequently, solemnly. And the promise and accomplishment confirm each other"—WESLEY.

"See on Acts 2. 6; Tit. 1. 2—This verse refers to the relation of the gospel to the Old Testament Scriptures; it is intended thereby to declare that the former was not a thing entirely disconnected with the previous history of the world, but the blossoms which had grown out of the roots of the Old Testament (Acts 26. 22)"—OLSHAUSEN. "The *promise* of the great Deliverer, running through the Old Testament, is one of the most wonderful of the phenomena of history"—MOULE.

3. **Who was of the seed of David according to the flesh**—"that is, with regard to His human nature. Both the natures of our Saviour are here mentioned; but the human is mentioned first, because the Divine was not manifested in its full evidence till after His resurrection"—WESLEY.

"**Of the seed of David.** The New Testament begins with this assertion (Matt. 1. 1), and almost closes with it (Rev. 22. 16). In 2 Tim. 2. 8, S. Paul, at the close of his ministry, again recites it as a foundation truth"—MOULE.

4. "**But** powerfully **declared to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness**—that is, according to His Divine nature. **By the resurrection from the dead**—for this is both the fountain and the object of our faith; and the preaching of the apostles was the consequence of Christ's resurrection"—WESLEY.

"Christ was both at the same time the Son of God from eternity, the Son of David in time. His resurrection showed Him to be *none other than the Son*—**with power**—*lit.* 'in power.' (Comp. 1 Cor. 16. 43.) Power attended and characterised His resurrection, both as cause and effect. It was miracle and triumph"—MOULE. "**By the resurrection from the dead.** The particular act in which the Sonship of Christ was most conspicuously ratified and confirmed was His resurrection from the dead. It was ratified by His resurrection, as a manifestation of transcendent and Divine power. (Comp. Acts 2. 28; 17. 31; ch. 4. 34.) 'By *the* resurrection *of* the dead'—by that resurrection of which Christ was the first-fruits"—ELLICOTT. "The verse implies that Christ claimed on earth to be, in a sense peculiar to Himself, the Son of God, *i.e.* He claimed a relation to God shared by none else. For, although the surpassing grandeur of His resurrection suggested the surpassing greatness of Him who was raised from the dead, yet even this great miracle was but a silent witness, and could do no more than confirm the testimony of Jesus concerning Himself"—BEET.

5. **By whom we have received**—I and the other apostles—**grace and apostleship**—the favour to be an apostle, and qualifications for it—**for obedience to the faith in all nations**—"that is, that all nations may embrace the faith of Christ. **For His name**—for His sake; out of regard to Him"—WESLEY.

(Ch. 12. 3; 15. 15; 1 Cor. 15. 10; Gal. 1. 15; 2. 9; Eph. 3. 8; Acts 9. 15.)

"**Grace and apostleship** — qualifications and commission; grace for the endurance of labours, apostleship for authority in preaching"—ORIGEN. "Apostleship includes all those privileges which S. Paul possessed as an apostle; grace is all those privileges that he possessed as a Christian. The light in which he valued most the gifts that had been bestowed upon him, was inasmuch as they enabled him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles"—ELLICOTT.

6. **Among whom**—"the nations brought to the obedience of faith—**are ye also**—but S. Paul gives them no pre-eminence above others"—WESLEY.

Called to be Jesus Christ's (R.V.). Christians are holy on account of Christ, who lives in them. He who would experience "all things are yours—and ye are Christ's" (1 Cor. 3. 21-23) must be *all* Christ's—"your whole spirit and soul and body—preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 5. 23). "The gospel is God's voice calling men to Christ; and is as solemn as the voice from the burning bush, or on the road to Damascus. Those who have obeyed the call are Christ's called ones. Just as, by the voice of Christ, God made S. Paul an apostle, and gave him a right to call himself such; so by the gospel, God gave these men to Christ, and gave them a right to call themselves His"—BEET.

7. **To all that are in Rome**—"most of these were heathens by birth (ver. 13), though with Jews mixed among them. They were scattered up and down in that large city, and not yet reduced into the form of a church. Only some had begun to meet in the house of Aquila and

Priscilla. **Beloved of God.** And from His free love, not from any merit of yours, **called** by His word and His Spirit to believe in Him, *and* now through faith *holy* as He is holy. **Grace**—the peculiar favour of God—**and peace**—all manner of blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. This is both a Christian salutation and an apostolic benediction—**from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.** This is the usual way wherein the apostles speak, 'God the Father,' 'God our Father.' Nor do they often, in speaking of Him, use the word *Lord*, as it implies the proper name of God, *Jehovah*. In the Old Testament, indeed, the holy men generally said, 'The Lord our God'; for they were then, as it were, servants; whereas now they are sons: and sons so well know their father, that they need not frequently mention his proper name. It is one and the same peace, and one and the same grace, which is from God and from Jesus Christ. Our trust and prayer fix on God, as He is the Father of Christ; and on Christ, as He presents us to the Father"—WESLEY.

Called to be saints. (Ch. 9. 24; 1 Cor. 9. 2; 1 Thess. 4. 7.) **Grace to you.** (1 Cor. 1. 3; 2 Cor. 1. 2; Gal. 1. 3.) "**Called to be saints**—*lit.* 'Called saints'—*i.e.* practically 'converted, so as to be saints.' Holiness is the unmistakable characteristic of the true Church. The glory of God is His holiness. It is the task of the Church to exhibit in human life and character this holiness of God's. Those whom God calls into His Church, He calls to be above all else, holy, and every individual member of the Church should be alive to the necessity of holy living"—M. DODS. **From God our Father**—the original source of all our blessings, who is now become our Father, having adopted us into His family, and regenerated us by His grace. "**And the Lord Jesus Christ**—the one Mediator between God and man, through whose sacrifice and intercession we receive all the blessings of providence and grace"—BENSON. "**Grace**—the love of God manifested in the form of pardon towards sinful man. **Peace**—the feeling of profound calm or inward quiet which is communicated to the heart by the possession of reconciliation. It may seem that the title, 'well-beloved of God,' given above, included these gifts; but the Christian possesses nothing which does not require to be ever received anew, and daily increased by new acts of faith and prayer"—GODET.

SECTION II.—Vers. 8–17. GOOD REPORT OF THE ROMAN CHURCH. S. PAUL DESIRES TO VISIT THEM, AND PREACH TO THEM.—8. **I thank.** "In the very entrance of this one Epistle are the traces of all spiritual affections, but of thankfulness above all, with the expression of which almost all S. Paul's Epistles begin. He here particularly thanks God, that what otherwise himself should have done, was done at Rome already. **My God.** This very word expresses faith, hope, love, and consequently all true religion. **Through Jesus Christ.** The gifts of God all pass through Christ to us; and all our petitions and thanksgivings pass through Christ to God. **That your faith is spoken of** (R.V. 'That your faith is proclaimed'). In this kind of congratulations S. Paul describes either the whole of Christianity, as Col. 1. 3, etc., or some part of it, as 1 Cor. 1. 5. Accordingly here he mentions the faith of the Romans, suitably to his design (vers. 12, 17). **Through the whole world.** This joyful news spreading everywhere, that there were Christians also in the imperial city. And the goodness and wisdom of God established faith in the chief cities; in Jerusalem and Rome particularly, that from thence it might be diffused to all nations"—WESLEY.

"**Through Jesus Christ.** Christ is, as it were, the medium through whom God has been brought into close relation to man. Hence all intercourse between God and man is represented as passing through Him. He is not only the Divine *Logos*, by whom God is revealed to man, but He is also the Head of humanity, by whom the tribute of thanks and praise is offered to God"—ELLICOTT. "**That your faith is proclaimed.** Religion itself is a practical thing; and its natural effects, when received, are its true test. In Rome, it had been for some years working its own mighty moral changes, and had raised up a church there, whose faith in those primitive times had obtained no approving celebrity, if it had not saved its professors from sin; if it had not been 'faith working by love.' He could therefore refer to the effects produced as forcibly as to the argument in favour of the gospel; and had not only to exhibit the theory, but its triumphs of salvation and its fruits of holiness"—WATSON. "**Throughout the whole world.** There were multitudes of strangers continually visiting Rome, who, on their return home, reported what they had seen. The faith of these Romans in the Lord Jesus Christ would be specially the subject of conversation in the churches everywhere. It was a matter of great joy that the religion of Christ was professed in the imperial city"—BENSON.

9. **God, whom I serve**—"as an apostle—**in my spirit**—not only with my body, but with my inmost soul—**in the gospel**—by preaching it"—WESLEY.

How unceasingly (R.V.). "**With my spirit**—not only with my body, but with the greatest integrity and ardour of my soul"—COKE. "**For God is my Witness.** A solemn appeal to the heart-searching God, that he had loved them, and constantly prayed for them. **Making mention of you always in my prayers.** He can sooner be forgetful of himself than unmindful of them"—BURKITT. **Always**—in all my solemn addresses to God.

10. **If by any means now at length**

"This accumulation of particles declares the strength of his desire"—WESLEY.

"**A prosperous journey.** Little thought S. Paul that, when bound at Jerusalem, and posted from one prison to another, God was now sending him to Rome ; yet He sent him, and very safe, with a great convoy. God goes often another way to work for our good than we could imagine"—TRAPP.

11. **That I may impart to you**—"face to face, by laying on of hands, prayer, preaching the gospel, private conversation—**some spiritual gift.** With such gifts the Corinthians, who had enjoyed the presence of S. Paul, abounded (1 Cor. 1. 7 ; 12. 1 ; 14. 1). So did the Galatians likewise (Gal. 3. 5) ; and, indeed, all those churches which had had the presence of any of the apostles had peculiar advantages in this kind, from the laying on of their hands. (Acts 19. 6 ; 8. 17, etc. ; 2 Tim. 1. 6.) But as yet the Romans were greatly inferior to them in this respect ; for which reason the apostle, in the twelfth chapter also, says little, if anything, of their spiritual gifts. He therefore desires to impart some, **that they might be established** ; for by these was the testimony of Christ confirmed among them. That S. Peter had no more been at Rome than S. Paul, at the time when this Epistle was wrote, appears from the general tenor thereof, and from this place in particular ; for, otherwise, what S. Paul wishes to impart to the Romans would have been imparted already by S. Peter"—WESLEY.

"**That I may impart.** All the inward gifts of God are wrought in man's spirit by the Spirit of God. Nevertheless, S. Paul hopes to be a medium through which such gifts will be *imparted* to his readers at Rome" — BEET. "**That I may impart**—such gifts as would naturally flow to one Christian (or to many collectively) from the personal presence, and warm sympathy of another ; in S. Paul's case, heightened in proportion to the wealth and elevation of his own spiritual consciousness and life. His head and his heart alike are full to overflowing, and he longs to impart some of these riches to the Romans. Inasmuch as he regards all his own religious advancement and experience as the result of the Spirit working within him, he calls the fruits of that advancement and experience 'spiritual gifts.' **May be established**—may grow and be confirmed and strengthened in the faith. S. Paul would contribute to the advancement and consolidation of the Church"—ELLICOTT.

12. **That is,** I long **to be comforted by the mutual faith both of you and me.** "He not only associates the Romans with, but even prefers them before himself. How different is this style of the apostle from that of the modern court of Rome !"—WESLEY.

Each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine (R. V.). This was not an ingenious religious *compliment.* To the sincere Christian teacher nothing is more real than the reflex aid he receives among Christian learners. It was rather an illustration of MEYER'S description of the writer: "Amidst the circumstances of his apostolic work he developed a force and play of spirit, a keenness, depth, clearness, and cogency of thought, a purity and firmness of purpose, an intensity of feeling, a holy audacity of effort, a wisdom of deportment, a precision and delicacy of practical skill, a strength and liberty of faith, a fire and mastery of eloquence, a heroism in danger, a love, and self-forgetfulness and patience and humility, and altogether a sublime power and richness of endowment, which have secured for this chosen implement[1] of Christ the reverence and wonder of all time."

13. **Brethren.** "A frequent, holy, simple, sweet, and yet grand appellation. The apostles but rarely address persons by their names—as 'O ye Corinthians,' 'O Timotheus.' S. Paul generally uses this appellation, 'Brethren' ; sometimes in exhortation, 'My beloved,' or, 'My beloved brethren' ; S. James, 'Brethren,' 'My brethren,' 'My beloved brethren' ; S. Peter and Jude always, 'Beloved' ; S. John frequently, 'Beloved' ; once, 'Brethren' ; oftener than once, 'My little children.' **Though I have been hindered hitherto** — either by business (see ch. 15. 22) ; or persecution (1 Thess. 2. 2) ; or the Spirit (Acts 16. 7). **That I might have some fruit**—of my ministerial labours. **Even as** I have already had from the many churches I have planted and watered **among the other Gentiles**"—WESLEY.

Now I would not have you ignorant—a characteristic phrase. (See ch. 11. 25 ; 1 Cor. 10. 1 ; 12. 1 ; 2 Cor. 1. 8 ; 1 Thess. 4. 13.) "In writing these words, S. Paul doubtless sought only to express his feelings towards these far-off brethren. But he could not have written words more calculated to increase the attention which his former words called forth"—BEET. "**Oftentimes I purposed to come unto you.** Some at Rome might say, If S. Paul had such a longing desire to see us as he expresses, why did he not come before this and preach here, as he has done at Corinth and Ephesus, and elsewhere ? He tells them that it was not for want of will and inclination, but for want of opportunity"—BURKITT. "*Within limits,* evidently S. Paul's plans were no more inspired than those of modern missionaries ; his most deliberate intentions were liable to corrections by his Master. The correction came often in the form, not of silent providence, but of miraculous intimation. (See Acts 16. 6, 7, and comp. 2 Cor. 1. 15–17)"—C. B. "**But was let hitherto,** *i.e.* "was hindered." GROTIUS suggests that this "hindrance" lay in the necessity of those places where Christ was still unknown, and which therefore needed an apostolic visit more urgently than did Rome.

[1] The word used by Luther in Acts 9. 15, where our version uses *vessel.*

14. **To the Greeks and the barbarians.** "He includes the Romans under the Greeks; so that this division comprises all nations. **Both to the wise and the unwise**—for there were 'unwise' even among the Greeks, and 'wise' even among the barbarians. **I am a debtor,** to all—I am bound by my Divine mission to preach the gospel to them"—WESLEY.

"**The wise and the unwise.** (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 20, 26–28.) The gospel was at first most readily received by the poor and unlearned, but it did not therefore follow that culture and education were by any means excluded. S. Paul himself was a conspicuous instance to the contrary. And so, in the next century, the Church which began with such leaders as Ignatius and Polycarp, could number among its members before the century was out, Tertullian, and Origen—the most learned man of his time"—ELLICOTT.

15. **So much as in me**—"according to my ability and opportunity—**I am ready**—and desirous—**to preach the gospel . . . at Rome.** Though it be the capital of the world, a place of so much politeness and grandeur, and a place where it might be peculiarly dangerous to oppose those popular superstitions to which the empire is supposed to owe its greatness and felicity, yet I am willing to come and publish this Divine message, though it be at the risk of my reputation, my liberty, or life"—BENSON.

16. **For I am not ashamed of the gospel.** "To the world, indeed, it is folly and weakness (1 Cor. 1. 18); therefore, in the judgment of the world, he ought to be ashamed of it; especially at Rome, the head and theatre of the world. But S. Paul is not ashamed, knowing **it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth**—the great and gloriously powerful means of saving all who accept salvation in God's own way. As S. Paul comprises the sum of the gospel in this Epistle, so he does the sum of the Epistle in this and the following verse. **Both to the Jew and to the Gentile.** There is a noble frankness, as well as a comprehensive sense, in these words, by which he, on the one hand, shows the Jews their absolute need of the gospel; and, on the other, tells the politest and greatest nation in the world both that their salvation depended on receiving it, and that the first offers of it were in every place to be made to the despised Jews"—WESLEY.

"**The gospel of Christ.** It has encountered great and powerful foes, the malice of the Jews, the rage of heathen priests, the scorn and contempt of philosophers, the storm of popular fury. Ask of the Corinthians its moral powers in converting men from the grossest immoralities (1 Cor. 6. 11). The gospel has lost none of its ancient powers. It hallows the heart, and constrains us to love our enemies; yea, to be ready to die for the name of Jesus"—SUTCLIFFE. "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel**—not ashamed of a scheme so beneficent and so grand. The gospel he preaches is that mighty agency which God Himself has set in motion, and the object of which is the salvation of all who put their faith in it, to whatever nation or race they may belong. He has perhaps in his mind the reception he had met with in other highly civilised cities. (Comp. Acts 17. 32.) He had himself once found a 'stumbling-block' in the humiliation of the cross; now, so far from being ashamed of it, it is just that of which he is most proud. The preaching of the cross is the cardinal point of the whole gospel"—ELLICOTT. "**Not ashamed.** S. Paul, as a Jew, believed on Christ Jesus; and believing he had life through His name, through Him he enjoyed an abundance of grace; so that, being filled with that happiness which an indwelling Christ produces, he could cheerfully say, **I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.** And why? Because he felt it to be **the power of God to the salvation** of his believing soul"—CLARKE.

17. **The righteousness of God.** "This expression sometimes means God's eternal, essential righteousness, which includes both justice and mercy, and is eminently shown in condemning sin and yet justifying the sinner. Sometimes it means that righteousness by which a man, through the gift of God, is made and is righteous; and that, both by receiving Christ through faith, and by a conformity to the essential righteousness of God. S. Paul, when treating of justification, means hereby the righteousness of faith; therefore called 'the righteousness of God,' because God found out and prepared, reveals and gives, approves and crowns it. In this verse the expression means, the whole benefit of God, through Christ, for the salvation of a sinner. **Is revealed.** Mention is here made, and ver. 18, of a twofold revelation—of wrath and righteousness; the former, little known to nature, is revealed by the law; the latter, wholly unknown to nature, by the gospel. That goes before, and prepares the way, this follows. Each, the apostle says, 'is revealed' at the present time, in opposition to the times of ignorance. **From faith to faith**—by a gradual series of still clearer and clearer promises. **As it is written.** S. Paul had just laid down three propositions—1. Righteousness is by faith (ver. 17); 2. Salvation is by righteousness (ver. 16); 3. Both to the Jews and to the Gentiles (ver. 16). Now all these are confirmed by that single sentence, **The just shall live by faith** (R.V. 'The righteous shall live by faith'),—which was primarily spoken of those who preserved their lives, when the Chaldeans besieged Jerusalem, by believing the declarations of God, and acting according to them. Here it means, He shall obtain the favour of God, and continue therein by believing"—WESLEY.

The righteousness of God—"a phrase occurring elsewhere seven times in this Epistle (ch. 3. 5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 10. 3, twice), once in the Gospels (Matt. 6. 33), once in 2 Cor. (5. 21),

once in S. James (1. 20), and once in 2 Pet. (1. 1). Ch. 3. 26 appears to supply the key to this meaning; the 'righteousness of God' is something which is reached or received 'through faith in Christ,' and it is declared in such a way as to show Him 'just, *yet justifying.*' On the whole it is most consistent with most passages to explain it of the 'righteousness imputed by God' to the believer"—MOULE. "**The righteousness of God**—God's method of saving sinners"—CLARKE. "**The righteousness of God.** 'Of God' here means 'which proceeds from God.' And 'the righteousness' which thus 'proceeds from God' is that condition of righteousness in man into which he enters by his participation in the messianic kingdom. The whole object of the coming of the Messiah was to make men 'righteous' before God. This was done more especially by the death of Christ upon the cross, which, as we learn from ch. 3. 24-26, had the effect of making God 'propitious' towards men. The benefit of this act is secured to all who make good their claims to be considered members of the messianic kingdom by a loyal adhesion to the Messiah. Such persons are treated as if they were 'righteous,' though the righteousness that is thus attributed to them is not any actual merit of their own, but an ideal condition in which they are placed by God. This is the well-known doctrine of justification by faith." "This verse explains the statement in ver. 16 that the good news is a power of God to save all that believe. Man was perishing, and his perdition was the just punishment of his own sin. A righteous judge cannot rescue a criminal from a righteous sentence. But in the gospel God proclaims, through the death of Christ (ch. 3. 24), a new law, 'He that believes shall be saved,' and thus bestows his own favour on all that believe. The believer is now, by the gift of God, righteous. And the righteous judge breaks off the fetters, and sets the prisoner free. Where the word is believed, the arm of the Lord is stretched out to save. (Isa. 51. 1)"—BEET. A (not **the**) righteousness of God (R.V.). This seemingly trivial verbal change greatly clears the sense. The A.V. rendering seems to assert that a certain Divine attribute (**the** righteousness of God) is revealed in the gospel. But the indefinite article of the R.V. calls attention to the gospel as a particular manifestation of that righteousness, and thus foreshadows the chief topic of the Epistle, viz. Justification by Faith. (See ch. 3. 26.)

SECTION III.—Vers. 18-23. THE SINFULNESS OF THE HUMAN RACE; DIVINE ANGER.—18. **For.** "There is no other way of obtaining life and salvation. Having laid down his proposition, the apostle now enters upon the proof of it. His first argument is, The Law condemns all men, as being under sin. None, therefore, is justified by the works of the Law. This is treated of to ch. 3. 20. And hence he infers, Therefore justification is by faith. **The wrath of God is revealed**—not only by frequent and signal interpositions of Divine providence, but likewise in the sacred oracles, and by us, His messengers. **From heaven.** This speaks the majesty of Him whose wrath is revealed, His all-seeing eye, and the extent of His wrath: whatever is under heaven is under the effects of His wrath, believers in Christ excepted. **Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.** These two are treated of (ver. 23, etc.). **Of men.** He is speaking here of the Gentiles, and chiefly the wisest of them. **Who detain the truth**—for it struggles against their wickedness—**in unrighteousness.** The word here includes ungodliness also"—WESLEY.

"**For the wrath of God,** etc. The 'for' marks the connection as follows: 'The gospel is the secret of *salvation*, of justification before the eternal Judge; and as such it is a thing of supreme importance; for the Judge has proclaimed the doom of human sin. The question is not of mere theory, but of life or death.' **The wrath of God**—an expression frequent in the New Testament. All attempts to explain it away involve violence to the sense of Scripture: it would be as legitimate, in point of language, to explain away the Divine love"—MOULE. "**By the wrath of God** we are not to understand any *uneasy passion* in the Divine Being; but the *displeasures* of His righteousness, which is expressed by the punishments inflicted on the *ungodly*, those who retain not God in their knowledge; and the *unrighteous*, those whose lives are profligate"—CLARKE. "**All ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.** Ungodliness compriseth all sins against God; unrighteousness comprehends all sins against our neighbour. God will punish these sins upon the persons of the sinners. **Hold the truth in unrighteousness**—that is, their natural convictions were kept down under the dominions and power of their corruptions. Lust in their wills and affections was too strong for the light in their understandings; they entertained the light of truth in their minds, but did not suffer it to have its proper effect and influence upon their hearts and lives; thus making that a prisoner which would have made them free"—BURKITT.

19. **For what is to be known of God**—"those great principles which are indispensably necessary to be known—**is manifest in them; for God hath showed it to them** by the light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul means: '**What can be known** of God without the help of an extraordinary revelation is clearly manifested within them.' A light was given in their conscience and understanding, and this light bore on the existence and character of the Divine Being. This

present fact **is manifested,** is afterwards traced to its cause; 'for God "manifested" it to them.' This state of knowledge was due to a Divine act of revelation. God is not known like an ordinary object; when He is known, it is He who gives Himself to be known. The knowledge which beings have of Him is a free act on His part"—GODET. "**Because** is stronger, and of more limited meaning than **for.** As its form implies, it gives a *cause,* or reason, of what has been said. The reason why God is angry with these ungodly and unrighteous men is that they know better"—BEET.

20. **For those things of Him which are invisible, are seen**—"by the eye of the mind—**being understood.** They are seen by them, and them only, who use their understanding"—WESLEY.

Being perceived through the things that are made (R.V.). **For the invisible things of Him**—"His spiritual nature and infinite perfections, called His 'invisible things,' partly in opposition to the heathen deities, who, being all corporeal, their being and properties were things invisible; and partly because they cannot be seen, except in their effects, by men's bodily eyes"—BENSON. "**From the creation of the world are clearly seen.** It seems not to signify the means by which they came to the knowledge of God, for these are afterwards expressed, but rather to import that from the beginning of the world the heathen had the means of knowing the true God from the works of creation"—Dr. WHITBY.

21. **Because, knowing God**—"for the wiser heathens did know that there was one supreme God; yet from low and base considerations they conformed to the idolatry of the vulgar. **They did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful** (R.V. 'neither gave thanks')—they neither thanked Him for His benefits, nor glorified Him for His Divine perfections. **But became vain**—like the idols they worshipped—**in their reasonings**—various, uncertain, foolish. What a terrible instance have we of this in the writings of Lucretius! What *vain reasonings,* and how *dark* a heart, amidst so pompous professions of wisdom!"—WESLEY.

"Their sin, therefore, in worshipping idols, and in concealing the true God from the vulgar, did not proceed so much from ignorance as from corruption of heart. **Neither were thankful.** Thankfulness to God for His mercies is here represented as a part of religion, and no principle can be nobler, or have a greater or more extensive influence"—BENSON. "**To know God** is a phrase capable of many degrees of meaning, from the rational certainty of a supreme personal Maker and Lord up to that holy intimacy of divinely-given communion with the Father and the Son, to which the words of John 17. 3 refer. In this passage all that is necessary to understand is the certainty (however learnt) of the existence of a personal omnipotent Creator"—C. B.

22. **Professing themselves to be wise.** Relying upon their own wisdom, they wandered farther and farther from true wisdom, falling into the contradiction of supposing that the eternal and immutable essence of God could be represented by the perishable figures of man, or bird, or quadruped, or insect. **They became fools**—they *were made fools.* It is not merely that they expose their real folly, but that folly is itself judicially inflicted by God as a punishment for the first step of declension from Him"—ELLICOTT.

23. "**And changed**—with the utmost folly. Here are three degrees of ungodliness and of punishment: the first is described (vers. 21–24); the second (vers. 25–27); the third, in the 28th and following verses. The punishment in each case is expressed by God **gave them up.** If a man will not worship God as God, he is so left to himself that he throws away his very manhood. **Reptiles**—or creeping things, and various kinds of serpents"—WESLEY.

"Deity, and its prerogatives, were so degraded as to be (in the idolater's act) transferred to idols"—C. B. "**And changed.** Proof of their folly, and of the darkening of their heart. They put aside God, whom they acknowledged to be immortal, and whose character is so worthy of their highest admiration, and put in His place, not merely a dying man but a lifeless image of a dying man. The contrast of *imperishable* and *perishable* presents their folly in the clearest light"—BEET.

SECTION IV.—Vers. 24–32. CONDITION OF THE HEATHEN WORLD.—24. **Wherefore.** "One punishment of sin is from the very nature of it, as ver. 27; another, as here, is from vindictive justice. **Uncleanness.** Ungodliness and uncleanness are frequently joined (1 Thess. 4. 5); as are the knowledge of God and purity. **God gave them up**—by withdrawing His restraining grace"—WESLEY.

Gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness (R.V.). "**God gave them up**—as He did the antediluvians (Gen. 6. 3); the consequence of which was that their lust excited them to commit every sort of uncleanness. A contempt of religion is the source of all wickedness"—BENSON. "Idolatry and uncleanness often go together. Solomon's uncleanness led him to idolatry, and his idolatry increased his uncleanness. **Dishonour their own bodies.** Every pollution of sin, both natural and unnatural, is to be abhorred, as 'dishonouring the body.' Our bodies are to be members of Christ's. **Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness**—left these sinners to themselves to act without restraint, according to the inclinations of their lusts and corruptions. 'Lord, keep Thy servants from sinning against the light of

nature, against the light of Scripture, lest we be judicially darkened, and given up to hardness of heart, and the vilest of affections'"—BURKITT.

25. **Who changed the truth**—"the true worship of God—**into a lie**—false, abominable idolatries—**and worshipped**—inwardly—**and served**—outwardly"—WESLEY.

"**Who changed the truth of God**—those true conceptions which they had of Him by nature—**into a lie**. False opinions of Him, and the worship of idols. And they represented His true essence, His incorruptible and immortal nature, by images of men and brute creatures, which are fitly called a 'lie,' as being most false representations of the Deity"—BENSON. R.V. "For a lie." They bartered truth for error.

26. **Therefore God gave them up to vile affections**—"to which the heathen Romans were then abandoned to the last degree; and none more than the emperors themselves"—WESLEY.

"Their system of idolatry necessarily produced all kinds of *impurity*"—CLARKE. **God also gave them up.** (So Ps. 81. 11, 12; Acts 7. 42.) They became more and more debased. The sanctity of the body was utterly disregarded. They were left "without God," to live in vile desires. Men yet live who illustrate that awful condition of the ever-increasing power and corruption of indulgence in sin—"earthly, sensual, devilish."

27. **Receiving the just recompence of their error**—"their idolatry being punished with that unnatural lust, which was as horrible a dishonour to the body as their idolatry was to God"—WESLEY.

"A law broods over human existence, a law which is at the same time a Divine act: such as thou makest thy God, such wilt thou make thyself. The whole is here calculated to show that there is here a **just recompence** on the part of God. 'Well-merited recompence' (*lit.* 'the recompence which was meet'). One feels, as it were, the indignant breathing of God's holy wrath. Justice could not let it be otherwise. The clause **in themselves** brings out the depth of this blight; they bear it in themselves—it is visible to the eyes of all"—GODET.

28. **God gave them up to an undiscerning mind.** "Treated of (ver. 32)—**to do things not expedient**—even the vilest abominations, treated of (vers. 29–31)"—WESLEY.

And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge (R.V.). "As they would have nothing to do with Him, so He would have nothing to do with them"—ELLICOTT. "Here we see the hand of a just and avenging God; they abused their powers, and God deprived them of the *right use* of these powers"—CLARKE.

29. **Filled with all injustice.** "This stands in the first place; **unmercifulness**, in the last. **Fornication**—includes here every species of uncleanness. **Maliciousness.** The Greek word properly implies a temper which delights in hurting another, even without any advantage to itself"—WESLEY.

"Nothing is a sorer punishment than for the sinner to be given up to his own heart's lusts. When God withdraws His restraints, there are no abominations into which man may not rush headlong. When we think of the iniquities here recorded, and see them in the practice and temper of others, we should reflect, for our own humiliation, that our hearts are by nature the same, alike corrupt"—COKE.

30. **Whisperers**—"such as secretly defame others. **Haters of God**—that is, rebels against Him, deniers of His providence, or accusers of His justice in their adversities; yea, having an inward heart enmity to His justice and holiness. **Inventors of evil things**—of new pleasures, new ways of gain, new arts of hurting, particularly in war"—WESLEY.

"**Backbiters**—rather 'evil-speakers,' without the special notion of speaking in the *absence* of the person attacked. **Proud.** They who are continually exalting themselves and depressing others; magnifying themselves at the expense of their neighbours, and wishing men to receive their *sayings* as oracles"—CLARKE. **Disobedient to parents**—"a symptom of deep moral and social disorder. Parental authority stands in the Decalogue among the great foundations of virtue and duty, and our Lord Himself is significantly said (Luke 2. 51) to have been 'subject' to Joseph and Mary"—MOULE.

31. **Covenant-breakers.** "It is well known, the Romans, as a nation, from the very beginning of their commonwealth, never made any scruple of vacating altogether the most solemn engagement, if they did not like it, though made by their supreme magistrate, in the name of the whole people. They only gave up the general who had made it, and then supposed themselves to be at full liberty. **Without natural affection.** The custom of exposing their own new-born children to perish by cold, hunger, or wild beasts, which so generally prevailed in the heathen world, particularly among the Greeks and Romans, was an amazing instance of this; as also that of killing aged and helpless parents"—WESLEY.

"**Implacable**—that will not hear of a truce, much less of a peace"—TRAPP. **Covenant-breakers**—"persons who could be bound by no *oath*, because, properly speaking, they had *no God* to witness or avenge their misconduct. As every covenant or agreement is made as in the presence of God, so he that opposes the being and doctrine of God is incapable of being bound by any covenant, he can give no pledge for his conduct"—CLARKE.

32. **Not only do the same, but have pleasure** (R.V. "but also consent with them") **in those that practise them.** "This is the highest degree of wickedness. A man may be hurried by his passions to do the thing he

hates; but he that has pleasure in those that do evil, loves wickedness for wickedness' sake. And hereby he encourages them in sin, and heaps the guilt of others upon his own head"—WESLEY.

Knowing—"with full knowledge of the sentence of eternal death which is in store for them. They show that it is no mere momentary yielding to the force of temptation or of passion, but a radical perversion of conscience and reason, by the fact that they not only practise such things themselves, but in cold blood commend and applaud those who practise them"—ELLICOTT. "**Have pleasure in those that practise them.** There is little difference whether thou commit sin or consent to it"—TRAPP. "**Are pleased with**—last and darkest count in this catalogue of sin. Many commit sin, carried away by selfishness or passion, who readily condemn it in others. But to take pleasure in the sin of one's neighbour shows a love of sin, not for some further gain, but for its own sake"—BEET.

CHAPTER II.

SECTION V.—Vers. 1-29. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD ADMITS OF NO EXCEPTIONS.—1. **Therefore.** "The apostle now makes a transition from the Gentiles to the Jews, till, at ver. 6, he comprises both. **Thou art inexcusable** (R.V. 'art without excuse')—seeing knowledge without practice only increases guilt. **O man.** Having spoken of the Gentile in the third person, he addresses the Jew in the second person. But he calls him by a common appellation, as not acknowledging him to be a Jew. (See vers. 17, 28.) **Whosoever thou art that judgest**—censurest, condemnest. **For in that thou judgest the other**—the heathen—**thou condemnest thyself; for thou doest the same things**—in effect; in many instances"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul does not say that all men commit the unnatural sins so prominent in Section IV., for the section concludes with a long list of other sins. But he distinctly asserts that all are guilty of actual wickedness, that all do what they know God has forbidden, and might justly be punished with death"—BEET. "They who themselves commit the sins which they condemn and censure in others are totally inexcusable, and pronounce their own condemnation"—BURKITT.

2. **For we know**—"without thy teaching—**that the judgment of God**—not thine, who exceptest thyself from its sentence—**is according to truth**—is just, making no exception (vers. 5, 6, 11); and reaches the heart as well as the life (ver. 16)"—WESLEY.

"**But we are sure**—though men may judge partially and perversely, yet God will judge uprightly—**that the judgment of God**—the sentence that He will pronounce upon persons, whether Jews or Gentiles—**is according to truth**—according to the true state of every man's case, or according to the true character of persons, and the true quality of the actions and dispositions (vers. 5-11). **Against them who commit such things**—however they may behave towards their fellow-creatures"—BENSON.

3. **That thou shalt escape**—"rather than the Gentile"—WESLEY.

"**That thou shalt escape.** Emphatic. 'Are *you*, because you are a Jew, to be the only exception to this rule?' God makes no exceptions. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die' (Ezek. 18. 20). This is preaching to the conscience, to the quick. Our exhortations should be as forked arrows, to stick in men's hearts, and not wound only, as other arrows"—TRAPP.

4. **Or despisest thou.** "Dost thou go further still—from hoping to escape His wrath, to the abuse of His love? **The riches**—the abundance—**of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering**—seeing thou both hast sinned, dost sin, and wilt sin. All these are afterwards comprised in the single word 'goodness.' **Leadeth thee**—that is, is designed of God to lead or encourage thee to it"—WESLEY.

"**Or despisest thou.** Another question which brings out the secret ground of this fallacious hope. God is merciful; He is especially kind to Israel. He has shown this by long-continued forbearance of long-continued sin. Therefore, though the man lives in sin, he expects to escape punishment. S. Paul declares that such a hope is contempt of God's kindness, arising from ignorance of its purpose. God's *kindness*—the gentleness of His treatment of men. 'Riches of His kindness' (ch. 9. 23). S. Paul frequently heaps word on word, because he feels how poor the best words are to express the great things of God. God's **forbearance** is shown in His holding back for a time displeasure against sin"—BEET. "**Longsuffering** is a mode of mercy, and the reason of its exercise is only to be found in a merciful intention"—WATSON.

5. **Treasurest up wrath.** "Although thou thinkest thou art treasuring up all good things—oh what a treasure may a man lay up either way, in this short day of life! **To thyself**—not to him whom thou judgest—**in the day of wrath, and revelation, and righteous judgment of God**—just opposite to 'the goodness and forbearance and longsuffering' of God. When God shall be *revealed*, then shall also be 'revealed' the secrets of men's hearts (ver. 16). **Forbearance** and **revelation** respect God, and are opposed to each other; longsuffering and righteous judgment respect the sinner; goodness and wrath are words of a more general import"—WESLEY.

"The one condition upon which the goodness of God will come into operation being directly contravened by the impenitence of the man who should be penitent, the load of wrath which has been accumulating against him

remains unmoved. It is only waiting for the day of judgment to discharge itself upon him. **Treasurest.** The guilt of man is accumulated little by little. The punishment will be discharged upon him all at once, in one overwhelming tide. **Against the day of wrath**—*strictly,* 'in the day of wrath,' *i.e.* wrath to be outpoured upon the day of wrath. 'The great and terrible day of the Lord,' is a conception running through all the prophetic writings. (Comp. also in the New Testament, Luke 17. 30; Acts 2. 20; 1 Cor. 1. 8; 5. 5; 2 Cor. 1. 14; 1 Thess. 5. 2-4; 2 Thess. 2. 2; 2 Pet. 3. 10-12; Rev. 6. 17; 16. 14)"—ELLICOTT.

6. **Who will render.** "S. Paul is undoubtedly speaking of the judgment of the world which God will cause to be held by Christ. The subjects who are judged are *Jews* and *Gentiles,* consequently *all men*"—MEYER.

7. **To them that seek for glory**—"for pure love does not exclude faith, hope, desire (1 Cor. 15. 58)"—WESLEY.

"**Patient continuance in well doing**—*lit.* 'by patience (persistence) in good works.' Individuals are under the Divine government, and are contemplated separately in the Divine plan. As every man is redeemed by the death of Christ, offers of mercy are made to him, rules of conduct are assigned to him. If obedient, he has the Divine favour; yet in this world he may be afflicted. If he is disobedient he is under the curse; yet in this world he may be prosperous. But individuals have another life. There is a day of judgment appointed, and a state of endless retribution, and there all become equal. Every man is treated according to his own personal conduct (ver. 17)"—WATSON.

8. **But to them that are contentious** (R.V. "Factious")—"like thee, O Jew, who thus fightest against God. The character of a false Jew is disobedience, stubbornness, impatience. **Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish**—alluding to Ps. 78. 49, 'He cast upon them,' the Egyptians, 'the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble'; and finally intimating, that the Jews would in the day of vengeance be more severely punished than even the Egyptians were when God made their plagues so wonderful"—WESLEY.

"The 'faction' or 'strife' is that of the sinful soul against the humbling terms of the Divine peace and love. **And do not obey**—implying the resistance of the *will;* the element of *disobedience,* in *unbelief* towards God. For a suggestive example, see Heb. 4. 6, compared with the history there referred to. **But obey unrighteousness**—yielding the will to the impulse of sin; 'having pleasures in unrighteousness' (2 Thess. 2. 12). 'Unrighteousness' here, as often, means sin in its largest sense. All wrong, civil, social, moral, personal, overt, secret, violates the *eternal rights,* even when it least seems to touch temporal and human interests"—MOULE.

9. **Of the Jew first.** "Here we have the first express mention of the Jews in this chapter. And it is introduced with great propriety. Their having been trained up in the true religion, and having had Christ and His apostles first sent to them, will place them in the foremost rank of the criminals that obey not the truth"—WESLEY.

"**The Jew first,** as possessing greater privileges, and having abused greater mercies; and also on the Gentile who, though he had not the same advantages, had what God saw was sufficient for his state, and having sinned against them, shall have punishment proportioned to his demerits"—CLARKE. "**Tribulation and anguish**—describes the moral and eternal state of the man on whom the *indignation* and *wrath* of the Judge falls (ver. 8). Tribulation is the punishment itself (corresponding to wrath); anguish is the wringing of the heart which punishment produces; it corresponds to the Judge's 'indignation.' **Every soul of man**—expresses the equality and universality of the treatment dealt out"—GODET. **Every soul of man.** "Not simply 'upon every man.' The 'soul' is that which is affected by the 'tribulation and anguish'"—MEYER.

10. **But glory**—"just opposite to 'wrath,' from the Divine approbation—**honour**—opposite to 'indignation,' by the Divine appointment; and **peace** now and for ever—opposed to tribulation and anguish"—WESLEY.

"Here again the apostle indicates the result finally reached, whether evil or good, without expressly mentioning the means by which it may be produced; on the one hand, the rejection of the gospel (ver. 9), as the supreme sin, at once the effect and cause of evil-doing; on the other, its acceptance (ver. 10), as effect and cause of the determination to follow goodness, and of its practice. But what is the foundation of such a judgment? One of God's perfections which the Jew could not deny without setting himself in contradiction to the whole Old Testament, the *impartiality* of God, whose judgment descends on evil wherever it is found, *with* or *without* law (vers. 11, 12)"—GODET.

11. **For there is no respect of persons with God.** "He will reward every one according to his works. But this is well consistent with His distributing advantages and opportunities of improvement, according to His own good pleasure"—WESLEY.

"Confirms the statement in vers. 9, 10, that God will reward and punish both Jew and Greek, by asserting a great principle which underlies the Old Testament declaration of ver. 6. **Respect of persons**—*lit.* 'reception of faces'; to look at a man's face and exterior, instead of at his heart and life. (Comp. Jas. 2. 1-3; Luke 20. 21; Gal. 2. 6; Eph. 6. 9; Col. 3. 25.) God looks not at a man's circumstances, but at his conduct and heart. This principle commends itself to the moral sense of every

man"—BEET. "God does not save men with respect to their external privileges, or their barren knowledge and profession of the truth, but according as their state and dispositions really are"—M. HENRY.

12. **For as many as have sinned**—"he speaks as of the time past, for all time will be past at the day of judgment—**without the Law**—without having any written Law—**shall also perish without the Law**—without regard had to any outward law; being condemned by the law written in their hearts. The word 'also' shows the agreement of the manner of sinning with the manner of suffering. 'Perish'—he could not so properly say, '*Shall be judged* without the Law"—WESLEY.

"**And as many as.** The similar form of the two parts of the verse sets forth the similar fate of the two classes of sinners. **In Law** (ch. 3. 19). The principles of right and wrong authoritatively set forth in the Law was the moral element in which they lived, thought, and sinned. And these principles will also be the standard with which their conduct will be compared, and thus the instrument by means of which they will be judged. Judgment will come to them through the Law, which was the moral element of their life. Thus the two classes of mankind will be treated by God without respect of persons"—BEET. "The truth, plainly implied and necessarily supposed, that as some sinners perish, having the written word, and all external means of salvation; so others perish, having not the written word or law of God, and the outward and ordinary means of salvation. That all men shall not be proceeded against in the day of judgment after one and the same manner; but every man according to the demerit of his sin, and according to the capacity and relation in which he stood in this life. The Gentiles which had only the law of *nature*, shall not be judged by the Law of Moses. The Jews which have both the law of *nature* and the Law of Moses, shall be judged by both. And consequently Christians, which have the law of *nature* unwritten, the Mosaical Law written, and the evangelical law, both written and preached, shall be under greater guilt, and receive greater condemnation; the greater the light we have quenched, the greater the darkness inflicted (Heb. 2. 3)"—BURKITT.

13. **For not the hearers of the Law are,** even now, **just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified**—"finally acquitted and rewarded, a most sure and important truth, which respects the Gentiles also, though principally the Jews. S. Paul speaks of the former (ver. 14, etc.); of the latter (ver. 17, etc.). Here is therefore no parenthesis; for the sixteenth verse also depends on the fifteenth, not on the twelfth"—WESLEY.

Hearers of the Law—"Why 'hearers' rather than possessors or readers? To describe the position of the Jews who *heard* the Law in the synagogue every Sabbath, and who for the most part knew it only in this way (Luke 4. 16; Acts 13. 15; 15. 21)"—GODET. "**But the doers of the Law**—whether natural or revealed, *i.e.* they who walk according to the light of the dispensation they are under, who steadily and universally, in the tenor of their lives, act agreeably to its precepts; they, and they only—**shall be justified** (acquitted and rewarded)—in the day of final account; whether their knowledge of it was more or less express"—Dr. WHITBY.

14. **For when the Gentiles**—"that is, any of them. S. Paul, having refuted the perverse judgment of the Jews concerning the heathens, proceeds to show the just judgment of God against them. He now speaks directly of the heathens, in order to convince the heathens. Yet the concession he makes to these serves more strongly to convince the Jews. **Do by nature**—that is, without an outward rule; though this also, strictly speaking, is by preventing grace—**the things contained in the Law**—the ten commandments being only the substance of the law of nature. **These, not having the** written **Law, are a law unto themselves**—that is, what the Law is to the Jews, they are, by the grace of God, to themselves—namely, a rule of life"—WESLEY.

A law unto themselves. "Since they (the Gentiles) having no rule of conduct external to themselves, and yet follow sometimes the path marked out in the Old Testament, S. Paul infers that there is something within them, a part of themselves, which to them is what the books of Moses are to the Jews. *Whenever Gentiles* perform *the things of the Law*, however seldom and however imperfectly, they give by their conduct a proof that they have a law within. Whereas if they never obeyed this inner law, they would not give us this proof of its existence"—BEET. "It does not follow that the Gentiles, who have not had a Divine revelation, shall either perish, because they had it not; or their unrighteous conduct pass *unpunished*, because not having this revelation might be considered an excuse for their sins"—CLARKE. "What the Law was to the Jews, the Gentiles are by the light and grace of God to themselves, namely, a rule of life"—BENSON.

15. **Who show**—"to themselves, to other men, and, in a sense, to God Himself—**the work of the Law**—the substance, though not the letter, of it—**written on their hearts**—by the same Hand which wrote the commandments on the tables of stone. **Their conscience**—there is none of all its faculties which the soul has less in its power than this—**bearing witness.** In a trial there are the plaintiff, the defendant, and the witnesses. Conscience and sin itself are witnesses against the heathens. **Their thoughts** sometimes excuse, sometimes condemn, them. **Among themselves**—alternately, like plaintiff and defendant. **Accusing or even defending them.** The very manner of speaking

shows that they have far more room to accuse than to defend"—WESLEY.

"**In their hearts.** This is the force of the apostle's argument. He is proving that the Gentiles have a rule of action. And where is that rule? 'It is written in their hearts,' inscribed upon their mental faculties; a sense of moral good and evil is common to all mankind, and a secret power offered by Divine grace to embrace the one and to avoid the other"—COKE. "**The Law written in their hearts.** If they are injured in character, or defrauded in property, they are all learned in the Law, and philosophers in the moral code. If they steal, if they commit fornication, how cautious are they of concealment! If death approach, how dreadful are their fears! All these are dictates of conscience, emanations of the Law written in their hearts. (See Gen. 42. 21; John 8. 9)"—SUTCLIFFE. "**Their conscience also bearing witness**—for or against them, or testifying how far they have complied with their light or law. There is not one of all the faculties which the soul has less in its power than this. **And their thoughts**—or their reasonings or reflections upon their own conduct—**the meanwhile**, according as they do well or ill, **accusing**, condemning them, when they have acted contrary to their light, **or** else **excusing**, approving, and justifying them, when they have conformed to it"—BENSON.

16. **In the day**—"that is, who show this in the day. Everything will then be shown to be what it really is. In that day will appear the Law written in their hearts, as it often does in the present life. **When God shall judge the secrets of men.** On secret circumstances depends the real quality of actions, frequently unknown to the actors themselves (ver. 29). Men generally form their judgments, even of themselves, merely from what is apparent. **According to my gospel**—according to the tenor of that gospel which is committed to my care. Hence it appears that the gospel also is a law"—WESLEY.

"**The secrets of men**—not, we conceive, their secret bad actions, but, agreeably to the preceding discourse, their moral state and circumstances under different degrees of light, which are secrets now to us, or of which we are by no means competent judges. We cannot judge what capacities, opportunities, and advantages every man, in every age and country, enjoys, nor what use he makes of them; these are things only known to God"—COKE. "On secret circumstances depends the real quality of actions, frequently unknown to the actors themselves (ver. 29). Men generally form their judgments, even of themselves, merely from what is apparent"—BENSON.

17. "**But if thou art called a Jew** (R.V. 'But if thou bearest the name of a Jew'). This highest point of Jewish glorying, after a further description of it interposed (vers. 17–20), and refuted (vers. 21–24), is itself refuted (ver. 25, etc.). The description consists of twice five articles; of which the former five (vers. 17, 18) shows what he boasts of in himself; the other five (vers. 19, 20), what he glories in with respect to others. The first particular of the former five answers to the first of the latter; the second to the second, and so on. **And restest in the Law**—dependest on it, though it can only condemn thee—**and gloriest in God**—as thy God; and that, too, to the exclusion of others"—WESLEY.

S. Paul has expressed in vers. 13–16 the rule of judgment, that not the hearers, but the **doers** of the Law shall in the judgment be justified. He wishes now vividly to bring home the fact, that the conduct of the Jews, with all their conceit as to the possession and knowledge of the Law, is in sharp contradiction to that standard of judgment.

18. "**Knowest His will**—hast been favoured with a revelation of His own will, immediately from Himself — **being instructed** — being 'catechised' from your infancy, in the knowledge of Divine things"—CLARKE.

19. **Blind, in darkness, ignorant, babes.** "These were the titles which the Jews generally gave the Gentiles"—WESLEY.

"The Jewish doctors, in contempt of the Gentiles, were wont to speak of them as **blind, in darkness, ignorant, babes**, and boasted of themselves as guides, to whose direction the Gentiles, in matters of religion, ought implicitly to submit. This boasting of the Jews the apostle introduced here, to show that their sins were greatly aggravated by the revelation of which they boasted"—BENSON.

20. **Having the form of knowledge and truth**—"that is, the most accurate knowledge of the truth"—WESLEY.

"**An instructor of the foolish.** Ye believe the Gentiles to be **babes** and **fools** when compared with yourselves; that ye alone possess the only **true knowledge**; that ye are the only *favourites* of Heaven; and that all nations must look up to you as possessing the only **form of knowledge**, the system of eternal **truth**, derived **from the Law.** If, therefore, ye act not as becomes those who have such eminent advantages, it must be to your endless disgrace and infamy"—CLARKE.

21–23. **Thou dost not teach thyself.** "He does not teach himself who does not practise what he teaches. **Dost thou steal, commit adultery, commit sacrilege**—sin grievously against thy neighbour, thyself, God. S. Paul had shown the Gentiles, first their sins against God, then against themselves, then against their neighbours. He now inverts the order: for sins against God are the most glaring in a heathen, but not in a Jew. **Thou that abhorrest idols**—which all the Jews did, from the time of the Babylonish captivity. **Thou committest sacrilege**—doest what is worse, robbing Him 'who is God over all' of the glory which is due to Him. None of these

charges were rashly advanced against the Jews of that age; for, as their own historian relates, some even of the priests lived by rapine, and others in gross uncleanness. And as for sacrilegiously robbing God and His altar, it had been complained of ever since Malachi; so that the instances are given with great propriety and judgment"—WESLEY.

"**Thou therefore which teachest**—a priest, a Levite, a teacher, whose lives were often very immoral, though they judged and condemned the Christians. From their moral character, he was bold to repress their pride and insolence by three questions: **Dost thou steal? Dost thou commit adultery? Dost thou commit sacrilege?** Where, then, is your boasted circumcision?"—SUTCLIFFE. "This appeal might be, 'Thou who art so jealous for God against idolaters, dost thou worship self and mammon in His presence?'"—C. B. "S. Paul tells the man the practical result of the conduct just described. There is one who exults in the thought that to his nation God has given an authoritative standard of right and wrong. Yet he tramples that standard under his feet; and by so doing leads others to view with contempt the God who gave it. Even the heathen saw the absurd contradiction of the man's words and works. Yet from his bold profession they supposed him to enjoy the favour of the God of the Jews. And they spoke with contempt of a Deity who, as they thought, smiled on such a worshipper. Through his profession and conduct the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles"—BEET.

25. **Circumcision indeed profiteth**—"he does not say, justifies. How far it profited is shown in the third and fourth chapters. **Thy circumcision is become uncircumcision**—is so already in effect. Thou wilt have no more benefit by it than if thou hadst never received it. The very same observation holds with regard to baptism"—WESLEY.

"Here, as in many other passages, the apostle speaks the thoughts of Jewish readers. They fancied that circumcision, by showing that they were descended from Abraham and were members of God's covenant, would ensure their salvation, though they were ever so wicked. But he tells them their circumcision would avail them only, if they practised the Law; that is, performed the things required in the covenant with Abraham (see ver. 12), in which case, as the seal of that covenant, it would give them assurance of salvation. But if they did not perform the precepts of that covenant, their circumcision would be of no use to them"—BENSON.

26. **If the uncircumcision**—"that is, a person uncircumcised—**keep the Law** (R.V. 'keep the ordinances of the Law')—walk agreeably to it—**shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision**—in the sight of God"—WESLEY.

"If the *Gentile* be found to act according to the *spirit* and *design* of the *Law*, his acting thus uprightly, according to the light which God has afforded him, will be reckoned to him as if he were circumcised and walked agreeably to the Law"—CLARKE.

27. **Yea, the uncircumcision that is by nature**—"those who are, literally speaking, uncircumcised. **Fulfilling the Law**—as to the substance of it. **Shall judge thee**—shall condemn thee in that day—**who by the letter and circumcision**—who having the bare, literal, external circumcision—**transgressest the Law**"—WESLEY.

"The comparative exemplariness of those who enjoy less means and make less profession of religion, will justly condemn those who, with greater advantages and more pretensions to piety, dishonour, by their unfaithfulness, the holy name whereby they are called"—COKE.

"**Shall judge thee**—shall proclaim the punishment which God will inflict"—BEET.

28. **For he is not a Jew**—"in the most important sense, *i.e.* one of God's beloved people—**who is one in outward** show only; **neither is that** the true, acceptable **circumcision, which is apparent in the flesh**"—WESLEY.

"He is not a genuine member of the Church of God, who has only an **outward** profession. Circumcision is a rite which represents a *spiritual* thing, viz. the change and purification of the heart, as may be seen (Jer. 4. 4, 6, 10; 9. 26; Ezek. 44. 7, 9)"—CLARKE. "We are nothing for or before God, but what we are in the inward man; all the rest is but shadow"—COKE.

29. **But he is a Jew**—"that is, one of God's people—**who is one inwardly**—in the secret recesses of his soul. **And** the acceptable **circumcision is that of the heart**—referring to Deut. 30. 6; the putting away all inward impurity. This is seated **in the spirit**, the inmost soul, renewed by the Spirit of God. **And not in the letter**—not in the external ceremony. **Whose praise is not from men, but from God**—the only Searcher of the heart"—WESLEY.

"**Who is one inwardly**—by the purification of his heart from all filthy lusts, evil affections, and sinful dispositions, and a circumcision of the heart and in the spirit—that is, a circumcision wrought in us by the Spirit of God, and not barely by the letter of the Law. And the praise of this is not of men, who cannot discern the heart, but of God, who is the Searcher of the heart. Men are very prone to rest upon church-privileges and external performances, as evidences of Divine favour, yet they are no testimonies or signs of the truth of grace. It is holiness of heart and life, the communion with God, in the exercise of faith and love, which testifies to the fulness of saving grace"—BURKITT. "From the seventeenth verse, we have a very pointed attack on the

Jews, who boasted of privilege, of sacred knowledge, and despised the Gentiles; and who nevertheless committed the grossest crimes forbidden in the Law. The whole train of those arguments applies to the nominal Christians with equal force. The uncircumcised Gentile who obeyed the law of nature should be saved, while the Jew who slighted the Law of Moses should be condemned. Hence the inference, that 'he is a Jew,' or he is a Christian, 'which is one inwardly'; and circumcision is that of the heart. Learn then, O my soul, sincerely to follow the light thou hast, and the Lord will accept thee in the great day"—SUTCLIFFE.

CHAPTER III.

SECTION VI.—Vers. 1-9. THE JEWS HAVE REAL ADVANTAGES. — 1. "**What then,** may some say, **is the advantage of the Jew, or of the circumcision?**—that is, those that are circumcised, above the Gentiles"—WESLEY.

"In ch. 2. 25, S. Paul said that to those who keep the Law circumcision is profitable; and, in vers. 28, 29, that the distinctions which avail with God are not outward but inward. But circumcision is an outward ordinance. S. Paul therefore asks, What is the abovementioned benefit of it, and in what respects is a man a gainer by being a Jew? **Jew** and **circumcision** link Section viii. to Section vii. They keep before us the vain confidence expressed or implied in ch. 2. 17, 25"—BEET.

2. **Chiefly in that they were entrusted with the oracles of God**—"the Scriptures, in which are so great and precious promises. Other prerogatives will follow. (Ch. 9. 4, 5.) S. Paul here singles out this, by which, after removing the objection, he will convict them so much the more"—WESLEY.

"The oracles of God were **entrusted** to the Jews, for the good of all mankind. And the possession of them was, in S. Paul's day, the great distinction between Jews and Gentiles. While the heathen were vainly discussing the nature of the gods, the Jews were taught from childhood about Him who spoke to their fathers about the promised Deliverer. That the Jews were the first recipients of the oracles of God was in itself a sufficient proof of the advantage of being a Jew"—BEET.

3. **Shall their unbelief disannul the faithfulness of God?** "Will He not still make good His promises to them that do believe?"—WESLEY.

"Shall human inconstancy make God inconstant? Shall He revoke His promise to Abraham, and His oath to David? (2 Sam. 7. 25.) The promise to Abraham stands, though the rebels died; the oath to David is sure, though the sword departed not from his house. Covenants with men are futile, but with Christ they are sure. (Ps. 51. 4.) God **is true**; it is men who fluctuate and lie"—SUTCLIFFE.

4. "**God forbid that anything should be** insinuated which questions the faithfulness of God. **Yea, let God be true,** let Him be acknowledged true to His covenant and His promise, though **every man** should be esteemed **a liar,** and unworthy of confidence; or, though every Jew should disbelieve, and be cast off on that account"—BENSON. "Rather should we admit any charge of untruth against man, than the least against God. So David saw and wrote in his confession of his own sin; his main thought was (Ps. 51. 4) that he would own the very worst against himself, that God might be seen to punish him justly"—C. B.

5. **But,** "it may be further objected, **if our unrighteousness** be subservient to God's glory, is it not unjust in Him to punish us for it? **I speak as a man**—as human weakness would be apt to speak"—WESLEY.

"The mere raising of such a question as this requires an apology; it is only as a man might speak about man that he dares to utter such a thought. That, too, is an impossible objection, for if it held good there could not be any judgment. No sin would be punishable, for all sin would serve to emphasise the strict veracity of God in His denunciations of it, and therefore would ultimately conduce to His glory. It would thus cease to be sinful, and there would be nothing to hinder us from adopting the principle that is so calumniously attributed to us—that it is lawful to do evil that good may come. A calumny it is, and any such principle, with all that pertains to it, *i.e.* with the whole of the preceding argument, is justly condemned"—ELLICOTT.

6. **God forbid.** "By no means. If it were unjust in God to punish that unrighteousness which is subservient to His own glory, **how should God judge the world**—since all the unrighteousness in the world will then **commend the righteousness of God**"—WESLEY.

"By asking a second question S. Paul supports the denial with which he replies to the first. If it be unrighteous to punish the sins which show forth His own righteousness, God cannot punish anyone's sin. For all sin and all punishment will give additional proof that God is righteous. Thus the principle of the covert objection of ver. 5 would, if admitted, make it impossible for God to **judge the world**"—BEET.

7. **But,** "may the objector reply, **if the truth of God hath abounded**—has been more abundantly shown—**through my lie**—if 'my lie,' that is, practice contrary to truth, conduces to the glory of God, by making His truth shine with superior advantage — **why am I still judged as a sinner?** Can this be said to be any sin at all? Ought I not to do what would otherwise be evil, that so much 'good may come'? To this the apostle does not deign to give a direct answer, but cuts the objector short with a severe reproof"—WESLEY.

"**If the faithfulness of God in keeping His**

promise made to our fathers is, through our unfaithfulness, made far more glorious than it otherwise would have been, why should we then be *blamed* for that which must redound so much to the honour of God?"—CLARKE. "Observe how different from the coldness of Western thought and speech is the language and tone of this verse. S. Paul meets with a man who claims immunity from punishment, because his sin will bring glory to God. He at once puts himself by the man's side and says, 'I also,' and therefore everyone else, 'may claim the same immunity'"—BEET.

8. **Whose condemnation is just**—"the condemnation of all who either speak or act in this manner. So the apostle absolutely denies the lawfulness of 'doing evil,' 'any evil,' 'that good may come'"—WESLEY.

"A good intention will not excuse, never justify, a bad action in the sight of God: He will condemn evil-doers, though they do evil that good may come"—BURKITT. "The last clause of this verse, **whose condemnation is just**, teaches that there are certain rules which God has laid down for us, disobedience to which, in any imaginable circumstances, is universally a moral evil; even though the quantity of good arising thence to our fellow-creatures should be greater than that arising from an observance of those rules"—COKE.

9. **What then?** "Here he resumes what he said (ver. 1). **Under sin**—under the guilt and power of it: the Jews, by transgressing the written Law; the Gentiles, by transgressing the law of nature"—WESLEY.

"**Are we in worse case than they?** (R.V.). This is a difficult verse. MEYER renders, "Are we in the position to apply a defence for ourselves?" Compare R.V. *margin*, "Do we excuse ourselves?"

SECTION VII. — Vers. 10-20. THE JEWS ARE CONDEMNED BY THEIR OWN LAW.—10, 11. **As it is written.** "That all men are under sin appears from the vices which have raged in all ages. S. Paul therefore rightly cites David and Isaiah, though they spoke primarily of their own age, and expressed what manner of men God sees, when He 'looks down from heaven'; not what He makes them by His grace. **There is none righteous.** This is the general proposition. The particulars follow: their dispositions and designs (vers. 11, 12); their discourse (vers. 13, 14); their actions (vers. 16-18)"—WESLEY.

The quotations from the Old Testament, extending from this point to ver. 18, are from the LXX. version of Psalms and Isaiah.

11. "**There is none that understandeth**—the things of God—or, *lit.*, 'The man who understands, who seeks out God, exists not.' God looks down from heaven to see whether there are any who show their intelligence and prudence by seeking to know and to please Him. We have here the result. His eye cannot detect one righteous man. Not one acts wisely; not one makes it the object of life to find out God. All have strayed from the right path. All have together failed to attain their Maker's purpose. Not even one does good. It is evident that these words refer to Jews as well as Gentiles. Therefore S. Paul's charge in ver. 9 against the men of his day is but a repetition of an Old Testament declaration concerning the men of a former day"—BEET. The apostle's doctrine of human sinfulness (see Tit. 3. 3) is that the worst developments of individual sin only indicate the *possibilities of the sinful heart in general.* Passages like those cited here thus prove, not only what certain men were, but what man is. (See Jer. 17. 9)"—C. B.

12. **They have all turned aside**—"from the good way. **They are become unprofitable** — helpless, impotent, unable to profit either themselves or others"—WESLEY.

"**They are together become unprofitable.** Here the adjective is used to express a state of moral corruption and depravity. 'Together' means 'altogether'; 'the whole mass of mankind, with one consent, has fallen into ruin'"—BEET.

13. **Their throat**—"is noisome and dangerous as **an open sepulchre.** Observe the progress of evil discourse, proceeding out of the heart, through the throat, tongue, lips, till the whole mouth is filled therewith. **The poison of asps**—infectious, deadly, backbiting, tale-bearing, evil-speaking—**is under** (for honey is *on*) **their lips.** An asp is a venomous kind of serpent"—WESLEY.

"**Their throat.** By their malicious and wicked words they bury, as it were, the *reputation* of all men. The whole of this verse appears to belong to their habit of *lying*, *defamation*, *slandering*, etc., by which they wounded, blasted, and poisoned the reputation of others"—CLARKE. "'They drink iniquity like water' (Job 15. 16). These unclean things enter the heart, and defile the man"—SUTCLIFFE. "Emitting the noisome exhalations of a putrid heart"—Bishop HORNE.

14. **Cursing**—"against God. **Bitterness**—against their neighbour"—WESLEY.

"They never speak but in *blasphemies* and malice"—CLARKE.

15. "They make use of every means in their power to destroy the reputation and lives of the innocent"—CLARKE.

16. "**Destruction and misery.** If you trace their steps, you will find that they have left behind them *destruction and calamity*"—BEET.

17. **Of peace** — "which can only spring from righteousness"—WESLEY.

"Yet these men were Israelites. For the prophet declares that their sins have separated them from their God"—BEET.

18. **The fear of God is not before their**

eyes—"much less is the love of God in their heart"—WESLEY.

"They have no sense of religion to restrain them from the commission of these enormities"—BENSON. "The want of the **fear of God** before our eyes is the fountain from which all other evils do proceed and flow. 'The fear of God' is the bridle and curb which restrains from sin. Where that is wanting, all iniquity abounds; where that is present and prevalent, it keeps the soul close to God (Jer. 32. 32)"—BURKITT. "**The fear of God.** This term is the normal expression for piety in the Old Testament; it is that disposition in man which has always God present in the heart—His will and judgment. Man may evoke or suppress this inward view of God, on which his moral conduct depends"—GODET.

19. **Whatsoever the Law**—the Old Testament—**saith, it saith to them that are under the Law**—"that is, to those who own its authority; to the Jews, and not the Gentiles. S. Paul quoted no Scripture against them, but pleaded with them only from the light of nature. **Every mouth**—full of bitterness (ver. 14), and yet of boasting (ver. 27)—**may become guilty**—may be fully convicted, and apparently liable to most just condemnation. These things were written of old, and were quoted by S. Paul, not to *make* men criminal, but to *prove* them so"—WESLEY.

"In order to bring home this testimony of Scripture more directly to the Jews, and to prevent any subterfuge by which they might attempt to shift the reference from themselves on to the Gentiles, the apostle calls attention to the fact that the Law, *i.e.* the Old Testament, from which he has been quoting, speaks especially to those to whom it was given. **Guilty before God**—rather, 'guilty to God'; the dative expresses the person to whom the penalty is due"—ELLICOTT. "S. Paul now states a principle *known* and admitted both by his readers and his opponents; and which immensely increases the importance of the foregoing quotations. That he speaks of the books from which the above quotations were taken as **the Law**, proves that these books were held by himself, his readers, and his opponents, to be an authoritative declaration of God's will concerning man's conduct, and of the principles on which He will govern and judge the world"—BEET.

20. **No flesh shall be justified**—"none shall be forgiven and accepted of God. **By the works of the Law**—on this ground, that he hath kept the Law. S. Paul means chiefly the moral part of it (vers. 9, 19; 2. 21, etc., 26), which alone is not abolished (ver. 31). And it is not without reason that he so often mentions the works of the Law, whether ceremonial or moral; for it was on these only the Jews relied, being wholly ignorant of those that spring from faith. **For by the Law is only the knowledge of sin**—but no deliverance either from the guilt or power of it"—WESLEY.

"Reason why the Law produces the above results. It is given in the words of Ps. 143. 2; and is therefore clothed with Old Testament authority. The writer prays God not to enter into judgment with him, on the ground that in His sight no living person is or will be righteous. That no one will be, implies that no one can be. **Will not be justified**, excludes justification both in this world and at the bar of God. The emphatic words, **by works of Law**, are added so as not to exclude justification by faith. . . . God gave the Law in order to make us conscious of our lost estate, and thus to prepare us for a revelation of righteousness through Christ. In ages to come we shall look back upon the Law, not as a failure, but as the guardian slave who drove us to Christ (Gal. 3. 24), and as an essential link of the chain which raised us from our lost estate to eternal obedience and blessedness"—BEET.

SECTION VIII.—Vers. 21–26. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH AND THROUGH CHRIST.—21. **But now the righteousness of God** (R.V. "But now apart from the Law a righteousness of God hath been manifested")—"that is, the manner of becoming righteous which God hath appointed—**without the Law**—without that previous obedience which the Law requires; without reference to the Law, or dependence on it—**is manifested**—in the gospel. **Being attested by the Law itself, and by the Prophets**—by all the promises in the Old Testament"—WESLEY.

"**Righteousness of God.** (Ch. 1. 17.) **Manifest** (ch. 1. 19) in contrast to 'hidden' (ch. 2. 28 f.; 15. 25), a state in which God's approbation is enjoyed *has been made manifest* once for all, *i.e.* set publicly before the eyes of mankind, by the appearance of Christ (2 Tim. 1. 10), and by the proclamation of the gospel. (Tit. 1. 3; Col. 1. 26.) It is day by day 'revealed in the gospel by faith' (ch. 1. 17), *i.e.* brought by faith into the consciousness of man as his actual possession. **Apart from Law**—that which could never come through the Law, which said, 'Do this and live,' has been proclaimed in the gospel without any mention of doing as a condition of life"—BEET.

22. **To all**—"the Jews—**and upon all**—the Gentiles—**that believe: for there is no difference**—either as to the need of justification, or the manner of it"—WESLEY.

"God's method of saving sinners is not of *works*, but by faith in Christ Jesus; and is not restrained to any *particular people*, as the Law and its privileges were, but is **unto all** mankind in its *intention* and *offer*, and becomes effectual to them that believe; for God hath now made **no difference** between the Jews and the Gentiles"—CLARKE. "Of the terms of our present admittance into the kingdom

and covenant of God, he discourses in ch. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, and of our obligations to obedience, after we are admitted, he speaks in ch. 6, 7, etc. But it is not here meant that no works or obedience but what are sinless will be accepted; or as if there were no allowance for repentance, or no benefit of pardon, now that we are taken into the kingdom and covenant of God. Pardon, upon repentance, is one of the privileges of that kingdom"—COKE.

23. **For all have sinned**—"in Adam, and in their own persons; by a sinful nature, sinful tempers, and sinful actions. **And are fallen short of the glory of God**—the supreme end of man; short of His image on earth, and the enjoyment of Him in heaven"—WESLEY.

"**For all have sinned**—and consequently are equally helpless and guilty; and as God is no respecter of persons, there is *no reason* why *one* should be *preferred* before *another*, therefore His endless mercy has embraced **ALL**"—CLARKE. "In this passage, the words 'glory of God' may be misunderstood, we use the words 'approbation of God.' Man once possessed the approval of God. God looked with joy upon His own image, the monument of His own skill (Gen. 1. 31). But man sinned, and thus lost his primal beauty. All have sinned, and thus fall short of the moral character which God approves. Therefore, in the sight of God, all human distinctions fade. And for this reason God has proclaimed salvation by the same means, for all men"—BEET.

24. **And are justified**—pardoned and accepted—**freely**—without any merit of their own—**by His grace**—not their own righteousness or works. **Through the redemption**—the price Christ has paid. **Freely by His grace.** "One of these expressions might have served to convey the apostle's meaning; but he doubles his assertion, in order to give us the fullest conviction of the truth, and to impress us with a sense of its peculiar importance. It is not possible to find words that should more absolutely exclude all consideration of our own works and obedience, or more emphatically ascribe the whole of our justification to free, unmerited goodness"—WESLEY.

"**Justified.** They receive the Judge's formal declaration that they shall not be punished. 'To justify' is to make righteous. And the righteous man is he whose conduct is right, agreeing with the standard with which it must be compared. We here meet for the first time with justification as a present blessing"—BEET. "**Redemption**—*lit.* 'ransoming.' The doctrine of the atonement thus stated is not peculiar to S. Paul, and did not originate with him. It is found in Matt. 20. 28; Mark 10. 45 (comp. 1 John 2. 2; 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19; 2. 24)"—ELLICOTT. "**Redemption** here denotes that kind of redemption of a captive from death, which is procured by paying a price for his life. The redemption purchased for us by Christ is deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and the wrath of God consequent thereon, and from the power of our spiritual enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh. (See Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14; Tit. 2. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19)"—BENSON. "**Being justified** is qualified in three directions: those of the *mode*, the *origin*, and the *means*. The mode is expressed by the adverb, **freely.** It is not a matter of wages, it is a free gift. The origin of this gift is—**His grace**—God's free goodwill inclining Him to sinful man to bestow on him a favour. There is no blind necessity here; we are face to face with a generous inspiration of Divine love. The means is the **deliverance** wrought in **Jesus Christ**"—GODET. "**By His grace**—or 'favour' means that compassionate disposition of the Divine nature, whereby God freely remits His right of punishment, and receives penitent sinners into favour on terms which He was not bound in justice to do"—COKE.

25. **Whom God hath set forth**—"before angels and men—**a propitiation**—to appease an offended God. But if, as some teach, God never was offended, there was no need of this propitiation. And, if so, Christ died in vain. **To declare His righteousness**—to demonstrate not only His clemency, but His justice, even that vindictive justice whose essential character and principal office is, to punish sin. **By the remission of past sins** (R.V. 'Because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime')—all the sins antecedent to their believing"—WESLEY.

"The death of Christ had a twofold object or final cause—(1) It was to be, like the sacrifices of the old covenant, an offering propitiatory to God, and actualised in the believer through faith; (2) It was to demonstrate the righteousness of God by showing that sin would entail punishment, though it might not be punished in the person of the sinner"—ELLICOTT. "Divine love manifests itself in the gift of the Son, that it may be able afterwards to diffuse itself in the heart by the gift of the Spirit"—GESS. "By the appointment of God, Christ died as a sacrifice for sin, and God pardons sin through the merit of that sacrifice. Hence Christ is called 'a propitiation' (1 John 2. 2; 4. 10). By touching this doctrine, the apostle removed the great objection of the Jews and heathens against the gospel, that it had neither a priest nor a sacrifice"—MACKNIGHT. "Faith is presented under two leading views: the first is that of assent or persuasion, the second that of confidence or reliance. One is mere intellectual assent, the other is a work of the heart, a motion of the soul towards God, to lay hold upon His covenant engagements, and to rest in them"—WATSON.

26. **For a demonstration of His righteousness**—"both of His justice and mercy. **That He might be just**—showing His justice on

His own Son—**and yet** the merciful justifier of every one **that believeth in Jesus.** 'That He might be just'—might evidence Himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous in the administration of His government, even while He is the merciful 'justifier' of the sinner 'that believeth in Jesus.' The attribute of justice must be preserved inviolate; and inviolate it is preserved, if there was a real infliction of punishment on our Saviour. On this plan all the attributes harmonise; every attribute is glorified, and not one superseded, no, nor so much as clouded"—WESLEY.

"**To declare** (R.V. 'For the showing'). The perfections of God, which were dishonoured by our rebellion, are glorified. He appears, by this method of justification, inconceivably rich in showing mercy; yet inflexibly steady in executing justice. The holiness of the Divine nature, and the dignity of the Divine government, are not only maintained, but most magnificently displayed"—COKE. "**That He might be** (*i.e.* practically, 'might be seen to be,' that He might be in *His creatures' view*)." "Our pardon, redemption, righteousness, are conferred by faith alone, as the sole condition of our justification; and this faith is such a belief of the gospel, by the power of the Spirit of God, as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls to Him, in humble confidence of His ability and willingness to save"—SUTCLIFFE. "What was the *end* with a view to which this *demonstration of righteousness* was required at this time? The apostle answers: **that He might be just, and a justifier**—that is to say, 'that while being and remaining just, God might justify.' It was a great problem, a problem worthy of Divine wisdom, which the sin of man set before God—to remain just while justifying (declaring just) man who had become unjust. God did not shrink from the task. He had even solved the difficulty beforehand in His eternal counsel, before creating man free; otherwise would not this creation have merited the charge of imprudence? God had beside Him, in Christ, the means of being at once *just* and *justifier*—that is to say, just while justifying, and justifying while remaining just. . . . The cross re-establishes order by putting each in his place—the holy God on His throne, rebellious man in the dust. So long as this homage, making reparation for the past, remains without us, it does not save us; but as soon as we make it ours *by faith in Jesus*, it avails for us, and God can *justly* absolve us. By appropriating to himself the homage rendered to the majesty of God by the Crucified One, the believer is himself crucified as it were in the eyes of God; moral order is re-established, and judgment can take end by an act of absolution"—GODET.

SECTION IX.—Vers. 27–30. ALL BOASTING IS EXCLUDED.—27. "**Where is the boasting then** of the Jew against the Gentile? **It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay**—this would have left room for boasting: **but by the law of faith.** Since this requires all, without distinction, to apply as guilty and helpless sinners, to the free mercy of God in Christ. **The law of faith** is that Divine constitution which makes faith, not works, the condition of acceptance"—WESLEY.

Boasting (R.V. "Glorying"). "Why is boasting shut out? By ver. 10. For its teaching rests on the truth that no man, by his own effort, can save himself from death. S. Paul looks round and cries, Where now is your exultation? It has vanished from view. **It has been shut out.** By what means? By a law (*i.e.* by a Divine proclamation of the way in which God will rule and judge His people). **By what kind of law?** By a law which re-echoes the voice of Moses, 'Do this and live'? No, God has shut out all boasting by promulgating a law which says, 'Believe and live.' The gospel is correctly called *a law;* for it is an authoritative declaration of God's will concerning us, and of the principles on which He governs us. It is a **law of faith**: for it requires faith; and is thus distinguished from the Mosaic Law, which required works. (Comp. John 6. 29; 1 John 3. 23.) The word 'law' reminds us that the Voice from Calvary is equal in authority to the Voice from Sinai"—BEET.

28. **We conclude then that a man is justified by faith.** "And even by this, not as it is a work, but as it receives Christ; and, consequently, has something essentially different from all our works whatsoever"—WESLEY.

We reckon therefore (R.V.). Many authorities read, "For we reckon"—*i.e.* "We reason, we maintain." "Justification from our sins is by faith alone, without respect to any works of ours, done either before or since conversion; and God will justify circumcised believers, and uncircumcised believers, one and the same way, even by the way of grace and faith"—BURKITT.

29. **Surely of the Gentiles also**—"as both nature and the Scriptures show"—WESLEY.

"**Is He the God of the Jews only?**—*More lit.* 'Does God belong to the Jews alone?'—*i.e.* as the Giver of peace and life by covenant"—MOULE. "Can it be imagined, that a God of infinite love and mercy, should limit and confine His favours to the little perverse people of the Jews, leaving all the rest of mankind in an eternally desperate condition? That would by no means agree with the idea we have of the Divine goodness, for 'His tender mercies are over all His works.' He is **the God of the Gentiles also**: and therefore hath established a way of justification, equally open to the Gentiles as to the Jews"—BENSON.

30. **Seeing it is one God who**—"shows mercy to both, and by the very same means" —WESLEY.

"The way of justification is the same to both—to the Jews by faith, and to the Gentiles, through the same faith. God shows mercy to both, and by the very same means"—BENSON. "**Shall justify**—the future signifies 'throughout the Christian dispensation'—wherever the Christian system extends"—ELLICOTT.

31. **We establish the Law** — "both the authority, purity, and the end of it; by defending that which the Law attests; by pointing out Christ, the end of it; and by showing how it may be fulfilled in its purity"—WESLEY.

"**Do we then make void the Law through faith?** Which is equivalent to asking, 'Does Christianity teach that the Law is no longer obligatory upon Christians, because it teaches that no man can be justified by it?' To this he answers, in the most solemn form of expression, **God forbid; yea, we establish the Law**" —WATSON. "The *Law* is holy and just and good, and is not disanulled, but established by the gospel: because by the gospel we obtain grace, in some measure, to fulfil the Law, and yield a sincere obedience to it; which for the sake of Christ's perfect and spotless obedience, shall find a gracious acceptance with God"—BURKITT. "This verse forms a true period to the whole passage (vers. 21–30). The Law had been called to give witness on the subject of the doctrine of universal condemnation; it had borne witness (vers. 7–19). It has just been cited again, and now in favour of the new righteousness; its testimony has not been less favourable (vers. 27–31)"—GODET. See WESLEY'S Sermon on this passage.)

CHAPTER IV.

SECTION X. — Vers. 1–25. ABRAHAM, AN APPARENT EXCEPTION TO THE RULE OF GRATUITOUS ACCEPTANCE, REALLY THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF IT.—"Having proved it by argument, he now proves by example, and such example as must have greater weight with the Jews than any other—(1) That justification is by faith; (2) That it is free for the Gentiles"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul introduces Abraham in order to test, by the case of the great father of the Jewish nation, the gospel which overthrows all Jewish boasting"—BEET.

1. **That our father Abraham hath found** —"acceptance with God. **According to the flesh**—that is, by works"—WESLEY.

"At the time of the Christian era the passage in Genesis relating to Abraham's faith had become a standard text in the Jewish schools—and the interest thus concentrated upon it prepared the way for the fuller and more spiritual teaching of the apostles"—LIGHTFOOT. "**The flesh**—*i.e.* human nature, in the Fall, as unrenewed and unassisted by Divine special grace"—C. B.

2. "The meaning is, if Abraham had been justified by works, he would have had room to glory. But he had not room to glory. Therefore he was not justified by works"—WESLEY.

"We may paraphrase: 'But as a fact he had no ground of boasting; for, in view of the holiness of God, that could not be even for him. And (ver. 3) Scripture bears this out in direct terms; for it records that he was accepted as believing'"—MOULE.

3. **Abraham believed God**—"that promise of God concerning the numerousness of his seed (Gen. 15. 5, 7); but especially the promise concerning Christ (Gen. 12. 3), through whom all nations should be blessed. **And it was imputed to him for righteousness** — God accepted him as if he had been altogether righteous"—WESLEY.

(So ver. 5; Ps. 106. 30, 31; 2 Cor. 5. 19.) "If Christ died not in vain, the ungodly is justified in Him alone; to whom, believing in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness"—S. AUGUSTINE. "Wherefore Abraham, by believing, doth only embrace the grace tendered unto him, that it might not be in vain. If this be imputed unto him for righteousness, it follows that he is no otherwise righteous, but, as trusting or relying upon the goodness of God, he hath boldness to hope for all things from Him"—CALVIN. "By turning from Abraham to the sinner, S. Paul prepares the way for the quotation of the next verse. Gen. 15. 6 not only asserts that Abraham was justified by faith, but therefore implies that he was justified apart from works. Therefore he has no ground of self-exultation, but a good ground of exultation in view of God. And S. Paul, by proclaiming a new law which shuts out all boasting on the ground of works, does not overthrow, but supports, the authority of the old covenant and of the Jewish Scriptures" —BEET.

4. **Now to him that worketh.** "All that the Law requires, the reward is no favour, but an absolute debt. These two examples are selected and applied with the utmost judgment and propriety. Abraham was the most illustrious pattern of piety among the Jewish patriarchs. David was the most eminent of their kings. If, then, neither of these was justified by his own obedience, if they both obtained acceptance with God, not as upright beings who might claim it, but as sinful creatures who must implore it, the consequence is glaring. It is such as must strike every attentive understanding, and must affect every individual person"—WESLEY.

"If Abraham had been *justified* by *works*, the blessing he received would have been given to him as a *reward* for those works, and consequently his *believing* could have had no part in his *justification*, and his *faith* would have been useless"—CLARKE. "The two expressions—**him that worketh**, and **him that worketh**

not (ver. 5)—are general and abstract, with this difference, that the first refers to any workman whatever in the domain of life, while the second applies only to a workman in the moral sense. To the hired workman who performs his task his reward is reckoned not as a favour, but as a debt. Now, according to the declaration of Moses, Abraham was not treated on this footing, therefore he is not one of those who have fulfilled their task. On the other hand, to the workman (in the moral sense) who does not labour satisfactorily, and who nevertheless places his confidence in God who pardons, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. Now, according to Moses, it is on this footing that Abraham was treated, therefore he belongs to those who have not fulfilled their task. These two harmonious conclusions—the one understood after ver. 4, the other after ver. 5—set forth the contents of the declaration of Moses: Abraham was treated on the footing, not of a good, but of a bad workman"—GODET.

5. **But to him that worketh not**—"it being impossible he should without faith—**but believeth, his faith is imputed to him for righteousness**. Therefore, God's affirming of Abraham, that faith was imputed to him for righteousness, plainly shows that he worked not; or, in other words, that he was not justified by works, but by faith only. Hence we see plainly how groundless that opinion is, that holiness or sanctification is previous to our justification. For the sinner being first convinced of his sin and danger by the Spirit of God stands trembling before the awful tribunal of Divine justice; and has nothing to plead but his own guilt, and the merits of a Mediator. Christ here interposes; justice is satisfied; the sin is remitted, and pardon is applied to the soul, by a Divine faith wrought by the Holy Ghost, who then begins the great work of inward sanctification. Thus God justifies the ungodly, and yet remains just and true to all His attributes. But let none hence presume to 'continue in sin'; for to the impenitent, God 'is a consuming fire.' **On Him that justifieth the ungodly.** If a man could possibly be made holy before he was justified, it would entirely set his justification aside; seeing he could not, in the very nature of the thing, be justified if he were not, at that very time, ungodly"—WESLEY.

"There can be no other mode of justification than by faith in that Christ who is Abraham's seed, and in whom, according to the promise, all the nations of the earth are to be blessed"—CLARKE. "S. Paul says, **He who justifieth the ungodly.** He might have said the sinner; but he chose the more forcible term to designate the evil of sin, that no category of sinners, even the most criminal, may think itself excluded from the privilege of being justified by their faith"—GODET. "**Justifieth the ungodly.** Guilt, therefore, precedes pardon; whilst that remains, so far are any from being justified, that they are 'under wrath,' in a state of condemnation, with which a state of justification cannot consist"—WATSON. "**Justifieth the ungodly.** 'Justification has respect to particular individuals, and is to be distinguished from that gracious constitution of God, by which, for the sake of Jesus Christ, He so far delivers all mankind from the guilt of Adam's sin, as to place them, notwithstanding their natural connection with the fallen progenitor of the human race, in a salvable state.' Justification is a blessing of a much higher and more perfect character, and is not common to the human race at large, but experienced by a certain description of persons in particular"—BUNTING. "Faith is imputed for righteousness, not because it carrieth any merit from us, but because it apprehends the goodness of God"—CALVIN. "S. Paul well applies to God the epithet, **Him that justifieth the ungodly**, this being the thing wherein the goodness and mercy of God is illustrated, since it is a fact that He gives the ungodly, who are His enemies, the most excellent thing of all He can give them, which is justification, by which they attain eternal life. God justifies the ungodly by giving him first to know his ungodliness. They who never know themselves to be ungodly, never come to be just and godly"—VALDES.

6. **So David also.** "David is fitly introduced after Abraham, because he also received and delivered down the promise. **Affirmeth**—a man is justified by faith alone, and not by works. **Without works**—that is, without regard to any former good works supposed to have been done by him"—WESLEY.

"**Even as David also describeth** (R.V. 'pronounceth'). In Ps. 32 this quotation is specially to the point, being not only an inspired statement of truth, but made by one who had been guilty of deep 'ungodliness,' and had himself experienced justification under that condition. 'Also,' *i.e.* as well as Moses in Genesis"—MOULE.

7. **Happy are they whose sins are covered**—"with the veil of Divine mercy. If there be indeed such a thing as happiness on earth, it is the portion of that man **whose iniquities are forgiven**, and who enjoys the manifestation of that pardon. Well may he endure all the afflictions of life with cheerfulness, and look upon death with comfort. Oh let us not contend against it, but earnestly pray that this happiness may be ours"—WESLEY.

"In David's day there were men thus justified, and he proclaims their happiness. **Covered**—explained by 'propitiation' (ch. 3. 25). The blood of the sacrifices cast a veil over the sin for which it was shed, and hid it from the view of the Judge. (Comp. Jas. 5. 20.) David looks to the past and future. Iniquity has been forgiven, and a veil cast over sin. We have in Ps. 32 the joyful song of a pardoned man'—BEET. "This quotation from David would

have been nothing to the apostle's purpose, unless he had understood the forgiveness of sins, and the imputation of righteousness, and the non-imputation of sin, to signify the same thing as 'counting faith for righteousness,' with only this difference, that the introduction of the term 'faith' marks the manner in which the forgiveness of sin is obtained. To impute faith for righteousness is nothing more than to be justified by faith; placed by an act of free forgiveness, through faith in Christ, in the condition of righteous men, in this respect, that the penalty of the Law does not lie against them, and that they are restored to the Divine favour"—WATSON. **Forgiven.** The emphasis is upon this word. "Whose sins are not abolished, but forgiven; not annihilated, but covered up, removed from sight, hidden by the absolving grace of God"—ELLICOTT. "**Blessed**—for those things are forgiven which exposed him to the most grievous punishment. **Covered**—entirely removed out of sight, and thrown into oblivion"—CLARKE.

8. **Impute** (R.V. "Will not reckon").

9. **This happiness**—"mentioned by Abraham and David. **On the circumcision**—those that are circumcised only. (R.V. 'Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision?') **Faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness.** This is fully consistent with our being justified—that is, pardoned and accepted by God upon our believing, for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered. For though this, and this alone, be the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, yet faith may be said to be 'imputed to us for righteousness,' as it is the sole condition of our acceptance. We may observe here forgiveness, not imputing sin, and imputing righteousness, are all one"—WESLEY.

"**Faith was reckoned to him for righteousness**—before he was circumcised. Therefore faith shall be reckoned to us for righteousness, 'if we believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.' Abraham's faith rested solely on the promises"—SUTCLIFFE. "This question is very nervous. If this pardon, granted in this way, be essential to **happiness**—and David says it is so—then is it the privilege of the **Jews** exclusively? This cannot be; for, as it is by the mere *mercy* of God, through *faith*, the **circumcision** cannot even claim it. But, if God offer it to the circumcision, not because they have been *obedient*, for they also have *sinned*, but because of His *mere mercy*, then of course the same blessedness may be offered to the **Gentiles** who believe in the Lord Jesus"—CLARKE.

10. **Not in circumcision**—"not after he was circumcised; for he was justified before Ishmael was born (Gen. 15); but he was not circumcised till Ishmael was thirteen years old. (Ch. 17. 25)"—WESLEY.

"Faith was reckoned to Abraham for justification (Gen. 15. 6); but circumcision was not instituted till about fourteen or fifteen years after (Gen. 17. 1, etc.)—for faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness or justification at least *one year* before Ishmael was born. (Comp. Gen. 15 and 16)"—CLARKE. "There was a time in Abraham's life when, by his uncircumcision, he represented the Gentiles, as later after his circumcision he became the representative of Israel. Now if it was in the first of these two periods of his life, that is to say in his Gentilehood, that he was justified by faith . . . the conclusion was obvious at a glance. S. Paul makes full use of it against his adversaries. He expounds it with decisive consequences in the sequel"—GODET.

11, 12. "**And**—after he was justified—**he received the sign of circumcision**—circumcision, which was a sign or token of his being in covenant with God. **A seal**—an assurance on God's part, that He accounted him righteous, upon his believing, before he was circumcised. **Who believe in circumcision**—that is, though they are not circumcised"—WESLEY.

"**Sign of circumcision.** (Matt. 24. 30; Luke 11. 29.) Circumcision was enjoined as a visible mark or token of the covenant made by God with Abraham (Gen. 15. 18; 17. 11) in the day he believed. **A seal**—a solemn attestation of that to which it is annexed. It explains the meaning of the **sign.** (So 2 Cor. 1. 22; Eph. 1. 13; 2 Tim. 2. 19.) Among those who bear in their bodies the sign of the covenant, Abraham was to have a spiritual posterity. But his true children are those only who imitate that faith of their father which was older and nobler than circumcision. **Walk**—favourite metaphor with Paul (ch. 6. 4; 8. 4; 13. 13; 14. 15). Every act is a step forward in some direction"—BEET. **And the father of the circumcision**—"of those who are circumcised, and believed as Abraham did. To those who believe not, Abraham is not a father, neither are they his seed"—WESLEY.

"Abraham received this rite by Divine appointment, that he might also be the father of those who are circumcised, and believe as he did; for in the covenant which God made with him, He constituted him the father of all believers; and whatsoever promises were made to him and his seed were in reality made to believers of all nations, *i.e.* to all who, like Abraham, exercised a continued faith, and who from faith live a life of obedience to God to the end of their days. To those who do not thus believe and obey, Abraham is not a father, neither are they his seed"—BENSON.

13. **The promise that he should be the heir of the world**—"is the same as that he should be 'the father of all nations,' namely, of those in all nations who receive the blessing. The whole world was promised to him and them conjointly. Christ is the Heir of the world, and of all things; and so are all Abraham's seed, all that believed in Him with the faith of Abraham"—WESLEY.

Heir of the world—"describes the promise, not in the form given to Abraham, but as we, taught by the gospel, now understand it. Abraham's children, and they only, will one day possess the new earth and heaven which God will create. Abraham will look upon the new world as the reward of his own faith, because it will be given to those who have imitated that faith"—BEET. **Heir of the world.** "This promise was explained by the Jews of the universal sovereignty of the Messiah. Through the righteousness of faith—as a further consequence of that (imputed) righteousness which proceeds from faith"—ELLICOTT.

14. **If they only who are of the Law**—"who have kept the whole Law—**are heirs, faith is made void**—no blessing being to be obtained by it; **and so the promise is of no effect**"—WESLEY.

"**They of the Law**—they who make the Law their starting-point in seeking life, and whose claim is derived from the Law. (So Gal. 3. 10; ch. 2. 8; 3. 26; Gal. 3. 7, 9.) **Heirs**—those who receive the blessing in virtue of their imitation of and therefore spiritual descent from Abraham. **Make vain** (1 Cor. 15. 17). **Of no effect** (ch. 3. 3, 31; Gal. 3. 17)"—BEET. "**Is made void**—*lit.* 'emptied' of its meaning, becomes an empty name, and the promise is rendered nugatory. There is nothing left for either to do, if the votaries of the Law, simply as such, are to be the inheritors of the messianic kingdom"—ELLICOTT.

15. **Because the Law**—"considered apart from that grace which, though it was in fact mingled with it, yet is no part of the legal dispensation, is so difficult, and we so weak and sinful, that instead of bringing us a blessing, it only **worketh wrath**; it becomes to us an occasion of wrath, and exposes us to punishment as transgressors. **Where there is no Law** in force, there can be **no transgression** of it"—WESLEY.

"**Where no Law is, there is no transgression.** The same acts which would be harmless as to another world, had there been no Law, now since we are 'under Law,' and know we are under Law, have a very different character. They violate God's holy Law, and against every one the malediction lies"—WATSON. "**But where no Law is**, there are no limits to overstep. Before the Law there was sin, but it did not assume the form of transgression. If, when God gave the promise He had annexed the Law as their condition, He would have made fulfilment impossible. For none can keep the Law as it requires to be kept. Therefore God said nothing about the Law. He thus 'passed over' (ch. 3. 25) the sinfulness of those to whom He spoke, in view of the propitiation afterwards provided"—BEET. "**The Law worketh wrath**—that is, manifesteth it, and so seemeth to work it, as likewise affliction doth corruption in God's children; stir the puddle with a stick and the mud will soon be on the top of the water. Rub the brand and sparkles will fly abroad"—TRAPP.

16. **Therefore it**—"the blessing—**is of faith, that it might be of grace**—that it might appear to flow from the free love of God, and **that the promise might be firm**, sure, and effectual, **to all the** spiritual **seed of Abraham**; not only Jews, but Gentiles also, if they follow his faith"—WESLEY.

"Faith is here directly contrasted with works or merits, as it is also in all passages where justification is the subject. Faith, as it looks to God, as it is the recipient of the glad tidings, marks the freeness of grace; for what act can be more void of merit, or of moral qualifications in general, than the mere belief of good news? Faith, as it looks to man, as it brings the gospel to act on the mind, is the instrument of sanctification. **Sure to all the seed.** They are the children of faithful Abraham, who are the followers of his faith. And their faith produces similar effects. They give themselves up to the service of God; and thus, walking before Him, His covenant is established with them"—WATSON. **According to grace**—"that the fulfilment may be in proportion, not to man's merit, but to God's undeserved favour. **Sure**—something on which their confidence could rely, and rely safely. God made faith the condition of the promise, in order that both Jews and Gentiles may look forward with confidence to its fulfilment, a fulfilment measured not by their works but by God's grace"—BEET.

17. **Before God**—"though before men nothing of this appeared, those nations being then unborn. **As quickening the dead.** The dead are not dead to Him; and even the things that are not are before God. **And calling the things that are not**, summoning them to rise into being, and appear before Him. The seed of Abraham did not then exist; yet God said, 'So shall thy seed be.' A man can say to his servant actually existing, Do this, and he doeth it; but God saith to the light, while it does not exist, Go forth, and it goeth"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul goes back to the story of Gen. 17. Abraham stands as a believer in the presence of God, who beholds his faith. To God's eye the events of distant ages are present; and by Him they are completely controlled. In view of the future He says to Abraham, not 'I will,' but '**I have made thee a father of many nations.**' **He believed**, may refer to Gen. 15 or 17. Because he believed in ch. 15, he stood before God as in ch. 17. His faith rested upon the character of Him *in whose presence* he stood"—BEET. **God who quickeneth the dead**—"He is the *Creator*, He gave *being* when there was *none;* He can as infallibly assure the existence of those things which are not, as if they were already actually in being. And, on this account, He can never fail of accom-

plishing whatsoever He has promised"—CLARKE. "Then, remember, that how depraved soever the heart may be, however hard and stubborn its habits, this God can give a new heart"—SUTCLIFFE. "God shows by His promise not only what He wills to exist for us but what He wills us to become, and what we already are in His sight, and we abstracting from our real state, and by a sublime effort taking the position which the promise assigns us, answer: Yea, I will be so; I am so. Thus it is that Abraham's faith corresponded to the promise of the God who was speaking to him face to face. It is this true notion of faith which the apostle seeks to make plain, by analysing more profoundly what passed in the heart of the patriarch at the time when he performed that act on which there rested the foundation of the kingdom of God on earth"—GODET.

18–21. "The apostle shows the power and excellence of that faith to which he ascribes justification. **Who against hope**—against all probability, believed and hoped in the promise. The same thing is apprehended both by faith and hope; by faith, as a thing which God has spoken; by hope, as a good thing which God has promised to us. **So shall thy seed be**—both natural and spiritual, as the stars of heaven for multitude"—WESLEY.

"This faith had Messiah for its great and ultimate object. And in its nature it was an entire affiance in the promise and faithfulness of God, with reference to the holy seed. So the object of that faith which is imputed to us for righteousness is Christ; Christ as having made atonement for our sins. Faith being thus understood excludes all notions of its meritoriousness"—WATSON. "Abraham's faith was a reliance upon the future, when, humanly speaking, the future promised nothing. **To the end that**, etc. (purpose of this faith). That what follows was the result of it. Abraham looked at his own aged body; but he looked also at the promise. He remembered that it was **the promise of God.** The *doubt* is always contrasted with faith, and proves that the faith which God requires excludes doubt. Had Abraham doubted, it would have been because he did not believe. (Comp. ch. 14. 23; Matt. 21. 21; Mark 11. 23; Jas. 1. 6)"—BEET. "It is the nature of faith to believe God upon His bare word; and that against sense in things invisible, against reason in things incredible. Sense corrects imagination, reason corrects sense, but faith corrects both. It will not be, saith sense; it cannot be, saith reason; it both can and will be, saith faith, for I have a promise for it"—TRAPP.

20. "**Giving God the glory** of His truth and power"—WESLEY.

"Already has He done that for us, which we had much less reason to expect or conceive than we now have to hope for anything remaining"—COKE.

21. **And being fully persuaded**—"his soul was full of confidence, that the *truth* of God bound Him to fulfil His promise, and His power enabled Him to do it"—CLARKE.

22. "For which reason God was graciously pleased **to place** his faith **to his account**; and to allow his reliance upon the Divine goodness, power, and faithfulness, for a *title* to the Divine blessing, which, otherwise, having been an idolater, he had no right to"—Dr. TAYLOR.

23. **On his account only**—"to do personal honour to him"—WESLEY.

24. **But on ours also**—"to establish us in seeking justification by faith, and not by works; and to afford a full answer to those who say that 'to be justified by works means only, by Judaism; to be justified by faith means, by embracing Christianity, that is, the system of doctrines so called.' Sure it is that Abraham could not in this sense be justified either by faith or by works; and equally sure that David (taking the words thus) was justified by works, and not by faith. **Who raised up Jesus from the dead**—as He did, in a manner, both Abraham and Sarah. **If we believe on Him who raised up Jesus.** God the Father therefore is the proper object of justifying faith. It is observable that S. Paul here, in speaking both of our faith and of the faith of Abraham, puts a part for the whole. And he mentions that part, with regard to Abraham, which would naturally affect the Jews most"—WESLEY.

"**If we believe on**, etc. To believe a promise is to lean upon Him who gave it. **Raised Jesus from the dead**—puts our faith beside that of Abraham as a reliance upon the power of God. Just as to him belief of the promise was impossible without an assurance that God is able to set aside the decay of nature, so now we cannot believe the gospel promise of eternal life unless we are sure that God is able to open the gates of death. For the gospel declares that God raised Christ from the dead. (Comp. ch. 10. 9; Acts 17. 18, 31)"—BEET. "In the case of Abraham, God revealed Himself by the promise of an event *to be accomplished*; the patriarch required therefore to believe in the form of *hope*, by cleaving to the Divine attribute which could realise it. In our position, now we are in presence of an *accomplished fact*, the display of the almighty grace of God in the resurrection of Jesus. The object of faith is therefore different in form, and yet the same in substance: God and His manifestation, then in word, now in act. What closely binds the two historical facts brought into connection, though so distant, the birth of Isaac and the resurrection of Jesus, is that they are the two extreme links of one and the same chain—the one the point of departure, the other the consummation of the history of salvation. But it must not be imagined that, because it falls to us to believe in an accomplished fact, faith is now nothing

more than historical credence given to the reality of this fact. The apostle at once sets aside this thought when he says, not, 'when we believe in the resurrection of Jesus,' but, 'when we believe in **God who raised** Jesus.' (Comp. Col. 2. 12)"—GODET. "Faith elevates the soul to God, and ennobles all the affections. The sinner, viewing the glory and grace of Christ, penetrated with contrition for his past offences, says, concerning every promise which God has made to man, 'Let it be unto me according to Thy word'"—SUTCLIFFE.

25. "**Who was delivered**—to death—**for our offences**—as an atonement for them—**and raised for our justification**—to empower us to receive that atonement by faith"—WESLEY.

The apostle has, by these explanations, rendered it impossible for us to understand him as meaning anything else by faith, but the act of believing. To those who will, notwithstanding this evidence from the context, still insist upon understanding faith, in these passages, to mean the righteousness of Christ, BAXTER bluntly observes, "If it be not faith, indeed, that the apostle meaneth, the context is so far from relieving our understandings, that it contributeth to our unavoidable deceit or ignorance. Read over the texts, and put but 'Christ's righteousness' everywhere instead of the word 'faith,' and see what a scandalous paraphrase you will make. The Scripture is not so audaciously to be corrected." **Raised for our justification.** MEYER points out that God raised Jesus from the dead, for this object: the resurrection of the sacrificed One was required to produce in men **the faith** through which alone His atoning offering could be appropriated, and without which it could not attain its end—our justification.

CHAPTER V.

SECTION XII.—Vers. 1-11. THE SECURITY AND HAPPINESS OF THE STATE OF JUSTIFICATION.—1. **Being justified by faith.** "This is the sum of the preceding chapters. **We have peace with God** (R.V. 'Let us have peace')—being enemies to God no longer (ver. 10); neither fearing His wrath (ver. 9). We have peace, hope, love, and power over sin, the sum of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters. These are the fruits of justifying faith; where these are not, that faith is not"—WESLEY.

"The need of justification is established; and its equal terms for Jew and Greek, and the fact that faith is its one appointed condition; and the nature and actings of faith, specially as in Abraham's example. We now come to a fuller statement of some important details, which will lead up to a view of the *effects* of faith in the character and life of the justified"—MOULE. "**We have peace.** Justification is never alone; all the graces follow in clusters, privileges of the highest order. What need, then, for Christians so justified and ennobled to keep the Ceremonial Law! They have peace which passeth knowledge (Phil. 4. 7)"—SUTCLIFFE. "**Peace**—our guilty fears are silenced, and we are taught to look up to God with sweet serenity of soul. While we no longer conceive of Him as an enemy, but as a Friend and Father"—DODDRIDGE. There can be little doubt that **Let us have peace** is the true reading. BEET explains by a reference to ch. 4. 24. In the instance of Abraham, justification by faith was exhibited and has been recorded "for our sake." Let us then avail ourselves of it. **Let us, justified by faith, have peace with God.**

2. **Into this grace**—"this state of favour"—WESLEY.

"We do not come in our own strength; but are brought by Christ. Yet it is **by faith.** Had we not believed, we should still be far off. (Comp. Gal. 2. 29; 1 Pet. 1. 5.) In the favour of God **we stand.** (Ch. 11. 20; 1 Cor. 10. 12; 15. 1; 2 Cor. 1. 24; Eph. 6. 11-14.) To 'stand' represents the Christian life as the maintenance of our position, in spite of adversaries and burdens which would cast us down"—BEET.

3. **We glory in tribulations also**—"which we are so far from esteeming a mark of God's displeasure that we receive them as tokens of His fatherly love, whereby we are prepared for a more exalted happiness. The Jews objected to the persecuted state of the Christians as inconsistent with the people of the Messiah. It is therefore with great propriety that the apostle so often mentions the blessings arising from this very thing"—WESLEY.

We glory—same word as "rejoice" in ver. 2. (See ch. 8. 35-39 for a noble example of such rejoicing. See, too, Matt. 5. 11; Acts 5. 41; Heb. 10. 34; 1 Pet. 1. 5-9, and Jas. 1. 2, 4.) "Another exultation. Even the *afflictions* (ch. 2. 9) which were so great a part of their outward life, increase their joyful hope. This arises from **knowing** the purpose and effect of these troubles. In spite of them S. Paul and his readers hold on their way. And thus the trials call forth in them an 'endurance' (ch. 2. 7) and perseverance which otherwise would be unknown. Our endurance increases our hope of victory, but only by giving proof of the strength of the arm on which we lean. (Comp. Acts 5. 41; 2 Cor. 12. 9; Phil. 1. 28; Jas. 1. 2-4)"—BEET. **Tribulation worketh patience**—"is a principle of personal religion which we may carry into our relation to the great fellowship. The kingdom is one of slow development, and all who serve it must wait in patience, which is, like charity, one of its royal laws"—POPE. "**Tribulation** teaches the believer the possibility and blessedness of 'patient continuance in well-doing'"—C. B.

4. "**And patience** works more **experience** of the sincerity of our grace, and of God's power and faithfulness"—WESLEY.

And patience, experience (R.V. "And patience, probation, and probation hope").

"The patient enduring of tribulation gives us more experience of the truth and degree of our grace, of God's care of us, and of His power and love, and faithfulness engaged in supporting us under our sufferings, and causing them to work for our good"—BENSON.

5. **Hope shameth us not** (R.V. "And hope putteth not to shame")—"that is, gives us the highest glorying. We glory in this our hope, **because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts**—the Divine conviction of God's love to us, and that love to God which is both the earnest and the beginning of heaven. **By the Holy Ghost**—the efficient cause of all these present blessings, and the earnest of those to come"—WESLEY.

"A hope that is not *rationally* founded will have its expectation cut off; and then *shame* and *confusion* will be the portion of its possessor. But our hope is founded on the *goodness* and *truth* of God, and our religious experience shows that we have not misapplied it, nor exercised it on improper objects"—CLARKE. "**By the Holy Ghost.** Their spiritual gifts were clear proofs of the love which God bears to them, and of His will that they should be saved"—COKE. "This verse is the central saying of the entire passage. On the one hand, it is directly connected with the two first verses: 'We no longer feel any fear; nay, rather, we triumph in the hope of glory, a hope which is rendered brighter even by suffering.' On the other hand, this verse contains all that follows. This hope will not be falsified in the end by the event, that is what the second part of the passage proceeds to prove (vers. 6–11). The word *make ashamed* refers to the non-realisation of the hope when the hour of glory has struck. The present **maketh not ashamed** is the present of the idea. . . . The matter in question in the context is the terrible position of the justified man who in the day of judgment should find himself suddenly face to face with unappeased wrath. S. Paul declares such a supposition impossible. Why? Because the source of his hope is the revelation of God Himself, which he has received, of the love of which he is the object. The reawakening of wrath against him is therefore an inadmissible fact"—GODET.

6. "How can we now doubt of God's love? **For when we were without strength**—either to think, will, or do anything good—**in due time**—neither too soon nor too late; but in that very point of time which the wisdom of God knew to be more proper than any other—**Christ died for the ungodly**—not only to set them a pattern, or to procure them power to follow it. It does not appear that this expression, of dying for anyone, has any other signification than that of rescuing the life of another by laying down our own"—WESLEY.

"**Without strength** (R.V. 'Were yet weak'). Christ not only died to set us an example, or to procure us power to follow it, but to atone for our sins"—BENSON. "The apostle having pointed out the glorious state of the believing Gentiles, contrasts this with their former state, and the means by which they were redeemed from it. They were, and we are, **without strength**; have lost our principle of spiritual power. **Ungodly.** The mind which was made for God is no longer His residence. For such **Christ died**"—CLARKE. "Christ died for us, when **we were yet weak** (R.V. 'powerless')—unable to save ourselves, either by atonement for the past, or by future obedience. **In due season**—at the most suitable point of time (Gal. 4. 4). This is in part evident even to us, and is an additional proof of God's love. S. Paul has plainly taught us in ch. 3. 24–26, of which this is an historical summary, that by God's appointment Christ saved us from death by Himself dying"—BEET.

7. **A just man**—"one who gives to all what is strictly their due. **The good man**—one who is eminently holy; full of love, of compassion, kindness, mildness, of every heavenly and amiable temper. **Perhaps—one—would—even—dare to die.** Every word increases the strangeness of the thing, and declares even this to be something great and unusual"—WESLEY.

"A merely just and righteous man would be admired, but he would not so take hold of the heart of another as to produce a willingness to die for him; **yet peradventure**, in some rare case, **for a good man**, a man of benevolence, adorned with the softer virtues, and abounding in the distribution of his favours,—for such a one **some would even dare to die.** Some one, overcoming even the love of life in the fulness of his gratitude, might venture to give him his own life to preserve that of such a one. But we were neither just nor good, we were sinners, and 'God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'"—WATSON.

8. "**But God recommendeth**—a most elegant expression. Those are wont to be recommended to us, who were before either unknown to, or alienated from, us. **While we were sinners**—so far from being *good*, that we were not even *just*"—WESLEY.

"This verse develops the proof of God's love afforded by the contrast between what we can with difficulty conceive a man to do even for the best, and what Christ has already done for sinners. Just as the death of the sinless One gives proof of His love, this event of the past is ever present to us, and each day *gives proof* of God's love"—BEET. "As regards the wording of the verse, it is *lit.* 'For hardly for a just man will one die; for the good man, perhaps, one actually dares to die.' The whole point of the verse is that such acts of even such love among men are very rare and very limited indeed"—C. B.

9. **By His blood** (R.V. "Being now justified by His blood")—"by His bloodshedding—

we shall be saved from wrath through Him —that is, from all the effects of the wrath of God. But is there then wrath in God? Is not wrath a human passion? And how can this human passion be in God? We may answer this by another question: Is not love a human passion? And how can this human passion be in God? But to answer directly: wrath in man, and so love in man, is a human passion. But wrath in God is not a human passion; nor is love, as it is in God. Therefore the inspired writers ascribe both the one and the other to God only in an analogical sense"—WESLEY.

"Since it hath pleased God to give us such an unexampled display of His love as this, how high may our expectations rise, and how confidently may we conclude, that **we shall be saved from wrath through Him!** If He so loved us when we were mere guility sinners, we may assure ourselves, that having now constituted us as righteous, and accepted us as such, He will certainly save us from eternal damnation"—BENSON. "If God were so benign to us before our conversion, what may we not expect from Him now we are converted!"—WATSON. "**Saved.** We are justified when we believe, but not finally saved and safe until the battle of life is over. (So ch. 10. 10; 12. 11; Phil. 1. 19; 1 Thess. 5. 8; 2 Tim. 2. 10.) Our deliverance is begun (ch. 8. 24), and advances with every victory. This verse looks to the past, and from it draws an inference for the future. If God loves us so much as to pardon our sins at the cost of the blood of Christ, He will not leave us to perish for our sins in the day of judgment"—BEET.

10. **If**—"'As sure as'—so the word frequently signifies; particularly in this and the eighth chapter. **We shall be saved**—sanctified and glorified—**through His life**—who 'ever liveth to make intercession for us'"—WESLEY.

The **enmity** to goodness and to God which previously existed rendered **reconciliation** necessary, and the **death of His Son** by which it was made possible, also purchased the fulness of salvation. He *died* for our sins, and He *rose* again for our justification, and this justification, with every blessing resulting from it, is as possible as the godly sorrow which preceded it. *In His life* (ch. 8. 1) we have *peace*, and **we also joy in God** (ver. 11). **His life.** Not merely through His **intercession** (ch. 8. 34), but also through His whole working in His kingly office"—MEYER.

11. **And not only so, but we also glory.** "The whole sentence, from the third to the eleventh verse, may be taken together thus: We not only 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' **but also** in the midst of tribulations **we glory in God** Himself, **through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation**"—WESLEY.

Atonement (R.V. "Reconciliation") **now**—in this present time. The *full* rewards of justification will not be ours till we "see Him" by whom we live. But even now we have a foretaste of the heavenly blessedness. We **rejoice in God** during the earthly pilgrimage as surely as those who have gained His "presence" dwell in the fulness of joy." Indeed, our hope of all that Christ has promised, when we shall "see Him as He is," is strengthened by the assurance of His favour, while so much remains simply a matter of faith in His word. "*Now* are we the sons of God."

SECTION XII.—Vers. 12-19. THE CURSE OF ADAM IS REVERSED.—12. **Therefore.** "This refers to all the preceding discourse; from which the apostle infers what follows. He does not therefore properly make a digression, but returns to speak again of sin and of righteousness. **As by one man**—Adam, who is mentioned, and not Eve, as being the representative of mankind—**sin entered into the world**—actual sin, and its consequence, a sinful nature. **And death**—with all its attendants. It 'entered into the world' when it entered into being; for till then it did not exist. **By sin**—therefore it could not enter before sin. **Even so**—namely, by one Man. **In that**—so the word is used also (2 Cor. 5. 4). **All sinned**—in Adam. These words assign the reason why death came upon **all men**; infants themselves not excepted, **in that all sinned**"—WESLEY.

"Here begins an important section, closing with the chapter. In point of language, and of links of thought, it is occasionally difficult, and moreover deals with the deep mystery of the effects of the Fall"—MOULE. "**By one man**—that is, by the wilful act of one man. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 21, 22, 45-49.) **Sin**, in this verse and Epistle, is not a mere act, but a living, ruling, hostile, deadly power. (Ch. 5. 21; 6. 12 f., 17, etc.) S. Paul here assumes that there was a time when man was beyond its dominion (Gen. 1. 31). For **through one man sin entered into the world.** The spirit of evil, although he had crept into Paradise, was, until man sinned, outside the sphere in which man lived. S. Paul sees everywhere the fatal power of sin, and looks back to the moment of Adam's disobedience as the entrance into our world of this fearful foe. He teaches plainly (see ver. 19) that just as we share the punishment, so in some sense we share the sin of Adam"—BEET. "The verse describes the entrance of **death** into the world. The emphasis is on the words: **by one man.** Adam is here characterised not merely as the *first* of sinners, but as the one who laid human life open to the power of sin. The term **sin** should be taken here in its greatest generality. The apostle is not speaking specially of sin either as a tendency or an act, either as an individual act or as a collective fact, but of the principle of revolt whereby the human will rises against

the Divine in all its different forms and manifestations"—GODET.

13. **For until the Law sin was in the world**—*All*, I say, *had sinned*, **for sin was in the world** long before the written Law; **but**, I grant, **sin is not** so much **imputed**, nor so severely punished by God, **where there is no** express **Law** to convince men of it. Yet that all had sinned, even then, appears in that all died"—WESLEY.

The Scriptures own no other imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity than of Christ's righteousness to those that believe. The righteousness of Christ is imputed or given to those that believe, not in the letter and formality of it, but in blessings, privileges, and benefits purchased of God by the merit of it. So the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity, not in the letter and formality of it (which is the imputation commonly urged), but in the demerit of it, that is, in the curse or punishment due to it"—WATSON. **not imputed**—so as to bring penalty. Therefore, had there been *in no sense* a (broken) law in the primeval age, there would have been no death. But death was universal.

14. **Death reigned.** "And how vast is his kingdom! Scarce can we find any king who has as many subjects, as are the kings whom he hath conquered. **Even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression.** Even over infants who had never sinned, as Adam did, in their own persons; and over others who had not, like him, sinned against an express law. **Who is the figure of Him that was to come**—each of them being a public person, and a federal head of mankind. The one, the fountain of sin and death to mankind by his offence; the other, of righteousness and life by His free gift. Thus far the apostle shows the agreement between the first and Second Adam; afterwards he shows the differences between them. The agreement may be summed up thus: As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so by one Man righteousness entered into the world, and life by righteousness. As death passed upon all men, in that all had sinned, so life passed upon all men (who are in the Second Adam by faith), in that all are justified. And as death through the sin of the first Adam **reigned even over them who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression**, so through the righteousness of Christ, even those who have not obeyed, after the likeness of His obedience, shall reign in life. We may add, As the sin of Adam, without the sins which he afterwards committed, brought us death, so the righteousness of Christ, without the good works which we afterwards perform, brings us life: although still every good, as well as evil, work, will receive its due reward"—WESLEY.

"**Death reigned from Adam to Moses.** A visible and well-known fact, that men in those ages died as to the body, since he could not intend that all the generations of men, from Adam to Moses, died eternally. The death of the body is the first effect of the imputation of Adam's sin to his descendants, as stated in this chapter. A second is necessarily implied; a state of spiritual death—the being born into the world with a corrupt nature, always tending to actual offence. A third consequence is a conditional liability to eternal death, for that state which makes us liable to actual sin makes us also liable to actual punishment. But this is conditional, not absolute; for since the apostle makes the obedience of Christ available to the forgiveness of the 'many offences' we may commit in consequence of the corrupt nature we have derived from Adam, and this extends to all men, they can only perish by their own fault"—WATSON. "From this whole argument it appeared that Adam had been the sole author of the reign of death, and herein precisely was he the counterpart of Him who was to come to be the sole principle of life here below. Thus it is easy to understand why the apostle, after explaining the origin of death, closes with these words, appropriately introducing the statement of the other member of the parallel: **Who is the type of the Adam that was to come**"—GODET.

15. **Yet not.** "S. Paul now describes the difference between Adam and Christ; and that much more directly and expressly than the agreement between them. Now the Fall and the free gift differ (1) In amplitude (ver. 15); (2) He from whom sin came, and He from whom the free gift came (termed also 'the gift of righteousness') differ in power (ver. 16); (3) The reason of both is subjoined (ver. 17); (4) This premised, the offence and the free gift are compared, with regard to their effect (ver. 18), and with regard to their cause (ver. 19)"—WESLEY.

"**The offence** (R.V. 'the trespass'—*lit.* 'stumbling'). In every view, as S. Paul elsewhere says, the condition of man is bettered by the mediation of Christ. He has higher glory, a better paradise, and a more blessed hope, than Adam lost. And, as sin and death came on all, the free gift comes with more abundant grace on every believer"—SUTCLIFFE. "Believers shall by Christ be brought to a much nobler and more excellent life than that from which Adam fell, and which they lost in him"—BENSON. "Redemption is a positive exercise of surpassing grace and love, resulting in a glorious and eternal reversal, in the subjects of it, of the previous ruin; indeed, more than a reversal, because it brings with it the *exaltation* given to the brethren of the Second Adam. The **much more** here, and in ver. 17, is thus—*q.d.* 'The fall of the first Adam caused vast results of evil; the work of the far greater Second Adam shall much more cause vast results of good'"—S. C.

16. **The sentence was by one offence to**

Adam's condemnation—"occasioning the sentence of death to pass upon him, which, by consequence, overwhelmed his posterity. **But the free gift is of many offences unto justification** (R. V. 'The free gift came of many trespasses unto justification')—unto the purchasing it for all men notwithstanding many offences"—WESLEY.

"Such is sin, that Adam's *sin* brought death on all men; such is grace, that innumerable *sins* are, through the propitiation, 'abundantly pardoned.' The hereditary guilt and doom of the Fall is very distinctly taught in this verse. But the gift exceeds the ruin; for while the result of Adam's sin was just the lawful reign of death over *men* as sinners, the result of Christ's work shall be not a mere reversal of this, but the reign of *justified men* over death in glory"—LIAS.

17. "There is a difference between grace and the gift. **Grace** is opposed to the **offence**; the **gift**, to *death*, being the gift of life"—WESLEY.

"Notice the tone of triumph of this verse. Through Adam's sin death became our king. Although we look forward with certainty and joy to the day of deliverance, we cannot but recognise his sway. His dread summons we are compelled to obey. But the day is coming when, upon the throne now occupied by death, ourselves will sit in endless life. Through one man death became our king; through one Man we shall obtain eternal royalty"—BEET.

18. **Justification of life**—"is that sentence of God, by which a sinner under sentence of death is adjudged to life"—WESLEY.

The salvation wrought **by the righteousness and obedience** of Christ is a common salvation, provided for and freely offered to all men. It includes not only a justification that frees from death but that entitles to life.

19. **As by the disobedience of one man many**—"that is, 'all men'—**were constituted sinners**—being then in the loins of their first parent, the common head and representative of them all—**so by the obedience of One**—by His obedience unto death; by His dying for us—**many**—all that believe—**shall be constituted righteous**—justified, pardoned"—WESLEY.

"**Obedience.** This term is chosen in contradistinction to the disobedience of Adam. The obedience of Christ was an element in the atonement. (Comp. Phil. 2. 8, where it is said that He 'became obedient unto death'; and Heb. 10. 7, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God,' specially in connection with the atonement)"—ELLICOTT. "With the **disobedience** of one there is contrasted the **obedience** of one. Some understand hereby the *expiatory sacrifice* of Jesus. But as in the Levitical *cultus* the victim required to be without blemish, so in the true expiatory sacrifice the Victim required to be without sin. It is impossible, therefore, to isolate the death of Christ here from His holy life; and the term 'obedience' embraces both. (Comp. Phil. 2. 8)"—GODET. "In accordance with the plain statements of Scripture, I hold that Christ died for all men; that He died as much for one man as for another; and that God's purpose of salvation embraces the race. In stating my views, I need no plainer words than those which Christ and His apostles have put into my lips. And these plain words of Scripture are not contradicted by any others. Apart of Christ, all men are dying. Looked at in view of eternity, and of eternal death, all advantages less than salvation are absolutely worthless. Unless Christ died in order to save all men, He did not in any sense whatever die for all men. Not only are we never taught that Christ died for one man in a higher, for another in a lower, sense; but such a distinction is impossible"—BEET.

SECTION XIII.—Vers. 20, 21. THE LAW WAS GIVEN TO PREPARE FOR THIS.—20. **The Law came in between** "the offence and the free gift. **That the offence might abound**—that is, the consequence (not the design) of the Law's coming in was, not the taking away of sin, but the increase of it. **Yet where sin abounded, grace did much more abound**—not only in the remission of that sin which Adam brought on us, but of all our own; not only in remission of sins, but infusion of holiness; not only in deliverance from death, but admission to everlasting life, a far more noble and excellent life than that which we lost by Adam's fall"—WESLEY.

"**And the Law came in beside, that the trespass might abound** (R.V.). The Law illustrates the plenitude of the obedience we owe to God, and by consequence demonstrates the shame, the baseness, the turpitude of sin, as reflected in that celestial mirror. There only can the real contrast between sin and holiness, love and hatred, be seen"—SUTCLIFFE. "**Grace did much more abound.** Not only is *pardon* for all that is past offered by the gospel, but also the Holy Spirit, in the abundance of His gifts and graces, is communicated. Thus the grace of the gospel not only redeems from death and restores to life, but brings the soul into such a relationship with God, and into such a participation of eternal glory, as we have no authority to believe ever would have been the portion of *Adam* himself, had he even eternally retained his innocence"—CLARKE.

21. **That as sin had reigned—so grace also might reign**—"which could not reign before the Fall, before men had sinned—**through righteousness to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.** Here is pointed out the source of all our blessings—the rich and free grace of God. The meritorious cause—not any work of righteous man, but the alone merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. The effect

or end of all—not only pardon, but life; Divine life, leading to glory"—WESLEY.

"**That as sin hath reigned unto death.** In the wide and universal destruction made of those whom it had brought under that fatal sentence—**so grace might reign**—which could not reign before man had sinned, **through righteousness** imputed, implanted, and practised; through the justification of men's persons, the renovation of their natures, and their practical obedience to God's holy Law—**unto eternal life by Christ Jesus our Lord.** Here is pointed out—(1) The source of all our blessings—the rich and free grace of God; (2) The meritorious cause; not any works or righteousness of man, but alone the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ; (3) The effect or end of all—not only pardon, but life, Divine life leading to glory"—BENSON. "We have reached the close of the fundamental part of the treatise which forms the body of the Epistle. In the first section S. Paul had demonstrated universal condemnation. In the second he had expounded universal justification obtained by Christ and offered to faith. The third section has furnished the demonstration of the second, founding on the fact of the condemnation of all in one, rendered indubitable by the reign of death, and proceeding to establish the fact of the justification of all in one. The question now arises, whether the mode of justification thus expounded and demonstrated can secure the moral renewal of mankind, and explain the theocratic history of which it is the consummation. Such is the subject of the two following parts"—GODET.

CHAPTER VI.

SECTION XIV.—Vers. 1-10. IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST WE DIED TO SIN.—1. "The apostle sets himself more fully to vindicate his doctrine from the consequence above suggested (ch. 3). He had then only in strong terms denied and renounced it; here he removes the very foundation thereof"—WESLEY.

"**What shall we say then?**—What use shall we make of this sweet and comfortable doctrine? Shall we do evil that good may come? Shall we sin the more, because the more sin we commit the more will the grace of God be magnified in our pardon? Is this the use to be made of it? **God forbid.** Opinions that give any countenance to sin, or open a door to immoralities, how plausible soever they be rendered, by the pretension of advancing free grace, are to be rejected with the greatest abhorrence; for the truth as it is in Jesus is a truth according to godliness" (Tit. 1. 1)—M. HENRY.

2. **Dead to sin**—"freed both from the guilt and from the power of it"—WESLEY.

"We must not continue in sin, because God's purpose is that we be dead to sin, and living for God (Section XV.); and because sin is obedience to an enemy whose purpose is death (Section XVII.). **Died to sin** (vers. 10, 11; 7. 4; Gal. 2. 19; 6. 14)—separated by death from all contact with sin. For our chief idea of death is complete separation from the world in which we lived"—BEET.

3. **As many as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have been baptized into His death.** "In baptism we, through faith, are ingrafted into Christ; and we draw new spiritual life from this new root, through His Spirit, who fashions us like unto Him, and particularly with regard to His death and resurrection"—WESLEY.

"Why has baptism this special connection with the **death** of Christ? In the first place, the death of Christ is the central and cardinal fact of the Christian scheme. It is specially related to justification, and justification proceeds from faith, which is ratified in baptism. In the second place, the symbolism of baptism was such as naturally to harmonise with the symbolism of death. It was the final close of one period, and the beginning of another—the complete stripping off of the past, and putting on of the 'new man'"—ELLICOTT.

4. **We are buried with Him**—"alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion. **That as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory**—glorious power—**of the Father, so we also,** by the same power, should rise again; and as He lives a new life in heaven, so we **should walk in newness of life.** This, says the apostle, our very baptism represents to us"—WESLEY.

"**Walk in newness of life**—as Christ being raised from the dead lives a new life in heaven"—BENSON. "Newness of life supposes newness of heart, for out of it are the issues of life; and there is no way of making the streams sweet, but making the spring so. All things become new. The man is what he was not, doth what he did not"—M. HENRY. "The principle of regeneration in our hearts is no other than the Divine nature, producing a death to sin and a life to righteousness"—SUTCLIFFE. "It requires the same 'glorious energy' to **quicken** the dead sinner, as to raise from the grave the dead Christ"—CLARKE.

5. **For.** "Surely these two must go together; so that if we are indeed made conformable to His death, we shall also know the power of His resurrection"—WESLEY.

"Proof that our burial with Christ was designed to lead to a life altogether new. **United in growth.** Our union with Christ is such that His human development is our development; that the facts of His human life reproduce themselves in us. They are already reproduced in our spirits, and will be in our bodies. (Phil. 3. 21.) **Likeness** (ch. 1. 23; 5. 14)—by union with Him we spiritually undergo a death **like** His. **We shall be**—as in ch. 4. 24; 5. 14, 19. For S. Paul was himself already (Gal. 2. 20) living a resurrection life"—BEET.

6. **Our old man**—"coeval with our being, and as old as the Fall; our evil nature—a strong and beautiful expression for that entire depravity and corruption which by nature spreads itself over the whole man, leaving no part uninfected. This in a believer is **crucified with Christ**, mortified, gradually killed, by virtue of our union with Him. **That the body of sin**—all evil tempers, words, and actions, which are the 'members' of the 'old man' (Col. 3. 5), **might be destroyed**"—WESLEY.

Here we have a further description of the destruction of sin. "Our old self" must be **crucified**, *i.e.* put to death—as surely as Christ was on the cross. Any less stringent process will fail to conquer the evil of our nature. The experience is painful, but absolutely necessary, **that henceforth we should not serve sin.** Without such a crucifixion, a man may abstain from sinful actions, but the old affections and inclinations will remain. He who would "walk in newness of life," must not only "mortify," so as to humiliate, but "crucify," and so **destroy** "the body of sin."

7. **For he that is dead**—"with Christ—**is freed from** the guilt of past, and from the power of present **sin**, as dead men from the commands of their former masters"—WESLEY.

Freed from sin—"from all its obligations, and from its condemning power. He in whose heart Christ lives, and grace reigns, is dead to his old habits of sin, as a dead man is to the duties of life. Though this may not be generally the case, yet S. Paul gives the perfect enjoyment of one who, like himself, could say, 'I live not, but Christ liveth in me'"—SUTCLIFFE.

8. **Dead with Christ**—"conformed to His death, by dying to sin"—WESLEY.

Conformed to His death by dying to sin, then may we be conformed to Him in life also. We shall live in fellowship with Him here, as surely as with Him in eternal glory hereafter. GODET says: "Jesus, from the depths of His heavenly state, communicates Himself to the man who has appropriated His death by faith, and thus fills up with His holy life the void formed in us by the renunciation of our own life."

9. Once, that is at His crucifixion, death had dominion over Christ. If the belief of ver. 8 is to be unfaltering and comforting, it must rest upon the truth that **death hath no more dominion over Him.**

10. **He died to sin**—"to atone for and abolish it. **He liveth unto God**—a glorious eternal life, such as we shall live also"—WESLEY.

"Nothing is more clearly taught in this Epistle than that the death of Christ was a sacrifice for sin; an atonement for guilty man, and accepted as such by God. The first proposition of this verse unfolds the reason why death was allowed to reign over Him for a little; the second explains the reason why this cannot be repeated. . . . The relation which Jesus sustained to sin was the sole cause of His subjection to death. He died to **expiate** sin, and *to destroy it.* There was a moment in His existence in which He bore its penalty, and thereby established its defeat. But this moment was short, and remains single and alone. Such is the force of the term *once for all.* It was a transient necessity which He consented to encounter; but such a crisis will not be renewed. The debt once paid is so, completely and for ever. (Comp. Heb. 7. 27; 9. 12, 26, 28; 10. 10; 1 Pet. 3. 18)"—GODET.

SECTION XV.—Vers. 11–14. THEN SERVE SIN NO MORE.—The words in **Christ** are all-important with S. Paul and S. John. They are explained in John 15. 1–7. Christ is the life-giving element in which we live and breathe; the root from which as branches we each moment draw our life.

12. **Let not sin reign even in your mortal body.** "It must be subject to death, but it need not be subject to sin"—WESLEY.

"Sin is represented as a king, a tyrant, who has the *desires of the mind* and the *members of the body* under his control; so that, by influencing the *passions*, he governs the *body*. Do not let sin have any place or being in you, or it will have dominion"—CLARKE.

13. **Neither present your members to sin**—"to corrupt nature, a mere tyrant—**but to God**—your lawful King"—WESLEY.

"To obey the desires of the body is to place them under the power of sin, and so to put ourselves in hostility to God; whereas our duty is to consecrate all our powers to Him. **Present yourselves to God.** Place your powers at His disposal—*i.e.* resolve that henceforth you will exist, and use all your powers, opportunities, and time, to work out His purposes. To resolve that God shall be the aim of our being is to resolve that our lips shall speak His message, our hands do His work, our feet run on His errands, and our lips show forth His praise"—BEET.

14. **Sin shall not have dominion over you.** "It has neither right nor power. **For ye are not under the Law**—a dispensation of terror and bondage, which only shows sin, without enabling you to conquer it—**but under grace**—under the merciful dispensation of the gospel, which brings complete victory over it to everyone who is under the powerful influences of the Spirit of Christ"—WESLEY.

"Laws are simply aids to weak folks, to tell them where to go, to help them to go, and to make them remember the next time if they do not go. If a man has a direct inspiration of God; or if his culture has gone so high that he does not need these external stimulants; or if he has another sphere of influences, which lead him to the same things from a higher point of view, the lower ones drop, not because they are wrong, but because the man is doing the same things better by a different set of instruments. Therefore it is, that there is no law to some men"—BEECHER.

SECTION XVI. — Vers. 15–23. EXPERIENCE PROVES HOW BAD IS THE SERVICE OF SIN.— 15. **What then?** — Shall we commit sin because the purpose of God's rule is not to treat us according to our conduct, but to do us good? The man of ch. 2. 4 did so. We must not be careless about the commands of God because God has promised to forgive sin.

16. **Know ye not**—a self-evident truth, that bond-service, once accepted, becomes binding, and forbids divided servitude; — this is true of the obligations of pardon as those of condemnation.

17. "**The form of doctrine into which ye have been delivered** — literally it is, **The mould into which ye have been delivered**— which, as it contains a beautiful allusion, conveys also a very instructive admonition; intimating that our minds, all pliant and ductile, should be conformed to the gospel precepts, as liquid metals take the figure of the mould into which they are cast"—WESLEY.

But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered (R.V.). "The verse proves that *given up* does not necessarily imply, though it frequently refers to, surrender to a hostile power. (So Acts 14. 26.) In the providence of God these people were handed over to the gospel as preached by S. Paul, that their hearts and lives might be moulded by it. And they obeyed the teaching under which they were placed. The patriarchs and Israelites, under Moses and under the Prophets, were handed over to another type of teaching"— BEET. "The apostle does not thank God that they **were sinners**; but that, although they were such, they had now received and obeyed the gospel"—CLARKE.

18. "**Being then set free from sin.** We may see the apostle's method thus far at one view:—

	CHAP.	VER.
1. Bondage to sin, . . .	III.	9
2. The knowledge of sin by the Law; a sense of God's wrath; inward death, .	III.	20
3. The revelation of the righteousness of God in Christ through the gospel, . .	III.	21
4. The centre of all, faith, embracing that righteousness	III.	22
5. Justification, whereby God forgives all past sin, and freely accepts the sinner, .	III.	24
6. The gift of the Holy Ghost: a sense of God's love; new inward life	V.	5
	VI.	4
7. The free service of righteousness, ...	VI.	12" —WESLEY.

"Then we may be **made free from sin**— free from its dominion and its curse. This glorious freedom involves a blessed servitude. He who frees them from sin claims their obedience, and promises abundant reward. They now obey one whose essence is conformity to the Law of God"—BEET.

19. **I speak after the manner of men.** "Thus it is necessary that the Scripture should let itself down to the language of men — **because of the weakness of your flesh.** Slowness of understanding flows from the weakness of the flesh, that is, of human nature. **As ye have presented your members servants to uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now present your members servants of righteousness unto holiness.** 'Iniquity' (whereof uncleanness is an eminent part) is here opposed to 'righteousness'; and 'unto iniquity' is the opposite of 'unto holiness.' 'Righteousness' here is a conformity to the Divine will; 'holiness,' to the whole Divine nature. Observe, they who are 'servants of righteousness' go on to 'holiness'; but they who are 'servants to iniquity' get no further. Righteousness is service, because we live according to the will of another; but liberty, because of our inclination to it, and delight in it"—WESLEY.

"**I speak as a man.** (Ch. 3. 5.) It might seem improper to describe believers by the common term used for slaves. But S. Paul teaches Divine things by the words of common life, and now warns us to distinguish carefully between the outward form and the underlying truth. In one sense, we are slaves of God; in another, we are not. The warning applies to the entire teaching of the Bible. In revelation God always speaks as a man"— BEET. "**To uncleanness, and to iniquity.** Wicked men take great pains for hell; would they but take the same for heaven, they could not likely miss of it"—TRAPP. "The lusts which war in the members are but weapons, instruments. You must therefore look to the higher powers of sin in the soul, to the throne of unrighteousness there, whose agents those lusts are"—GOODWIN.

20. **When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.** "In all reason, therefore, ye ought now to be free from unrighteousness; to be as uniform and zealous in serving God as ye were in serving the devil"—WESLEY.

For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness (R.V). "These two servitudes are incompatible; if we cannot serve *God* and *Mammon*, surely we cannot serve *Christ* and *Satan*" — CLARKE. "If there is any bondage in doing right, at that time they were free from it. They have therefore given the service of sin a fair trial"— BEET.

21. **Those things.** "He speaks of them as afar off"—WESLEY.

To be **ashamed** of sin is one of the gracious, if painful experiences of life; and to remember **the end** of all evil, should make men hate this great curse of our race.

22. "**But now being made free from sin.**

While in the flesh we are said to be the servants of sin, and under the law of sin; but now, by a regenerate state, we are made the servants of righteousness"—SUTCLIFFE. **Fruit unto holiness** (R.V. "unto sanctification"). "Holiness of heart was the principle; and righteousness of life the fruit"—CLARKE. "**You have your fruit.** Your life produces, by the outworking of its own laws, good results. To live for God is to have the fruit of our toil (Phil. 1. 22), and the results are our eternal possessions. *For sanctification.* The results are in the direction of, and tend to develop, the devotion of our powers to God. Thus is daily realised the purpose (ver. 19) for which we give ourselves to righteousness"—BEET.

23. **Death**—"temporal, spiritual, and eternal—**is the due wages of sin; but eternal life is the gift of God.** The difference is remarkable. Evil works merit the reward they receive; good works do not. The former demand wages; the latter accept a free gift"—WESLEY.

The one recompence of **sin** is **death.** It can bring nothing that does not end in **death.** God's free **gift** not only saves from the endless war which sin involves, but provides **eternal life** for all. "Sin is a hard servitude; the wages more so"—SUTCLIFFE.

CHAPTER VII.

SECTION XVII.—Vers. 1-6. THROUGH CHRIST WE DIED TO THE LAW.—1. The apostle continues the comparison between the former and the present state of a believer, and at the same time endeavours to wean the Jewish believers from their fondness for the Mosaic Law. I **speak to them that know the Law**—to the Jews chiefly here. **As long**—so long, and no longer—**as it liveth.** "The Law is here spoken of, by a common figure, as a person, to which, as to a husband, life and death are ascribed. But he speaks indifferently of the Law being dead to us, or we to it, the sense being the same"—WESLEY.

Or are ye ignorant, brethren (R.V.). "S. Paul concedes to the Mosaic Law all it can claim. The Roman citizen might go beyond the frontiers of the empire, and thus escape from the laws of Rome. But as long as a Jew lives he is bound by the Law of God"—BEET. "To prove the believer's emancipation from legal bondage, S. Paul supports his argument by an article of the Law itself, which he applies spiritually (vers. 1-4); then he shows that the believer makes use of this right, not to yield himself more freely to sin, but to serve God better than he would have done under the Law (vers. 5, 6). His emancipation in relation to the Law is therefore legitimate—more than that, it is morally beneficial and necessary"—GODET.

2. **She is freed from the law of her husband**—"from that law which gave him a peculiar property in her"—WESLEY.

"**Law of the husband.** (Comp. Lev. 19. 20, etc.) S. Paul implies that the Mosaic Law touches only the present life. Although in the Old Testament a future life was plainly indicated, and in a few places distinctly asserted, yet the threatenings of Moses and the Prophets refer only to the present life. With the dead man they have nothing to do. Hence the law of the married woman is a fair sample of the whole"—BEET.

4. **Thus ye also**—"are now as free from the Mosaic Law as an husband is, when his wife is dead. **By the body of Christ**—offered up; that is, by the merits of His death, that Law expiring with Him"—WESLEY.

"We may sum up the contents of this and the three preceding verses, as follows:—As by His death Christ entered upon an existence set free from every legal statute, and determined by the life of God alone, so we, when we have died to sin, enter with Him into this same life in which, like a re-married widow, we have no other master than this new Spouse and His Spirit. The object of this union, says S. Paul, concluding this development (ver. 4), is, **that we may bring forth fruit unto God.** By this expression he unmistakably continues and completes the figure which he began, namely, that of marriage. The new issue which is to spring from this union between the risen One and His Church is an activity rich in holy works wrought in the service of God"—GODET. **Bear fruit.** (Col. 1. 10; ch. 1. 13.) We are not united to Christ simply that we may be *saved from wrath through Him*, but also that we may live a life of holy devotion, and so become daily illustrations of the power of the grace of God. *Love, joy, peace,* and every other evidence of *newness of life,* must testify to mysterious union with the source of life.

5. **When ye were in the flesh**—"carnally minded, in a state of nature; before we believed in Christ. **Our sins which were by the Law**—accidentally occasioned, or irritated thereby—**wrought in our members**—spread themselves all over the whole man"—WESLEY.

"**The motions of sin** (R.V. 'The sinful passions'). S. Paul here assumes of Christians that they were once **in the flesh,** when the sinful passions were full of energy; and he implies just as distinctly that they are so no longer. **Fruit unto death**—to produce those acts of transgression which subject the sinner to death, temporal and eternal"—CLARKE. "Death was, as it were, the power to which the results of the unregenerate life were dedicated. He 'who had the power of death' (Heb. 2. 14) was the usurping god"—C. B. "The word, **the members,** corresponds to the expression **of the sins.** Every evil instinct has, so to speak, an agent corresponding to it in one of the members of the body. The result of this impure working, caused by the shock of the holy Law against the carnal heart

of the natural man, is an abundance of evil **fruits** which produce **death** in man. (Comp. Jas. 1. 14, 15.) In the affections of the flesh, it is said (ch. 8. 6) there is a secret aspiration after death. The man who acts without God tends to separate himself ever more profoundly from God"—GODET.

6. **Being dead to that whereby we were held**—"to our old husband, the Law. **That we might serve in newness of spirit**—in a new, spiritual manner—**and not in the oldness of the letter**—not in a bare, literal, external way, as we did before"—WESLEY.

"Now we are to love God with all our heart, according to the new spirit or covenant of the gospel. Here grace abounds more than sin"—SUTCLIFFE. "**In newness of spirit**—implies a freedom from the dominion of the flesh, by the power of the Spirit enabling us to mortify the deeds and lusts of the flesh (ch. 8. 13), and then serving God by the continual aid of the Holy Spirit"—BENSON.

SECTION XVIII.—Vers. 7-12. YET THE LAW IS NOT DEAD.—7. **What shall we say then?** "This is a kind of a digression, to the beginning of the next chapter, wherein the apostle, in order to show in the most lively manner the weakness and inefficacy of the Law, changes the person and speaks as of himself, concerning the misery of one under the Law. This S. Paul frequently does, when he is not speaking of his own person, but only assuming another character. (Ch. 3. 5; 1 Cor. 10. 30; 4. 6.) The character here assumed is that of a man, first ignorant of the Law, then under it, and sincerely but ineffectually striving to serve God. To have spoken this of himself, or any true believer, would have been foreign to the whole scope of his discourse—nay, utterly contrary thereto, as well as to what is expressly asserted. (Ch. 8. 2.) **Is the Law sin**—sinful in itself, or a promoter of sin. **I had not known lust**—that is, evil desire. I had not known it to be a sin—nay, perhaps I should not have known that any such desire was in me: it did not appear, till it was stirred up by the prohibition"—WESLEY.

It has been much discussed whether S. Paul, in this chapter, is describing his present or his pre-Christian experience. If the former, his language ill assorts with his other accounts of his spiritual state. It is practically certain that the conflict here described is fought in the soul of a "natural man." The present tenses are easily accounted for by the Hebrew fondness for those tenses, so as to secure greater life and vividness in the narration of past events. "It was through the tenth commandment that S. Paul discovered lust, and it was by finding out this inward fact of lust that he became conscious of his state of sin. In this picture of his inner life S. Paul gives us, without intending it, a very high idea of the purity of his life as a child and a young man. He might, when confronted with the nine commandments, have to the letter claimed for himself the verdict, 'not guilty,' like the young man who said to Jesus, 'All these have I kept from my youth up.' But the tenth commandment cut short all this self-righteousness, and under this ray of Divine holiness he was compelled to pass sentence of condemnation. Thus there was wrought in him, Pharisee though he was, without suspecting it, a profound separation from ordinary Pharisaism, and a moral preparation which was to lead him to the arms of Christ and His righteousness. To this so mournful discovery there was added the statement of the following verse, which records a second and still more painful experience"—GODET. "Here opens a new and important section, including the remainder of ch. 7, and passing on in close connection into ch. 8. The dogmatic statement and illustration of the union of the justified with Jesus Christ as (1) the Second Adam, (2) the new Master, (3) the mystic Husband, is now closed. All these aspects of redemption, but especially the last, have suggested the question now to be definitely treated, namely, What is the true Nature and Work of the Law? **Is the Law sin?** We have just read (ver. 5) that the instincts of our sins were **by the Law**. Does this mean that the Law is a sinful principle and motive? Is it the origin of sin? **God forbid. Nay**, S. Paul entirely rejects the suggestion that the Law *is* sin, but all the more insists on the fact that it does both detect sin, and (in a certain sense) *evoke* it"—C. B.

8. **But sin**—"my inbred corruption—**taking occasion by the commandment**—forbidding, but not subduing it, was only fretted, and **wrought in me** so much the more **all manner of evil desire. For** while I was **without** the knowledge of **the Law, sin was dead**—neither so apparent nor so active; nor was I under the least apprehensions of any danger from it"—WESLEY.

Concupiscence (R.V. "coveting"). Sin and the commandment together—sin, the evil principle in men, acting as the primary cause, and the commandment as the secondary cause—led their unfortunate victim into all kinds of violation of the Law. This is done in two ways—(1) The perverseness of human nature is such that the mere prohibition of an act suggests the desire to do that which is prohibited; (2) The act, when done, is invested with the character of sin, which hitherto it did not possess. It becomes a distinct breach of the Law, where previously there had been no law to break. This is what the apostle means by saying that "without the Law sin was dead." Until there was written prohibition, sin (the evil principle) was powerless to produce sinful actions.

9. **And I was once alive without the Law**

—"without the close application of it. I had much life, wisdom, virtue, strength; so I thought. **But when the commandment**—that is, the Law, a part put for the whole (but this expression particularly intimates its compulsive force), which restrains, enjoins, urges, forbids, threatens—**came**—in its spiritual meaning, to my heart, with the power of God—**sin revived, and I died**—my inbred sin took fire, and all my virtue and strength died away; and I then saw myself to be dead in sin, and liable to death eternal"—WESLEY.

And I was alive apart from the Law once (R.V.). "Such is the state of carnal men at ease in their sins, and thoughtless of Divine things. The filth of a prison is scarcely seen in the dark, but when the sun shines all the defilement appears. What a discovery and change of view is induced by awakening grace!"—SUTCLIFFE. "Note the sadness of the word *once*. To S. Paul life is but a memory of the far past. **Sin came to life**—awoke to power and activity. The purpose and aim of its activity was given in vers. 1–6. In the days of innocence sin was like a serpent, dormant and harmless in the bosom of S. Paul. At the voice of the Lord it awoke and slew him"—BEET. CALVIN says: "The death of sin is the life of man; and, on the contrary, the life of sin is the death of man." GODET adds: "From the moment he found himself called to apply the prescription of the Law seriously to his conduct, he was not slow to discover sin within him; for in the depths of his heart he found lust; and not only did the Law unveil this evil principle to him, but it intensified its power. The torrent bubbled and boiled on, meeting with the obstacle which came in its way."

10. **The commandment which was intended for life.** "Doubtless it was originally intended by God as a grand means of preserving and increasing spiritual life, and leading to life everlasting"—WESLEY.

"The Law was designed to save life, by guarding from death. (Lev. 18. 5; Deut. 5. 33.) Such was its natural tendency. But the human will refused obedience, and then this Law led to death by the curse of the broken commandment. The Law is the weapon with which sin slew S. Paul. But we do not blame a sword because, in the hands of an enemy, it has slain the man for whose defence it was made. The fault is, not with the Law, but with sin"—BEET.

11. **Deceived me**—"while I expected life by the Law, sin came upon me unawares, and slew all my hopes"—WESLEY.

For sin, finding occasion through the commandment, beguiled me, and through it slew me (R.V.). The "beguiling" and the "death" here mentioned is fully illustrated by the history of Paradise. (Gen. 3. 4, 5, 13.) By the very prohibition of God, Satan found "occasion" to "beguile" the woman, and so brought the threatened death. (See also 2 Cor. 11. 3 and 1 Tim. 2. 14.) From the Fall till now the process of so accomplishing deception and the destruction of man has never ceased.

12. **The commandment**—"that is, every branch of the Law—**is holy, and just, and good.** It springs from, and partakes of, the holy nature of God; it is every way just and right in itself; it is designed wholly for the good of man"—WESLEY.

"**Wherefore**—this word introduces a conclusion, not from the verse immediately preceding, but from the whole of the last five verses. The apostle glances back for a moment over the course of his argument"—ELLICOTT.

SECTION XIX.—Vers. 13–25. THE LAW SHOWS THE EVIL AND POWER OF SIN.—13. "**Was then that which is good made** the cause of evil **to me**; yea, of **death**, which is the greatest of evil? Not so. **But** it was **sin** which was made death to me, inasmuch as it **wrought death in me**, even **by that which is good**—by the good Law. **So that sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful.** The consequence of which was, **that** inbred **sin**, thus driving furiously in spite of the commandment, **became exceeding sinful**; the guilt thereof being greatly aggravated"—WESLEY.

"We have here another account, in addition to those of chaps. 3. 19 and 5. 20 of the purpose for which the Law was given. Each statement illustrates the others. The Law was the result of Adam's sin. It came that his sin might be multiplied into the many sins of his children, and that thus the principle of sin, which entered through Adam into the world, might make known its real character. Therefore S. Paul's death is in no way owing to the Law, but entirely to sin. For the coming of the Law was the result of the prior coming of sin through Adam into the world. Therefore both the Law and its results are altogether owing to sin"—BEET. The R.V. rendering here is needlessly difficult. It is best to supply a word in English which makes the sense quite plain—**But sin did.**

14. **I am carnal.** "S. Paul, having compared together the past and present state of believers, that 'in the flesh' (ver. 5), and that 'in the spirit' (ver. 6), in answering two objections, Is then the Law sin? (ver. 7), and, Is the Law death? (ver. 13), interweaves the whole process of a man reasoning, groaning, striving, and escaping from the legal to the evangelical state. This he does from ver. 7 to the end of this chapter. **Sold under sin**—totally enslaved; slaves bought with money were absolutely at their master's disposal"—WESLEY.

"The apostle, from indwelling sin, now proceeds to the habits of sin. The old man, the usurper, now acts openly as a tyrant. He catches men by their reigning passions, and holds them under the yoke of servitude, as

Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness. All this is exemplified in the words which follow"—SUTCLIFFE. "The language is indeed strong, but it is the strength of profound spiritual insight. The man who here 'does what he hates' is one who has so felt the absolute sanctity of God and of His law as to see sin in the *slightest* deviations of will and affection from its standard. Such penitence for such sin is not only possible in a life of Christian rectitude, but may be said to be a natural element in it"—C. B.

15. **But what I hate that I do.** "Here is the conflict between the two natures in man, the one drawing the mind to good, the other to evil, and evil which cannot be conquered by human efforts; it is by the aids of grace alone that sin can be subdued. 'If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live'"—SUTCLIFFE. "This verse contains the proof from fact of the state of slavery which S. Paul has just affirmed. The slave knows not what he does, for he does the will of another. So S. Paul complains that his work is not the result of a distinct view in which he has, as it were, intellectually possessed himself beforehand of what he was going to do; it is the result of blind instinct, which drags him along as if without his knowledge, so that when he sees it realised, it is not what he wished—it is, on the contrary, what he detests"—GODET.

16. **It is good.** "This single word implies all the three that were used before (ver. 12), 'holy, just, and good'"—WESLEY.

The Law commands what I desire, therefore my desire is itself a testimony to the goodness of the Law. The reprobation with which S. Paul's conscience visits his own work is a solemn homage rendered by him to the Law, for thereby he takes part with the Law against himself.

17. "**It is no more I that** can properly be said to **do it, but** rather **sin that dwelleth in me**—that makes, as it were, another person, and tyrannises over me"—WESLEY.

"That S. Paul agrees with the Law, and yet does what in agreement with the Law he hates, proves that he is not the author of his own actions. And since these actions cannot be attributed to anyone outside himself, he comes to the awful conclusion that within him there is someone other than himself, who is the true author of his actions. This stranger, who has seized the helm of S. Paul's ship, he calls *sin*"—BEET.

18–20. **In my flesh.** "The flesh here signifies the whole man as he is by nature"—WESLEY.

"The corrupt and degenerate self, my animal appetites and passions, debased and enslaved as they are by sin through the Fall"—BENSON. "Enthralled is it, and the will is powerless. What I do and what I will are opposite things. It is therefore sin that acts, and not I"—ELLICOTT. "'Sin dwells in him' to such a degree that 'no good thing dwells in him'; the intruder has occupied the whole dwelling, and *every part* of it is *infected*; by vitiating the affections and will, sin has spoilt *all*"—C. B.

21. **I find then a law**—"an inward, constraining power, flowing from the dictate of corrupt nature"—WESLEY.

I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present (R.V.). There can be little doubt of the practical meaning of the verse. "Such is the relation between me and the law that my will is with it, my action is against it"—C. B. GODET adds: "Always the same two characteristics of his moral state; will for good, but powerless; evil carrying him away in practice. S. Paul is summing up *the mode of his existence* since the time when the law came in to affect his inward *life*, and from which the law gives him no means of escape." "**I find, therefore, that to me who wish for the Law, to do that which is good, that to me the bad is present**"—BEET.

22. **For I delight in the Law of God.** "This is more than 'I consent to' (ver. 16). The day of liberty draws near. **The inward man**—called the mind (vers. 23 and 25)"—WESLEY.

"**I delight with all my soul in the Law of God**—which is an emanation of His glory shining on the mind. My judgment approves, and all the oppressed emotions of grace working within, love it, as holy, just, and good"—SUTCLIFFE. "Every true *penitent* admires the Moral Law, longs most earnestly for a conformity to it, and feels that he can never be satisfied till he awakes up after this Divine likeness"—CLARKE. "**The inward man.** Same as the 'mind' in ver. 23. The Law which S. Paul approves, when he looks at it from the point of view of his inner and higher nature, becomes by that approval, and so far as it is understood and approved, 'the law of his mind.' This inner self is the subject of the Divine renewal which, from day to day, goes on in the Christian"—BEET.

23. **But I see another law in my members**—"another inward constraining power of evil inclinations and bodily appetites—**warring against the law of my mind**—the dictate of my mind, which delights in the Law of God—**and captivating me**—in spite of all my resistance"—WESLEY.

Another law (R.V. "A different law"). "The human nature, once wholly under the government of sin, is still the seat of this enemy, who carries on the conflict against the Law of God, and against S. Paul's own 'mind.' Two diverse laws claim obedience, and **the law of sin** often proves the stronger, and defeats the only power which can set this captive man free. Even after conversion, and when a moral change is wrought in the powers of the mind, there is a war between the flesh and the spirit"—WATSON. "S. Paul is a prisoner in his own

body. He is a slave; his master is his greatest enemy, and the enemy dwells in his own breast"—BEET. The hand of a tyrannical stranger is upon the helm of his life.

24. **Wretched man that I am.** "The struggle is now come to the height; and the man, finding there is no help in himself, begins almost unawares to pray, **Who shall deliver me?** He then seeks and looks for deliverance, till God in Christ appears to answer his question. The word which we translate 'deliver' implies *force*. And, indeed, without this there can be no deliverance. **The body of this death**—that is, this body of death, this mass of sin, leading to death eternal, and cleaving as close to me as my body to my soul. We may observe, the deliverance is not wrought yet"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul's view of his own desperate position forces from him a cry for deliverance. *Calamity-stricken.* (Ch. 3. 16; Jas. 5. 1; Rev. 3. 17.) It describes, not the man's state of mind, but his circumstances. **This death**—*i.e.* of body and soul, as in chaps. 6 and 7. **Body** refers to 'the members of my body' (ch. 7. 23). By means of his body, sin forces S. Paul to commit sin. His body is therefore the shackle with which sin is dragging him to eternal death. He cries for deliverance. From whom? From his own body, by means of which his enemy compels him to sin, and holds him in bondage. But we need not conceive him to desire death. This would not save him. From the tyranny of his own body, from a life of obedience to the desires of the body (ch. 6. 12), S. Paul cries to be set free. This cry of anguish, even more than the picture of his captivity, reveals his terrible position"—BEET.

25. **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord**—"that is, God will deliver me through Christ. But the apostle, as his frequent manner is, beautifully interweaves his assertion with thanksgiving; the hymn of praise answering in a manner to the voice of sorrow, 'Wretched man that I am!' **So then.** He here sums up the whole, and concludes what he began (ver. 7). **I myself**—or rather *that I*, the person whom I am personating, till this deliverance is wrought—**serve the Law of God with my mind**—my reason and conscience declare for God—**but with my flesh the law of sin**—but my corrupt passions and appetites still rebel. The man is now utterly weary of his bondage, and upon the brink of liberty"—WESLEY.

God heals the poor captive, and delivers him from his bondage. Grace is stronger than sin. (Ch. 5. 20.) Triumph and praise succeed the conflict and the despair. Light dawns on that dark experience, and the struggle ends, as with joy and gratitude he exclaims, **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.** There is no other by whom such victory is won, and through Him all may have the final and eternal triumph. (1 Cor. 15. 57.) "When a machine is out of order, and the various parts grate and grind against each other, it is not necessary to say to one who hears the grinding, 'It is out of order.' Therefore no time is spent in the New Testament to prove that men are depraved. It is assumed to be a thing of universal consciousness as it is. But, by the power of God's Spirit, and by the discipline of life, complete ascendency may be gained by our supersensuous nature"—BEECHER. "It is in Jesus our Lord, to whom the thanks and praise are due, though without His intervention there can only be a divided service. The mere human self serves with the mind the Law of God, with the flesh the law of sin. **I myself**—apart from, and in opposition to the help which I derive from Christ. The abrupt and pregnant style by which, instead of answering the question, 'Where is deliverance to come from?' the apostle simply returns thanks for the deliverance that has really been vouchsafed to him, is thoroughly in harmony with the impassioned personal character of the whole passage. These are not abstract terms, but they are matters of intimate personal experience. The deliverance wrought by Christ is apparently here that of sanctification rather than of justification. It is from the domination of the body, from the impulses of sense, that the Christian is freed, and that is done when he is crucified to them with Christ"—ELLICOTT.

CHAPTER VIII.

SECTION XX.—Vers. 1–13. SECURITY OF THE JUSTIFIED.—1. **There is therefore now no condemnation**—"either for things present or past. Now he comes to deliverance and liberty. The apostle here resumes the thread of his discourse, which was interrupted (ch. 7. 7)"—WESLEY.

Who walk not after the flesh. (Ver. 4; Gal. 5. 16, 25.) **Those in Christ Jesus**—"they to whom Christ is the element and source of life and action. (Comp. ch. 16. 7; 1 Cor. 1. 30; 2 Cor. 5. 17)"—BEET. "The last chapter closed with an account of the deep distress of the penitent; this one opens with an account of his *salvation*. The **now, therefore**, in the text, must refer more to the happy transition from darkness to light, from condemnation to pardon, which this believer now enjoys, than to the Christian dispensation taking the place of the Jewish economy"—CLARKE. "An unbeliever shall have a double condemnation; one from the Law which he hath transgressed, and another from the gospel, which he hath despised; as a malefactor that, being condemned and dead in law, rejecteth his prince's pardon. But it is otherwise with those that are in Christ Jesus. The Law cannot condemn them, because they have appealed; the gospel cannot, because they have believed"—TRAPP.

2. **The Law of the Spirit**—"that is, the gospel, **hath freed me from the law of sin and death**—that is, the Mosaic dispensation"

—WESLEY. (See John 8. 36; ch. 6. 18, 22; Gal. 2. 9; 5. 1; ch. 7. 24, 25.)

"This verse explains the inference of ver. 1, and shows how S. Paul's former divided allegiance proves that he is no longer condemned, **The Spirit** is a new and conspicuous feature of ch. 8. *The* Holy *Spirit* ('The Spirit of God,' and of Christ,' vers. 9, 11) is the Author and Giver *of life* (ver. 6). His every impulse tends towards life. If by the Author of life, S. Paul has been made free, he cannot be condemned to die"—BEET.

3. "**For what the Law** of Moses **could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh**—incapable of conquering our evil nature. If it could, God needed not to have sent **His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.** We, with our sinful flesh, were devoted to death. But **God sending His own Son, in the likeness of that flesh,** though pure from sin, **condemned** that **sin** which was **in** our **flesh**; gave sentence, that sin should be destroyed, and the believer wholly delivered from it"—WESLEY.

"**His own Son** (as in ch. 1. 4; 5. 10; 8. 29, 32). His relation to God is of the closest possible nature, and altogether different from that of all others. (Phil. 2. 7; 1 John 4. 9.) He came in our nature. (Gal. 4. 5.) He conquered where we had fallen before our foe. He was in all things like unto us, but in sin; as the brazen serpent was like the fiery serpent, but only it had no sting"—TRAPP. "The end for which Christ was sent by God was, through the sacrifice of His death, to condemn sin; that is, to expiate and take away the guilt of sin; so that it shall never be charged upon believers to their eternal condemnation" — BURKITT. "How was I freed? Thus. Precisely on that very point where the Law of Moses showed its impotence, viz. in the attempt to get rid of sin, which it failed to do, because of the counteracting influence of the flesh—precisely on this very point God interposed by sending His Son in a body of flesh, similar to that in which sin resides, and as an offering to expiate human sin, and so dethroned and got rid of sin in the flesh which He had assumed. The flesh, the scene of its former triumphs, became now the scene of its defeat and expulsion. Where sin—**in the flesh**—had hitherto had the mastery, it now stood condemned and worsted; it was unable to exercise its old sway any longer"—ELLICOTT.

4. **That the righteousness of the Law**—"the holiness it required, described (vers. 5-11) **—might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**—who are guided in all our thoughts, words, and actions, not by corrupt nature, but by the Spirit of God. From this place S. Paul describes primarily the state of believers, and that of unbelievers, only to illustrate this"—WESLEY.

"**That the ordinance** (or requirement) **of the Law might be fulfilled in us** (R.V.). Hitherto the Law could not be kept because of the antagonistic influence of the flesh; henceforth it may be kept for the reason that this influence has ceased, and that its place is taken by the influence of the Spirit"—ELLICOTT. "Since the Law was designed to mould our conduct, its purpose is accomplished when it is obeyed. Every act of obedience is God's work in us, and gift to us; and is an accomplishment of the Divine purpose for which Christ became man. **Walk according to the flesh**—to allow the indolence or appetites of the flesh to mark out our path. To do this is to obey sin, which dwells in the flesh. (Ch. 7. 18.) **Walk according to the Spirit**—to obey the law of the Spirit of life. God sent His Son to dwell in human flesh, that the Spirit of God, and no longer the flesh, may direct our steps; and that the purpose for which the Law of Sinai was given may be achieved in us"—BEET.

5. "**They that are after the flesh**—who remain under the guidance of corrupt nature—**mind the things of the flesh**—have their thoughts and affections fixed on such things as gratify corrupt nature, viz. on things visible and temporal; on things of the earth, on pleasure (of sense or imagination), praise, or riches. **But they who are after the Spirit**—who are under His guidance—**mind the things of the Spirit**—think of, relish, love things invisible, eternal; the things which the Spirit hath revealed, which He works in us, moves us to, and promises to give us"—WESLEY.

"One of the great contrasts between the past and present condition of the Christian. Once he sought to gratify and obey the sinful cravings of his human nature. Now, by the indwelling of the Spirit, he delights in those affections and duties which have been so graciously revealed to him. He is born of God, and in consequence has the spiritual mind, which is a distinct evidence of the regenerate soul. As if the apostle had said, When we lived under the dispensation of the Law, we brought forth fruit suitable to that state and condition; but now we serve God with new hearts and lives by the Spirit of Christ, according to the law of grace, and not carnally in the bondage and terror of the old Law, called (ver. 6) 'the oldness of the letter'"—BURKITT. "To be **after the flesh** is to be inwardly governed by it, as the natural man always is. The past here referred to is the deepest source of the moral life, whence the will is constantly drawing its impulses and direction. Hence the consequence: they are preoccupied with the things of the flesh, and aspire after them. *The aspiration* of which this verse speaks, proceeds from the *being*, and produces 'the walking' of ver. 4, the moral necessity of which S. Paul wishes to demonstrate, whether it be on the side of the flesh, or on that of the Spirit. The *I* is distinct from both tendencies; but it yields itself without fail to the one or the other—to the former, as the *I* of the natural man; to the latter, as the *I* of the regenerate man. As its state, so is its

tendency; as its tendency, so is its conduct"—GODET.

6. **For to be carnally minded**—"that is, to mind the things of the flesh—**is death**—the sure mark of spiritual death, and the way to death everlasting. **But to be spiritually minded**—that is, to mind the things of the Spirit—**is life**—a sure mark of spiritual life, and the way to life everlasting—**and** attended with **peace**—the peace of God, which is the foretaste of life everlasting; and peace with God, opposite to the enmity mentioned in the next verse"—WESLEY.

For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace (R.V.). "To live under the influence of 'the mind of the flesh' is to live in a state of condemnation, leading to and involving eternal death. The contrast is perfect; 'the mind of the Spirit,' the Divine indwellings which regenerate, also brings 'life and peace.'" There is no changing the *nature* of these two states and walks (ver. 5), and no arresting the latter in its onward march (ver. 6). The way of salvation is to pass from the first to the second, and not to relapse thereafter from the second to the first'—GODET. "A disorder in nature is a prohibition to all happiness belonging to that nature; a distempered body under the fury of a disease, can find no delight in the pleasures of the healthful; a wicked man, with a troubled and foaming sea of sin and lust in his mind, would find no more rest in heaven than a man with his disjointed members upon a rack can in the beauty of a picture. We must be spiritually minded before we can have either life or peace. Righteousness in the soul is the necessary qualification for the peace and joy in the kingdom of God. It is a contradiction to think that any can be happy with a nature contrary to the very essence of happiness"—CHARNOCK.

7. **Enmity against God**—"His existence, power, and providence"—WESLEY.

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity (R.V.). "This enmity does not lie, as some fancy, in bad habits, education, or other such accidental and extraneous circumstances. It has its source in the mind itself. The carnal mind not only *has*, but is, enmity against God. If it were not so, man would not need to be born again, to get a new heart; like a watch that had started a jewel, or lost the tooth of a wheel, it were enough to be repaired without being renewed"—GUTHRIE.

8. **They who are in the flesh**—"under the government of it"—WESLEY.

"**The flesh** is to the unsaved, not only the physical but the moral element of life. He sees and hears only through the eyes and ears of the body. All he has and is depends upon the body. He is therefore at its mercy; at the mercy of that which is hostile to God"—BEET.

9. **In the Spirit**—"under His government. **If any man have not the Spirit of Christ**—dwelling and governing in him—**he is none of His**—he is not a member of Christ—not a Christian—not in a state of salvation. A plain, express declaration, which admits of no exception. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"—WESLEY.

"God's union with men is not a shadow, is not a figure, is not a dream; it is the statement of a fact as literal as any law in nature"—BEECHER. "It is remarkable that **the Spirit of Christ** is here used as the equivalent of **the Spirit of God** in the preceding proposition. The Spirit of Jesus is that of God Himself, whom He has converted by appropriating Him perfectly here below into His personal life, so that He can communicate Him to His own. It is in this form that the Holy Spirit henceforth acts in the Church. Where this vital bond does not exist between a soul and Christ, it remains a stranger to Him and His salvation"—GODET. "**Dwell in you.** This expression is the complement of the other, 'to be *in* the Spirit,' 'to be *in* Christ.' It denotes the closest possible contact and influence of spirit upon spirit. No mysticism, however vivid and intense, can really go beyond this without infringing the bounds of personality, and contradicting the direct testimony of consciousness"—ELLICOTT.

The results of the presence of Christ in the soul are declared in ver. 10.

10. **Now if Christ be in you.** "Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ. **The body indeed is dead**—devoted to death—**because of sin**—heretofore committed. **But the Spirit is life**—already truly alive. **Because of righteousness**—now attained. From ver. 13, S. Paul, having finished what he had begun (ch. 6. 1), describes purely the state of believers"—WESLEY.

(See Eph. 3. 16, and also the seven epistles, Rev. 2 and 3.) "The supreme work of the Spirit is to acquaint the soul with Christ; hence the indwelling of the Spirit as the Divine Teacher results by holy necessity in the indwelling of Christ as the Divine Guest. (Comp. 2 Cor. 13. 5)"—MOULE. **Christ in you.** "The presence in us of the Spirit of Christ is the actual presence of Christ. Hence the Spirit is the bearer of the presence of Christ. (Comp. John 14. 18, 23, 26; 15. 26)"—BEET.

11. "Teaches that it is by the agency of the Holy Ghost that the saints shall rise again. Here on earth the bodies of believers are the temples of the Holy Ghost. He consecrates and sanctifies the very body in which, as in His temple, He dwells. The body is indeed dead, because of sin; it shall die, and seemingly perish. But it shall rise again; for the Spirit is the Spirit of life because of righteousness, and shall quicken our mortal bodies, and restore to a union with the glorified soul"—WATSON. "According to ver. 10 there was still left one power of death, that over the body. S. Paul now disposes of this also"—MEYER.

12. **We are not debtors to the flesh**—"we ought not to follow it"—WESLEY.

We owe nothing to the flesh, for "to live after" it, can only bring shame and death; but to "the Spirit," by whom we are brought into the possession of peace and life, "we are debtors."

13. **The deeds of the flesh.** "Not only evil actions, but evil desires, tempers, thoughts. **If ye mortify**—kill, destroy these—**ye shall live**—the life of faith more abundantly here, and hereafter the life of glory"—WESLEY.

"No man in his own strength can conquer sin. But if we by incessant prayer call in the aids of grace, we can, like S. Paul, do all things through Christ who strengthens us and gives us the victory"—SUTCLIFFE. "As long as corrupt nature is not mortified, but the principle left whole in a man, it is a vain thing to expect that it should not govern. But if the old nature be indeed mortified, and a new heavenly nature infused, then may it well be expected that men will walk in newness of life"—EDWARDS. "Be always an enemy to the devil and the world, but specially to your own flesh"—ROBERT SMITH. "The acts of which the body is the simple *instrument* are not its own. S. Paul would suppress those of which it is the independent author, and wherein, consequently, it withdraws from the dominion of the Spirit. These should come to an end, because in the Christian the spirit should direct and penetrate *all*, even *his eating and drinking*, according to the example quoted by the apostle. (1 Cor. 10. 31.) In all these acts of life the body should not guide, but be guided. Every act of sacrifice whereby the independence of the body is denied, and its submission to the spirit forcibly asserted, secures a growth of spiritual life in man"—GODET.

SECTION XXI. — Vers. 14–39. THE JUSTIFIED: AIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND CHEERED BY THE PROSPECT OF ETERNAL GLORY PREPARED FOR THEM.—14. **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God**—"in all the ways of righteousness—**they are the sons of God.** Here S. Paul enters upon the description of those blessings which he comprises (ver. 30) in the word *glorified;* though, indeed, he does not describe mere glory, but that which is still mingled with the cross. The sum is, through sufferings to glory"—WESLEY.

"**Led by the Spirit** — living and acting under His gracious power, and joyfully conscious of subjection to His will, in thought and conversation and work. The Holy Spirit is as surely the Divine Teacher and Guide of the sons of God, as the witness of their adoption into the sonship. **Sons.** On this sacred word, as used here, comp. John 1. 12, 13; 2 Cor. 6. 16–18; Gal. 3. 26; Phil. 2. 15; 1 John 3. 1, 2; 5. 1, 4, 5. In this verse (1) a glorious privilege is proclaimed, the being **sons of God**; (2) a description of the persons to whom the privilege belongs, they are such **as are led by the Spirit of God.** He directs their actions, enlightens their understanding, and guides their inclinations; and where He guides, He governs. Such as are 'led by God's Spirit' are undoubtedly 'God's children,' and such as are not His children refuse to be led by His Spirit, but live under the uncontrolled activity of their own"—BURKITT.

15. **For ye**—"who are real Christians—**have not received the spirit of bondage.** The Holy Ghost was not properly a spirit of bondage, even in the time of the Old Testament. Yet there was something of bondage remaining even in those who then had received the Spirit. **Again**—as the Jews did before. **We**—all and every believer. **Cry.** The word denotes a vehement speaking, with desire, confidence, constancy. **Abba, Father.** The latter word explains the former. By using both the Syriac and the Greek word, S. Paul seems to point out the joint cry both of the Jewish and Gentile believers. 'The spirit of bondage' here seems directly to mean those operations of the Holy Spirit by which the soul, on its first conviction, feels itself in bondage to sin, to the world, to Satan, and obnoxious to the wrath of God. This, therefore, and **the Spirit of adoption**, are one and the same Spirit, only manifesting itself in various operations, according to the various circumstances of the persons"—WESLEY.

"There is no spirit of slavery or of fear in our adoption into the family of God. The new relationship brings freedom and love. Once God was only known as a justly offended King, whose laws had been wickedly disobeyed, but now He is the reconciled Father to whose will it has become a joy to submit. **Spirit of adoption**—the Holy Spirit, so called because given to us when God makes us His sons. With this verse compare Gal. 4. 6. By crying in our hearts, 'Father,' the Spirit moves us to utter the same filial cry. How He moves us we learn from ver. 5. He reveals to all believers, by means of the gospel, God's fatherly love, manifested in the death of Christ. In the gospel calls us children. The Spirit speaks the gospel in our hearts. We hear and know the voice, and cry, 'My Father, God.' By prompting this cry, the Spirit given to us proves Himself to be the 'Spirit of adoption"—BEET.

16. **The same Spirit beareth witness with our spirit**—"with the spirit of every true believer, by a testimony distinct from that of his own spirit, or the testimony of a good conscience. Happy they who enjoy this clear and constant!"—WESLEY.

"**The Spirit itself** (R.V. 'The Spirit Himself'). In the order of cause and effect, the witness of God's Spirit precedes that of our own spirit; but in the order of thought, our own cry comes first. We are first conscious of our own filial confidence, and then observe that it is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. The process of assurance is as follows: The gospel proclaims that through the death of Christ, God receives into His favour and family all

who believe the good news. We have proof that this proclamation is the voice of God. We therefore accept it as true; we dare to believe that God accepts those that believe, and therefore ourselves, into His favour. We thus come consciously into the number of those whose acquittal the gospel proclaims. In the moment of our faith God accepts us as righteous, adopts us to be sons, and sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. The Spirit opens our mind to understand the meaning of the death of Christ, and thus makes known to us God's love. The love of God thus revealed assures us that the hope called forth by the promise will not deceive us. We now look up to God as our Father; and find that while we do so we have power to conquer our inveterate habit of sin. We accept these results of the gift of the Spirit as the confirmation of our hope"—BEET.

17. **Joint-heirs**—"that we may know it is a great inheritance which God will give us; for He hath given a great one to His Son. **If we suffer with Him**—willingly and cheerfully, for righteousness' sake. This is a new proposition, referring to what follows"—WESLEY.

"How much depends on our adoption, and how glorious the prospect which is unfolded to the 'children of God'! All the wealth of the heavenly inheritance shall come into the possession of the **joint-heirs with Christ.** Our sonship may involve suffering, but even this shall help to prepare for the heritage of glory. The very relation of a godly man to his everlasting glory is an honour ten thousand times surpassing the honour of all kingdoms of the world"—BAXTER. "All God's sons are heirs; not so the sons of earthly princes. Jehoshaphat gave his younger sons great gifts of silver, of gold, and of precious things; but the kingdom he gave to Jehoram, because he was the first-born. (2 Chron. 21. 3.) God's children are all higher than the kings of the earth. (Ps. 89. 27)"—TRAPP.

18. **For I reckon.** "This verse gives the reason why he but now mentioned sufferings and glory. When that glory 'shall be revealed in us,' then the sons of God will be revealed also"—WESLEY.

Revealed in us (R.V. "Revealed to usward"). A brave and scriptural way of regarding earthly tribulation. With **present sufferings** S. Paul was well acquainted, and not less so with the anticipations of glorification with Christ. The contrast between the experience and the expectation was great, but to **reckon** on the future **glory** prevented repining under the sorrows of **time.** Trial is short; triumph is eternal. (2 Cor. 4. 17; 1 Pet. 1. 6.) There is a vast disproportion between the Christian's present liability to suffering, and the certainty of his future glory; and surely those who have been exercised by the testings of time may joyfully anticipate **the glory which shall be revealed in us.** The glory already exists in Christ, it only remains to be revealed in us. (Comp. Gal. 3. 23; see also Col. 3. 4; Tit. 2. 13; 1 Pet. 1. 4.)

19. **For the earnest expectation.** "The word denotes a lively hope of something drawing near, and a vehement longing after it. **Of the creation**—of all visible creatures, believers excepted, who are spoken of apart; each kind, according as it is capable. All these have been sufferers through sin; and to all these (the finally impenitent excepted) shall refreshment redound from the glory of the children of God. Upright heathens are by no means to be excluded from this 'earnest expectation': nay, perhaps something of it may at some times be found even in the vainest of men; who (although in the hurry of life they mistake vanity for liberty, and partly stifle, partly dissemble, their groans, yet) in their sober, quiet, sleepless, afflicted hours, pour forth many sighs in the ear of God"—WESLEY.

Manifestation (R.V. "Revealing"). "The true and glorious character of **the sons of God,** and the blessedness of their eternal reward, shall be revealed. They will not always be in a condition of probation and testing as now. When Christ 'shall appear, we shall be like Him.' Nature waits for that day, and 'new heavens and a new earth' shall add to the endless triumph of our resurrection to 'the body that shall be'"—S. C.

"The **creation** specially distinguished from the children of God, and therefore does not include them. The words 'subject' and 'groan' exclude the happy spirits of other worlds. The coming liberation excludes bad angels, and those who finally reject the gospel. For to the latter, the coming of Christ will bring wrath (ch. 2. 8); and we cannot conceive it to bring liberty to the former. It therefore remains that the word denotes the entire world around us, living and without life, man alone excepted. It is what we call Nature; but reminds us that Nature is the work of God"—BEET.

20. **The creation was made subject to vanity**—"abuse, misery, and corruption—**by Him who subjected it**—namely, God. (Gen. 3. 17; 5. 29.) Adam only made it liable to the sentence which God pronounced; yet not without hope"—WESLEY.

For the creation was subjected to vanity (R.V.). "On the whole, notwithstanding serious difficulties, it seems necessary to take the word 'Creation' here to mean what we popularly call 'Nature.' **Was made subject**—apparently at the Fall. Not that there was no animal suffering and death previously. From Gen. 3. 17–19, we find that *some* change for the worse passed over man's abode when he fell; a change impossible now to define. But it may be that all distress and failure in creation are, in the sight of the Eternal, connected with the entrance of sin, whether or no they have followed the Fall in order of time"—C. B.

21. **The creation itself shall be delivered.**

"Destruction is not deliverance: therefore whatsoever is destroyed, or ceases to be, is not delivered at all. Will, then, any part of the creation be destroyed? **Into the glorious liberty**—the excellent state wherein they were created"—WESLEY.

Creation which was blighted when man sinned, shall share in his eternal renewal. Now its beauty fades, and its glories pass away. This was not its original destiny, and every intention of the Almighty Creator must be fulfilled. There is a deliverance from **the bondage of corruption** for "Nature," as surely as **glorious liberty** for **the children of God.** BEET adds: "This freedom, Creation will share. The bondage of corruption was designed to last only for a time. It was imposed when man fell; and will be removed when man's redemption is complete (ver. 23)."

22. "**For the whole creation groaneth together**—with joint groans, as it were with one voice—**and travaileth**—*lit.* 'is in the pains of childbirth,' to be delivered of the burden of this curse—**until now**—to this very hour; and so on till the time of deliverance"—WESLEY.

Its full and eternal glory is not yet. It bears many evidences of the great curse. Its voices are out of harmony. Destruction and corruption and death unite to spoil its grandeur and its powers. "We have here another proof (comp. 1. 20) of S. Paul's careful contemplation of the material world. For an important coincidence, see Acts 14. 17; 17. 24. If our exposition be correct, these verses teach us plainly that the world beneath our feet will be rescued from the curse of sin, to be our eternal home. (Comp Acts 3. 21; Rev. 21. 1.) Just as the sin of man's spirit brought a curse upon the body in which the spirit dwells, so it brought a curse also upon the greater dwelling-place of the entire race. And just as the body will some day share the liberation which the spirit already enjoys, so will the world around. Thus are the fortunes of the material world indissolubly joined to those of its inhabitant, man"—BEET.

23. **And even we, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit**—"that is, the Spirit, who is the first-fruits of our inheritance. **The adoption.** Persons who had been privately adopted among the Romans were often brought forth into the Forum, and there publicly owned as their sons by those who adopted them. So at the general resurrection, when the body itself is redeemed from death, the sons of God shall be publicly owned by Him in the great assembly of men and angels. **The redemption of our body**—from corruption to glory and immortality"—WESLEY.

"This verse compares the present state of the children of God with the present state of Nature. Nature groans, waiting for liberation; we groan, waiting for **adoption** and **redemption**"—BEET. "Our Lord (Luke 20. 36) terms those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain the heavenly world, 'the children of God,' because 'they are the children of the resurrection'; they being thereby manifestly shown to be His children. The apostle therefore had good reason to call the redemption of our body from death, *the adoption*"—BENSON. "We have here a special description of God's adopted children; they **have the first-fruits of the Spirit**—that is, they have the Holy Spirit in His sanctifying gifts and graces and comforts, and this is an evidence that God will give them more. Grace is an earnest of glory, and a pledge of everlasting life"—BURKITT. "Nor is it only the rest of creation that groans. We Christians, too, though we possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, nevertheless inwardly groan, sighing for the time when our adoption as the sons of God will be complete, and even our mortal bodies will be transfigured. **The redemption of our body.** One sign of the imperfect sonship of the Christian is that mortal and corruptible body in which the better and heavenly part of him is imprisoned. That, too, shall be transformed and glorified, and cleared from all the defect of its earthly condition. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 49–53; 2 Cor. 5. 1; Phil. 3. 21)"—ELLICOTT.

24. **For we are saved by hope.** "Our salvation is now only in hope. We do not yet possess this full salvation"—WESLEY.

For by hope were we saved (R.V.). The heavenly inheritance, the eternal, uninterrupted blessedness of our salvation, is not yet in our possession, but it is anticipated. We *hope* for the fulfilment of every promise of God as surely as we *believe* in His word.

26. **Likewise the Spirit.** "Nay, not only the universe, not only the children of God, but the Spirit of God also Himself, as it were, groaneth, while He **helpeth our infirmities**, or weaknesses. Our understandings are weak, particularly in the things of God; our desires are weak; our prayers are weak. **We know not**—many times—**what we should pray for**—much less are we able to pray for it—**as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us**—in our hearts, even as Christ does in heaven—**with groanings**—the matter of which is from ourselves, but the Spirit forms them; and they are frequently inexpressible, even by the faithful themselves"—WESLEY.

"To know the way to heaven, sometimes to cast a longing eye in that direction, and by fit and start to make a feeble effort heavenwards, can end in nothing. Man must get the Spirit of God. Thus only can we be freed of the shackles that bind the soul to earth, the flesh, and sin"—GUTHRIE. **Likewise.** "While on the one hand the prospect of salvation sustains him, so, on the other hand, the Divine Spirit interposes to aid him. The one source of encouragement is human (his own human consciousness of the certainty of salvation), the other is Divine. **Infirmities.** The correct reading is the singular, 'infirmity.' Without

this assistance we might be too weak to endure, but the Spirit helps and strengthens our weakness by inspiring our prayers. **With groanings**, etc. When the Christian's prayers are too deep and too intense for words, when they are rather a sigh heaved from the heart than any formal utterance, then we may know that they are prompted by the Spirit Himself. It is He who is praying to God for us"—ELLICOTT. "Such is my belief in the reality and existence and agency of the Divine Spirit, that I think I should have no hope and no faith as a minister, and as a labourer for the enfranchisement of mankind, if it were not that I believed there was an all-prevalent, vitalising, Divine Spirit" —BEECHER.

27. **But He who searcheth the hearts**—"wherein the Spirit dwells and intercedes—**knoweth**—though man cannot utter it—**what is the mind of the Spirit, for He maketh intercession for the saints**—who are near to God—**according to God**—according to His will, as is worthy of God, and acceptable to Him"—WESLEY.

"**He that searches**, etc. (Jer. 17. 10; 1 Sam. 16. 7; 1 Kings 8. 39, etc.) **The hearts** —in which (Gal. 4. 6) the Spirit cries. Although the yearnings of the Spirit within us cannot find adequate expression in words, they are effective with God. For He knows the secrets of the hearts, and hears the groaning of His own Spirit there"—BEET. "*Fluency in prayer* is not essential to *praying;* a man may pray most powerfully, in the estimation of God, who is not able to utter even one word"—CLARKE. **He that searcheth the hearts.** "Certainly here the Father. But it is the more noteworthy that the same words are used of the Son. (Rev. 2. 23.) 'The hearts' here are human hearts. In them the Father sees below the surface of 'ignorance what to pray for as they ought,' the sacred longings which are the expression of the Spirit's influence. **Knoweth** —and meeteth with a corresponding answer; crossing perhaps the saint's *explicit* prayer, but granting *the implicit*"—C. B.

28. **And we know.** "This in general; though we do not always know particularly what to pray for—**that all things**—ease or pain, poverty or riches, and the ten thousand changes of life—**work together for good**—strongly and sweetly for spiritual and eternal good—**to them that are called according to His purpose**—His gracious design of saving a lost world by the death of His Son. This is a new proposition. S. Paul being about to recapitulate the whole blessing contained in justification (termed 'glorification,' ver. 30), first goes back to the 'purpose' or decree of God, which is frequently mentioned in Holy Writ. To explain this (nearly in the words of an eminent writer) a little more at large:—When a man has a work of time and importance before him, he pauses, consults, and contrives; and when he has laid a plan, resolves or decrees to proceed accordingly. Having observed this in ourselves, we are ready to apply it to God also; and He, in condescension to us, has applied it to Himself. The works of providence and redemption are vast and stupendous, and therefore we are apt to conceive of God as deliberating and consulting on them, and then decreeing to act according to 'the counsel of His own will'; as if, long before the world was made, He had been concerting measures both as to the making and governing of it, and had then writ down His decrees, which altered not, any more than the laws of the Medes and Persians. Whereas, to take this consulting and decreeing in a literal sense, would be the same absurdity as to ascribe a real human body and human passions to the ever-blessed God. This is only a popular representation of His infallible knowledge and unchangeable wisdom; that is, He does all things as wisely as a man can possibly do, after the deepest consultation, and as steadily pursues the most proper method as one can do who has laid a scheme beforehand. But then, though the effects be such as would argue consultation and consequent decrees in man, yet what need of a moment's consultation in Him who sees all things at one view? Nor had God any more occasion to pause and deliberate, and lay down rules for His own conduct from all eternity, than He has now. What! was there any fear of His mistaking afterwards, if He had not beforehand prepared decrees, to direct Him what He was to do? Will any man say, He was wiser before the creation than since? or had He then more leisure, that He should take that opportunity to settle His affairs, and make rules for Himself, from which He was never to vary? He had doubtless the same wisdom and all other perfections at this day which He had from eternity; and is now as capable of making decrees, or rather has no more occasion for them now than formerly: His understanding being always equally clear and bright, His wisdom equally infallible"—WESLEY.

"**Work together for good.** Then Almighty God takes charge of all their interests; by His watchful care, His gracious and providential dispensations, all things are co-operating for their good; conspiring for the improvement of their moral state on earth, and securing and heightening their eternal glory. **The called** —*lit.* 'the invited.' There is an allusion to persons invited to a feast. It is the same word that is used by Jesus Christ in the Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son. He sent and invited his guests. **The called according to His purpose**—this is, according to the previous intention of God. And the reason why the apostle alludes to this is to answer an objection which the Jews might make (and against which a great part of the Epistle is directed), that the Gentiles were not to be invited to be fellow-heirs and partakers of the promises of Christ by the gospel. The apostle justifies his own

conduct by referring to the eternal purpose of God, in subordination to which was the calling of the Jews, which was only intended to be exclusive for a limited period. According to this eternal purpose, they had been called to inherit a blessing, not only by the outward call of the word, but by the internal operation of the Holy Ghost. To this they had not been disobedient. The word had come to them in power, and they had received it. They were thus effectually called. They had not only been invited to the feast, but they had sat down at the table so richly spread with gospel blessings"—WATSON. **"To them who are the called.** Further description of those 'who love God.' They have also, as in His eternal counsels He had designed it should be, obeyed the call given to them in the preaching of the gospel, and definitely enrolled themselves in the kingdom of the Messiah" — ELLICOTT. **Them that love God**—"as His children; in whose hearts His love has been 'outpoured by the Holy Ghost' (ch. 5. 5). Observe that this note of saintship stands *first* in this memorable passage; not eternal election, but that conscious love to God in Christ which is its sure fruit, and without which no speculation of mysteries brings the soul near to Him. It is the true God alone who makes this His unalterable demand: 'Thou shalt love ME.' **To them who are the called.** Identical with 'them that love Him.' 1 Cor. 1. 24, 26, 27 is a clear illustration, in contrast with Matt. 20. 14, 16, 22. In the Gospels the word 'call' refers to outward hearing; in the Epistles to inward reception, due to a special and sovereign influence from above. (See, too, Rev. 17. 14)"—C. B. **According to purpose.** (2 Tim. 1. 9; Eph. 1. 11; 3. 11.) This purpose is universal. (1 Tim. 2. 14.)

29. **Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated, conformable to the image of His Son.** "Here the apostle declares who those are whom He foreknew and predestinated to glory, namely, those who are 'conformable to the image of His Son.' This is the mark of those who are foreknown and will be glorified. (2 Tim. 2. 19; Phil. 3. 10, 21)"—WESLEY.

Foreknew. (Ch. 11. 2; Acts 2. 23; 26. 5; 1 Pet. 1. 2, 20; 2 Pet. 3. 17, etc.) "Always to know beforehand." There is nothing in this verse which suggests any other than the common meaning. In the everlasting past we stood before the mind of God. He knew us, our circumstances, our disposition, our conduct. **To be conformed,** etc.—before they were born, and therefore from eternity. God resolved that believers should be made like His Only-begotten Son. **The image,** etc.—the self-manifestation of Christ. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 49; 2 Cor. 3. 18; Col. 3. 10.) That image of splendour God has resolved to reproduce in His adopted sons. All spiritual growth is an increase of likeness to Christ, and is therefore an approach to the accomplishment of this Divine purpose. We must carefully avoid the error of supposing that our foreseen faith moved God to predestine us to salvation. God was moved to save us simply by our foreseen misery, and His own infinite mercy. (2 Tim. 1. 9; Tit. 3. 5.) Having resolved to save, He was moved, by His infinite wisdom and undeserved favour, to select persevering faith as the condition of salvation. And having chosen this condition, He now uses means (ch. 2. 4) to lead men to repentance and faith. So far from our faith being the ground, it is a result, of God's predestination. But although salvation is altogether the result of God's eternal purpose, and in no way whatever the result of anything we have done or shall do, God nevertheless permits man to resist effectually the influences which lead to salvation. He thus makes the salvation of each individual dependent upon his self-surrender to the Divine influences. But since this self-surrender was foreseen, God knew from the beginning the exact results of the death of Christ"—BENGEL.

30. **Them He**—"in due time—**called**—by His gospel and His Spirit. **And whom He called**—when obedient to the heavenly calling (Acts 26. 19)—**He also justified**—forgave and accepted. **And whom He justified**—provided they 'continued in His goodness' (ch. 11. 22)—**He** in the end **glorified.** S. Paul does not affirm, either here or in any other part of his writings, that precisely the same number of men are called, justified, and glorified. He does not deny that a believer may fall away and be cut off between his special calling and his glorification (ch. 11. 22). Neither does he deny that many are called who never are justified. He only affirms that this is the method whereby God leads us step by step toward heaven. 'He glorified.' He speaks as one looking back from the goal, upon the race of faith. Indeed grace, as it is glory begun, is both an earnest and a foretaste of eternal glory"—WESLEY.

"'Merciful and gracious' are the designs of God, 'who will have all men to be saved,' and the way by which He has provided for securing our salvation. **Called, justified, glorified,** are words which describe the Divine order, and we may personally experience each of these conditions of blessedness. In the scheme in question the *sanctification* of the saved is viewed as quite as much foreordained, and quite as necessary a part of the process, as any other; and that the *only evidence to the conscience* that the person is 'foreknown' lies, not in any intuition of a Divine decree, but in the presence of faith and love, and their fruits in heart and life. These will be always attributed, and justly, to *Divine grace alone;* but the presence of that grace will be traced *in them alone*"—C. B. **"He also glorified.** By inward holiness, changing them from glory into glory, in progressive religion, and by admission to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and

by all the endowment of the rich and hallowed gifts of the Holy Spirit"—SUTCLIFFE.

31. **What shall we say then to these things**—"related in the third, fifth, and eighth chapters? As if he had said, We cannot go, think, or wish anything further. **If God be for us.** Here follow four periods, one general and three particular. Each begins with glorying in the grace of God, which is followed by a question suitable to it, challenging all opponents; to all which, 'I am persuaded,' etc., is a general answer. The general period is, **If God be for us, who can be against us?** The first particular period, relating to the past time, is, **He that spared not His own Son, how shall He not freely give us all things?** The second, relating to the present, is, **It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?** The third, relating to the future, is, **It is Christ that died—Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**"—WESLEY.

"**What shall we then say?** S. Paul now applies the whole previous facts and reasons to the final proof of the safety of the children of God. He seems to refer not only to the former part of this chapter, but to the whole previous argument of the Epistle; for there, rather than in ch. 8, we find the doctrines which are here applied—the *sacrifice* of Christ, and consequent *justification*. No eloquence could be nobler than that of these closing verses, taking them merely in point of language. It is the eloquence of profound fact and truth, expressed with the sublime force and beauty of a lofty mind filled with the love of God"—C. B. ELLICOTT says of this verse, and the eight verses which follow it: "Now follows the sublime and triumphant conclusion from the foregoing—expressed with passionate energy and with the most intense consciousness of the reality of a Christian belief in penetrating and sustaining the mind in all outward trials, however severe." ERASMUS remarks on this, that "Cicero never said anything grander." It is needless to add that, setting aside other considerations, Cicero was not for a moment comparable in spiritual intensity, and therefore in true eloquence, to S. Paul. "Rejoice then, O my soul, in hope of the glory of God; and take good heed to the conditions of thy salvation, ever continuing in the faith, and enduring to the end"—SUTCLIFFE.

33. **He that.** "This period contains four sentences: He **spared not His own Son**; therefore He will **freely give us all things. He delivered Him up for us all**; therefore, none can **lay anything to our charge.** 'Freely'—for all that follows justification is a free gift also. **All things**—needful or profitable for us"—WESLEY.

"No argument was ever addressed to creatures, capable of being persuaded and obliged, equal to this. For while it convinces the understanding, it raises every tender and devout feeling in the heart, and is a continual source both of hope and gratitude. After having given us a gift of infinite value, because it was necessary for us, and we could not otherwise be redeemed and saved, will He deny us smaller blessings, which, though inferior, are nevertheless closely connected with our redemption and salvation?"—BENSON. "**He spared not His Son.** 'Tis this that silences the rising fear; 'Tis this that makes the hard thought disappear; He spared not His Son"—BONAR.

33. **God's elect.** "The above-cited author (ver. 28) observes, that long before the coming of Christ the heathen world revolted from the true God, and were therefore reprobated, or rejected. But the nation of the Jews were chosen to be the people of God, and were therefore styled, 'the children' or 'sons of God' (Deut. 14. 1); 'holy people' (Deut. 7. 6; 14. 2); 'a chosen seed' (Deut. 4. 37); 'the elect' (Isa. 41. 8, 9; 43. 10); 'the called of God' (Isa. 48. 12). And these titles were given to all the nation of Israel, including both good and bad. Now, the gospel having the most strict connection with the books of the Old Testament, where these phrases frequently occur; and our Lord and His apostles being native Jews, and beginning to preach in the land of Israel, the language in which they preached would of course abound with the phrases of the Jewish nation. And hence it is easy to see why such of them as would not receive Him were styled *reprobated*. For they no longer continued to be *the people of God;* whereas this and those other honourable titles were continued to all such Jews as embraced Christianity. And the same appellations which once belonged to the Jewish nation were now given to the Gentile Christians also; together with which they were invested with all the privileges of 'the chosen people of God'; and nothing could cut them off from these but their own wilful apostasy. It does not appear that even good men were ever termed 'God's elect' till above two thousand years from the creation. God's *electing* or *choosing* the nation of Israel, and separating them from the other nations, who were sunk in idolatry and all wickedness, gave the first occasion to this sort of language. And as the separating the Christians from the Jews was a like event, no wonder it was expressed in like words and phrases; only with this difference, the term 'elect' was of old applied to all the members of the visible Church; whereas in the New Testament it is applied only to the members of the invisible"—WESLEY.

"**God's elect.** The expression is found Matt. 24. 31; Mark 13. 27; Luke 18. 7; Col. 3. 12; Tit. 1. 1. God's 'elect' (chosen) are they who are 'foreknown, foreordained, called, justified, and glorified.' The eternal safety of every believer in Christ who is 'faithful' to

Him, is taught in the concluding verses of this chapter in gracious words, to the force of which no explanation can add. **It is God that justifieth. It is Christ that died.** Who shall 'charge,' or who condemn? The questions remain unanswered, and the man who is justified through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who proves his 'election' by his holy life, may still ask these questions with brave defiance to every foe, and with ever-growing trust in the grace and power which has made his salvation possible." "**God's elect.** Whatever God does, He purposed from eternity. Therefore, since God designs us to be sharers of the holiness of Christ, we infer that from eternity He formed for us this glorious design. And since the holiness of the Son of God includes or implies His entire moral grandeur, of which His visible splendour is but the outshining, we infer that, before the world was, God foreordained us to be the sharers of the image of His Son. (Comp. 1 Cor. 2. 7.) Upon our knowledge of this purpose rests our hope of glory. Predestination is simply a purpose; and by no means implies the inevitable accomplishment of the purpose. The boy marked out for one trade may enter another. It might, however, be supposed that what God foreordained must in every case be realised. But God has thought fit that the accomplishment of His own purposes shall depend upon man's faith. Hence S. Paul solemnly warns his readers (ch. 11. 21, 22) that unless they continue in faith, they will, although foreordained to glory, be cut off. So, in Jer. 18. 7–12, God expressly declares that the accomplishment of His purpose of blessing to Israel depends upon Israel's conduct. The doctrine of predestination is thus consistent with the teaching that salvation depends upon each man's own faith (ch. 9. 32; 11. 22 f.); with the teaching that God is using means to lead all men to repentance (ch. 2. 4); and with the universality of the purpose of redemption (ch. 5. 18)"—Beet. "**Who shall lay anything?** This is that confident interrogatory of a good conscience. (1 Pet. 3. 21.) **It is God that justifieth.** And if the judge acquit a prisoner, he cares not though the jailor or fellow-prisoners condemn him" — Trapp. "**Who shall lay anything?** All things shall be freely given to the Christian. Nothing can frustrate this; either on the side of *God*, for when He justifies none can condemn; or on the side of *Christ*, whose death and resurrection and ascension and intercession are pledges that nothing can separate us from His love. What have we to fear? When God pronounces our acquittal there is none who can pronounce our condemnation. *Lit.* 'God is He who justifies, who then can condemn?' and answering to this in the next verse we have, Christ is He that died, etc. This is the twofold answer to the question, 'Who shall come forward to accuse God's elect?' It is a conclusive reply to this to state the relation in which the accused stand to God and to Christ"—Ellicott.

34. **Yea rather, that is risen.** "Our faith should not stop at His death, but be exercised further on His resurrection, kingdom, second coming. **Who maketh intercession for us**—presenting there His obedience, His sufferings, His prayers, and our prayers sanctified through Him"—Wesley.

This is the only direct reference to the Ascension in the Epistle, and yet none more surely realised the presence of the Lord in heaven than S. Paul. We also must believe in the **risen** living Christ. He has exalted our human nature, and now **maketh intercession for us.** No wonder we have the teaching of a salvation "to the uttermost." (Heb. 7. 25.) Learn the glorious possibilities of faith in Christ. (Heb. 4. 14–16.) **Yea rather** ("Yea more"). The pledges that Christ has given us of His love did not end, but only began with His death.

35. **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ**—"toward us? **Shall affliction or distress?** He proceeds in order, from less troubles to greater; can any of these separate us from His protection in it; and, if He sees good, deliverance from it?"—Wesley.

"He speaks in view of these amazing proofs of the grace and truth of the Father and the Son. The whole context here relates to our security through the goodness of God. In what sense are the things now to be named viewed as 'not separating' us from this love? Probably they are to be taken as so many veils or clouds between us and the (outward) manifestation of the love; things which might tempt the believer to think that his Lord had forsaken him. S. Paul assures him that this cannot be really so; the separation is but seeming; the love is indissoluble. **Who shall separate us?** The Syriac is, Who shall separate *me?*"—C. B. **Love of Christ.** This may refer to either Christ's love for us, or our love to Christ. Origen and many others prefer the latter view. But the context seems to demand the former.

36. **All the day**—"that is, every day, continually. **We are accounted**—by our enemies; by ourselves"—Wesley.

As it is written—"in Ps. 44. 22. There were men who suffered death in God's service, in the earlier days. In suffering and in saintliness, the believing Church is one throughout all time. (1 Pet. 4. 12.) The sufferings of God's people are at all times typical of each other. At the same time, the tone of the Psalmist wants the exulting and triumphant confidence of the apostle."

37. **We more than conquer**—"we are not only no losers, but abundant gainers, by all these trials. This period seems to describe the full assurance of hope"—Wesley.

Men do suffer from their foes, but when their tribulations strengthen faith and love, they result in great gain. Christ intends a glorious victory for His people. (2 Cor. 4. 16–18.) They

now anticipate the eternal triumph, and even when "the last enemy" comes to conquer, they may say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth *us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15. 54-57).

38, 39. **I am persuaded.** "This is inferred from the thirty-fourth verse in an admirable order:—

'Neither DEATH' shall hurt us	*For*	'Christ is DEAD:'
'Nor LIFE'	,,	,, is RISEN.'
'Nor ANGELS, nor PRINCIPALITIES, nor POWERS; nor things present, nor things to come' .	,,	,, is at the RIGHT HAND of GOD:'
'Nor HEIGHT, nor DEPTH, nor any other creature'	,,	,, maketh INTERCESSION for us.'

Neither death—terrible as it is to natural men; a violent death in particular (ver. 36). **Nor life**—with all the affliction and distress it can bring (ver. 35); or a long, easy life; or all living men. **Nor angels**—whether good (if it were possible they should attempt it) or bad, with all their wisdom and strength. **Nor principalities, nor powers**—not even those of the highest ranks, or to them eminent power. **Nor things present**—which may befall us during our pilgrimage; or the whole world, till it passeth away. **Nor things to come**—which may occur either when our time on earth is past, or when time itself is at an end, as the final judgment, the general conflagration, the everlasting fire. **Nor height, nor depth**—the former sentence respected the differences of times; this, the differences of places. How many great and various things are contained in these words, we do not, need not, cannot know yet. **The height**—in S. Paul's sublime style, is put for heaven. **The depth**—for the great abyss—that is, neither the heights, I will not say of walls, mountains, seas, but of heaven itself, can move us; nor the abyss itself, the very thought of which might astonish the boldest creature. **Nor any creature**—nothing beneath the Almighty; visible enemies he does not even deign to name. **Shall be able**—either by force (ver. 35), or by any legal claim (ver. 33), etc. **To separate us from the love of God in Christ**—which will surely save, protect, deliver us who believe, in and through and from them all"—WESLEY.

"Proof of their victory. Since Christ is our strength, our wealth, our joy, our life, nothing can injure us, unless it can separate us from Him. **Persuaded**—suggests deliberation, followed by full conviction. **Death**—put first, because (ver. 36) the sword ever hung before the early Christians. **Principalities**—those who hold the dignity of princes, *i.e.* angel-princes or archangels (as in Eph. 1. 21; 3. 10; Cor. 1. 16; 2. 10), of good angels; and (in 1 Cor 15 24; Eph. 6. 12; Col. 2. 15) of bad ones. Doubtless they were 'the chief princes' of Dan. 10. 13, 21; 12. 1. **Angels**—not even angels are strong enough to tear us from God. **Powers**—kings, magistrates, etc. **Which is in Christ Jesus.** In the body of Christ was God's love manifested to the world, and we come personally and consciously within its embrace by union with the Spirit of Christ. 'Neither the hand of death, nor the events of a prolonged life, nor angels of ordinary or extraordinary rank, neither the hardships of the present nor the uncertainties of the future, nor powers of whatever kind, neither exaltation nor the deepest debasement, nor anything else which God has made, can put us beyond the reach of that love of God which shone upon us in the person, and from the cross of our Master, the anointed Jesus.' Therefore the assault of our enemies is utterly vain. We are more than conquerors"—BEET. "**Height: Depth**—vastness of intervening space. The Lord who loved us is 'above all heavens,' as to His bodily presence; but His love reaches thence to our 'depth' below, and holds us fast. **Any other creature**—a phrase meant to be absolutely inclusive of everything except the uncreated One. And it is the Uncreated who loved us! The previous phrases had *logically* included 'all creatures'; but S. Paul would fain preclude even the least definable causes of apprehension. This closing passage of ch. 8, taken as the climax of the whole previous part of the Epistle, is a remarkable illustration of the vital connection between revealed trust and sacred love"—C. B.

CHAPTER IX.

SECTION XXII.—Vers. 1-6. JEWISH UNBELIEF: S. PAUL'S DISTRESS IN VIEW OF IT.—In this chapter S. Paul, after strongly declaring his love and esteem for them, sets himself to answer the grand objection of his countrymen, namely, that the rejection of the Jews and reception of the Gentiles was contrary to the word of God. That he had not here the least thought of personal election or reprobation is manifest—(1) Because it lay quite wide of his design, which was this, to show that God's rejecting the Jews and receiving the Gentiles was consistent with His word; (2) Because such a doctrine would not only have had no tendency to convince, but would have evidently tended to harden, the Jews; (3) Because, when he sums up his argument in the close of the chapter, he has not one word, or the least intimation about it.

1. **In Christ.** "This seems to imply an appeal to Him. **In the Holy Ghost**—through His grace"—WESLEY.

"**I lie not.** The special reason for such words here is, perhaps, the thought that both Gentile Christians and unbelieving Jews (for different reasons) might think him now regardless of his earthly kindred, because so resolute in teaching the entire spiritual equality of all believers, Jew or Gentile. The Epistle might possibly

be heard or read by unconverted Jews; and such words as these might reach their hearts"—MOULE. "The apostle had *both* the testimony of his own conscience, the testimony of the Holy Ghost"—CLARKE. "**My conscience**, etc. S. Paul appeals to that faculty by which he contemplates his own inner self; and reminds us that he uses this faculty under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Those who knew S. Paul could not resist this appeal to Christ, in union with whom they knew that he lived and spoke, and to the Spirit who evidently permeated his entire life and thought"—BEET.

2. **I have great sorrow.** "A high degree of spiritual sorrow and of spiritual joy may consist together. (Ch. 8. 39.) By declaring his sorrow for the unbelieving Jews, who excluded themselves from all the blessings he had enumerated, he shows that what he was now about to speak he did not speak from any prejudice to them"—WESLEY.

S. Paul's sorrow for the Jews was great. Multitudes of them did not believe in Christ; they were under the condemnation of God. He saw well not only what they were, but what they might become, and yet what they blindly refused. No wonder he had **great sorrow, and unceasing pain in his heart** (R.V.). No doubt the expressions here are the more intense *because* of the contrasted recent view of the coming glory of believers, and their security in the love and covenant of God.

3. **I could wish.** "Human words cannot fully describe the motions of souls that are full of God. As if he had said, I could wish to suffer in their stead; yea, to be an anathema from Christ in their place. In how high a sense he wished this, who can tell, unless himself had been asked and had resolved the question? Certainly he did not then consider himself at all, but only others, and the glory of God. The thing could not be; yet the wish was pious and solid, though with a tacit condition, if it were right and possible"—WESLEY.

"Notice the intensity of S. Paul's patriotism. When he became a Christian, he did not cease to be a Jew, even though the Jews rejected Christ. A similar case of self-devotion in Ex. 32. 32. Perhaps in these moments S. Paul and Moses shared most fully the mind of Him who actually did (Gal. 3. 13; Matt. 27. 46) what their hearts vainly prompted them to do. The greatness of S. Paul's sorrow for the Jews, and the sacrifice to which it prompts him, proves how terrible was their position. S. Paul was sad for them, just as many to-day, who themselves rejoice amid the trials of life in the smile of God, are sad because some whom they love are away from Christ, and because there is reason to fear that they will be separated from Him for ever"—BEET.

4. **Whose is the adoption**, etc. "He enumerates six prerogatives, of which the first pair respect God the Father, the second Christ, the third the Holy Ghost. **The adoption and the glory**—that is, Israel is the first-born child of God, and the God of glory is their God. (Deut. 4. 7; Ps. 106. 20.) These are relative to each other. At once God is the Father of Israel, and Israel are the people of God. He speaks not here of the ark, or any corporeal thing. God Himself is 'the glory of His people Israel.' **And the covenants, and the giving of the Law.** The covenant was given long before the Law. It is termed 'covenants' in the plural, because it was so often and so variously repeated, and because there were two dispositions of it (Gal. 4. 24), frequently called two covenants, the one promising, the other exhibiting the promise. **And the worship, and the promises.** The true way of worshipping God; and all the promises made to the fathers"—WESLEY.

The name **Israelites** implied their high dignity; and they, as a nation, were taken into a peculiar relationship with God. They were called His *sons* and *first-born*. (Ex. 4. 22; Deut. 14. 1; Jer. 31. 9; Hos. 11. 1.) This Divine **adoption** was a high privilege. With them God had made special **covenants.** (Ex. 19. 5; 24. 7; 34. 27; Deut. 29. 1.) These 'covenants' included the most gracious **promises** about the Messiah and His reign, and as to the glory of their land. To S. Paul these "promises" were all sure of fulfilment to all who should prove faithful to the conditions on which they were given. BEET says: "All the promises about the Messiah, and the glory of His reign, which had been the solace and strength of Israel during ages of disaster, were the result of the adoption and the covenants."

5. "To the preceding, S. Paul now adds two more prerogatives. Theirs **are the fathers**—the patriarchs and holy men of old—yea, the Messiah Himself. **Who is over all, God blessed for ever.** The original words imply the self-existent, independent Being, who was, is, and is to come. 'Over all'—the Supreme; as being God, and consequently 'blessed for ever.' No words can more clearly express His Divine, supreme majesty, and His gracious sovereignty both over Jews and Gentiles"—WESLEY.

"**The fathers**—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, etc., the most renowned of men, and especially so because **of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.** Here the *twofold* nature of our Lord—His *divinity* and His *humanity*—appears. He who 'was God' (John 1. 1) was 'found in fashion as a man' (Phil. 2. 7, 8). The divinity of Christ is most clearly taught, and every true heart responds **Amen.** To Him, the **Lord of all.** (Acts 10. 36.) God has given 'a name above every name' (Phil 2. 9), and this shall be acknowledged in the eternal praises of the glorified. (Rev. 5. 12, 13.) Safely may we say, with Doddridge, that it is 'a memorable text, and contains proof of Christ's proper deity

which the opposers of that doctrine have never been able, nor will ever be able, to answer.' **God, who is over all**—who rules over and disposes all things according to His will. (Eph. 1. 11 ; 4. 6.) **Blessed for ever**—as in ch. 1. 25. At the mention of the name and birth of Christ, S. Paul cannot refrain from an outburst of praise to the great Ruler of the world who had chosen Israel, and had given Christ to be born in S. Paul's own day and nation. His sorrow for the Jews implies that the religious advantages of the old covenant, which were designed to lead them to Christ, and the birth of Christ in their midst, had utterly failed to profit them. Therefore, had the sentence ended here, it might have appeared that these advantages were of little worth. But they were infinitely the greatest advantages with which any nation had been endowed. And to S. Paul and the Jewish believers they had actually been the means of the inward and spiritual and eternal blessings of the new covenant. Notice how readily and frequently, and sometimes unexpectedly, S. Paul turns to God in prayer or praise, even from matters in which God is not expressly mentioned. (Ch. 1. 25 ; 15. 5, 13 ; 16. 20, 25.) To do so was natural to him because he looked upon everything in its relation to God"—BEET.

SECTION XXIII. — Vers. 7-33. GOD IS NOT UNFAITHFUL OR UNRIGHTEOUS.—6. **Not as if.** "The Jews imagined that the word of God must fail if all their nation were not saved. This S. Paul now refutes, and proves that the word itself had foretold their falling away. **The word of God**—the promises of God to Israel. **Had fallen to the ground**—this could not be. Even now, says the apostle, some enjoy the promises, and hereafter 'all Israel shall be saved.' This is the sum of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters. **For**—here he enters upon the proof of it—**all are not Israel who are of Israel.** The Jews vehemently maintained the contrary, viz. that all who were born Israelites, and they only, were the people of God. The former part of this assertion is refuted here ; the latter, ver. 24, etc. The sum is, God accepts all believers, and them only ; and this is no way contrary to His word. Nay, He hath declared in His word, both by types and by express testimonies, that believers are accepted as the 'children of the promise,' while unbelievers are rejected, though they are 'children after the flesh.' 'All are not Israel' —not in the favour of God—'who are' lineally descended 'of Israel'"—WESLEY.

"**But it is not as though the word of God hath come to nought** (R.V.). The apostle is speaking of the rejection of the Jews from being any longer the visible Church of God, on account of natural descent ; and in this passage he shows that the purpose of God to construct His Church upon a new basis, that of faith in Christ, although it would exclude the body of the Jewish people from this Church, since they refused 'the election of grace' through faith, would not prove that the word of God had fallen to the ground, or, as the literal meaning of the original is rendered in our version, 'has taken none effect.' **All are not Israel** (God's visible Church and acknowledged people) **who are of Israel**, or Jacob ; for a great part of the ten tribes who had been carried into captivity before the Babylonian invasion of Judah had never returned, had never been again collected into a people, and had, for ages, been cast out of their ancient Church state and relation, though by natural descent they were 'of Israel,' that is, descendants of Jacob"—WATSON. "S. Paul's sorrow, and the present sad position of the unbelieving Jews, do *not* by any means imply that **the word of God** has failed. S. Paul thus meets an objection to the gospel, viz. that if it be true, God has broken His promise. His previous teaching implies that the mass of the Jews are outside the family of God, and condemned to die. According to present appearances, many of them will, if the gospel is from God, be shut out of the long foretold glory. But with Abraham's seed, God made an everlasting covenant, and promised to be their God for ever. (Gen. 17. 7.) It might therefore be objected to the gospel that, by limiting salvation to those who believe, it implies the partial failure of the ancient promise. S. Paul admits that these old promises, on which the Jews based their claims, are 'the word of God.' But in this verse he declares that the position of the Jews does not imply that the promises have failed. So long as they continue in their present unbelief, they are outside the number of those for whom the promises were given"—BEET.

7. **Neither because they are** lineally **the seed of Abraham**, will it follow that **they are all children of God.** "This did not hold even in Abraham's own family ; and much less in his remote descendants. **But** God then said, **in Isaac shall thy seed be called.** That is, Isaac, not Ishmael, shall be called thy seed ; that seed to which the promise is made"—WESLEY.

From the first it was expressly stated that the posterity of Abraham, strictly so called, was to be that derived through Isaac. **In Isaac shall thy seed be called**, thus excluding the descendants of Hagar. God had, in His sovereign pleasure, conferred the Church relation upon the seed of Abraham only in certain lines. By the exercise of the same sovereignty God had now resolved not to connect the Church relation with natural descent, but to establish it on a ground which might comprehend the Gentile nations also—the common ground of faith in Christ. ELLICOTT says : "The apostle explains the restriction mentioned in this verse in a spiritual sense. Mere natural descent gives

no claim to membership in the theocracy." See the note on Gal. 3. 7.)

8. **That is, Not the children**, etc. "As if he had said, This is a clear type of things to come; showing us that in all succeeding generations, **not the children of the flesh**, the lineal descendants of Abraham, **but the children of the promise**, they to whom the promise is made, that is, believers, **are the children of God**"—WESLEY.

"Mere natural descent gives no claim to membership in the Church. It was with respect to their faith in Christ that men were chosen out of the world, and thus chosen into the Church. The rule, too, is universal; and if so, if it universally holds good that actual election has respect to faith, then, unless God's eternal purpose to elect be at variance with His electing, then His eternal purpose to elect had respect both to faith and obedience"—WATSON.

9. **For this is the word of the promise**—"by the power of which Isaac was conceived, and not by the power of nature. Not, Whosoever is born of thee shall be blessed, but, **At this time** — which I now appoint — **I will come, and Sarah shall have a son**—and he shall inherit the blessing"—WESLEY.

"Rather, **this saying is of promise.** The children of promise, I say, for the saying, '**At this time will I come,**' etc., is a matter of promise: it implied a Divine and miraculous intervention, and did not come in the ordinary course of nature"—ELLICOTT. "This verse is simply intended to justify the expression, 'children of the promise' (ver. 8). When the apostle says, **a word of promise**, he means a word which had the free character of a promise, and which did not in the least imply the recognition of a right. The term, **at this time**, signifies, 'Next year, at the moment when this same time (this same epoch) will return'"—GODET.

10, 11. "**And** that God's blessing does not belong to all the descendants of Abraham, appears **not only** by **this** instance, but by that of Esau and Jacob, who was chosen to inherit the blessing, before either of them had done **good** or **evil.** The apostle mentions this to show, that neither were their ancestors accepted through any merit of their own. **That the purpose of God according to election might stand**—whose purpose was to elect or choose the promised seed. **Not of works**—not for any preceding merit in him He chose. **But of Him that called**—of His own good pleasure, who called to that privilege whom He saw good"—WESLEY.

"Here a still stronger example of sovereign choice occurs. Isaac and Ishmael had only one parent in common; Jacob and Esau had both. In the former case, the choice of Isaac was declared only after Ishmael's birth and childhood; in the latter, the choice of Jacob was declared before the brothers were born. Nothing could go beyond this (ver. 11), in stating that the *reasons* of the Divine choice lie wholly within the Divine mind, and not in the works and characters of the choice. **According to election** — *i.e.* as determined, or characterised, by the sovereign choice of the Divine mind. S. Paul is treating the Divine choice in the widest and most absolute respects; and the sovereign gift to Jacob of sacred privileges, determining his whole course and his posterity, is thus taken as illustrating the fact of an equally sovereign gift, to 'whomsoever God will,' of the capacity to repent, believe, and love. Throughout the argument we must remember *who* the 'elect' are in the grand special case in hand, viz. the 'remnant' who actually (not only potentially) are true believers, under both the old and new dispensations"—C. B.

12. **The elder**—Esau — **shall serve the younger**—"not in person, for he never did, but in his posterity. Accordingly, the Edomites were often brought into subjection by the Israelites"—WESLEY.

"The oracle is taken from Gen. 25. 23. The question whether it refers to the two *brothers* personally, or to the two *peoples* who shall spring from them, is settled by the words preceeding: 'Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall issue from thee.' Hence it follows that the oracle neither speaks of the two peoples separately from their fathers, nor of the two fathers separately from their descendants. Possibly Genesis gives greater weight to the idea of the two peoples; whereas S. Paul (ver. 11) thinks chiefly of the two fathers"—GODET.

13. **As it is written**—"with which word in Genesis, spoken so long before, that of Malachi agrees—**I have loved Jacob**—with a peculiar love—**that is**, the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob. **And I have**, comparatively, **hated Esau**—that is, the Edomites, the posterity of Esau. But observe—(1) This does not relate to the person of Jacob or Esau; (2) Nor does it relate to the eternal state either of them or their posterity. Thus far the apostle has been proving his proposition, namely, that the exclusion of a great part of the seed of Abraham, yea, and of Isaac, from the special promises of God, was so far from being impossible, that, according to the Scriptures themselves, it had actually happened. He now introduces and refutes an objection"—WESLEY.

"The apostle speaks not of the *persons* of Jacob or Esau, but of their *posterity.* It is therefore evident that neither the *love of God to Jacob*, nor the *hatred of God to Esau*, were such, according to which the eternal states of men, either in happiness or misery, are to be determined; nor is there here any scriptural or rational ground for the decree of unconditional personal election and reprobation, which comparatively modern times have endeavoured to build on these Scriptures. For (1) it is here proved that Esau is not

mentioned under any *personal* consideration, but only as the *head* of his *posterity;* (2) The testimony of Scripture amply proves that all *Esau's posterity* were not, even in this sense, reprobated, nor all *Jacob's posterity* elected; (3) Neither does that *service,* or subjugation to Jacob, which the Divine oracle imposed on Esau, import any such reprobation as some contend for; as the *servant* may be *elected,* while the *master* himself is in a state of *reprobation;* (4) Were it even granted that *servitude* did import such a *reprobation,* yet it is certain that Esau, in person, never did *serve* Jacob. The scope of the apostle's reasoning is to show that God is the Sovereign of His own ways, has a right to dispense His blessings as He chooses, and to give salvation to mankind, not in the ways of their devising but in that way most suitable to His infinite wisdom and goodness"—CLARKE. "**Loved: Hated.** Human passions are attributed to God, to teach that He acts as men do when influenced by such passions. Only thus can men understand God. Hence God is angry (ch. 1. 18, etc.), repents (Gen. 6. 6; Jer. 18. 8), and hates (Ps. 5. 5 f.). God acts as though He were angry; as a man does who repents or hates. God acted as a friend of Jacob's children, and as an adversary of the sons of Esau. Mal. 1. 2 teaches that God's different treatment of the two nations did not arise from anything the fathers or their children had done; and the story of the two brothers and their descendants teaches the same. Therefore, looking back upon the words to Rebecca, S. Paul is justified in saying that God spoke them in order to declare the great principle, that the blessings of the covenant are given without consideration of human conduct"—BEET.

14, 15. **Is there injustice with God?** "Is it unjust in God to give Jacob the blessing rather than Esau? or to accept believers, and them only? **God forbid**—in no wise. This is well consistent with justice; for He has a right to fix the terms on which He will show mercy, according to His declaration to Moses, petitioning for all the people, after they had committed idolatry with the golden calf. **I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy**—according to the terms I Myself have fixed—**and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion**—namely, on those only who submit to My terms, who accept of it in the way that I have appointed"—WESLEY.

"The objection is not based on God's hatred to Esau, but on 'not of works.' For no Jew would say that God's treatment of Esau was unjust. **Unrighteousness**—or, in a ruler, *injustice.* S. Paul has completely overturned one objection, viz. that the gospel is contrary to the faithfulness of God. But the unbelieving Jew might still object on the ground of justice. S. Paul appeals to words spoken **to Moses** in one of the most solemn moments of his life. (Ex. 33. 19.) **Mercy**—kindness towards the unfortunate and helpless. **Compassion**—a stronger form of the same. Since, apart from God we are helpless and wretched, all God's gifts to us are acts of mercy. While granting Moses' prayer to see His glory, God asserts the great principle that His gifts are acts of mercy, and that therefore the objects of them are chosen, not because of their merit, but because of their helplessness and God's pity. God revealed His glory to Moses, not because he deserved it, but because God had compassion on him. Ver. 16 is S. Paul's inference from God's words"—BEET. "How can we decide on the means which the supreme Being employs, while we are ignorant of the reasons which move Him, and the plan which He holds in view? Before we censure, let us understand"—JAY.

16. **It**—"the blessing—**therefore is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth.** It is not the effect either of the will or the works of man, but of the grace and power of God. The will of man is here opposed to the grace of God, and man's running to the Divine operation. And this general declaration respects not only Isaac and Jacob, and the Israelites in the time of Moses, but likewise all the spiritual children of Abraham, even to the end of the world"—WESLEY.

"**Of him that runneth.** A metaphor taken from the foot races, as S. Paul may very possibly have seen them practised at Corinth. (Comp. ch. 9. 16; Gal. 2. 2; 5. 7; Phil. 2. 16.) The meaning is that the prize does not depend on human will or human effort, but on the grace of God"—ELLICOTT. "When God gives, it is not because a human *will* (**he that willeth**) or a human *work* (**he that runneth**) lays Him under obligation, and forces Him to give, in order not to be unjust by refusing. It is in Himself the initiative and the efficacy are (**Him that calleth**), whence the gift flows. He gives not as a thing due, but as a fruit of His love, which does not imply that therein He acts arbitrarily. Such a supposition is excluded, precisely because the Giver in question is God, who is wisdom itself, and who *thinks* nothing good except what *is* good. The principle here laid down included God's right to call the Gentiles to salvation when He should be pleased to grant them this favour"—GODET.

17. **Moreover.** "God has an indisputable right to reject those who will not accept the blessings on His own terms. And this He exercised in the case of Pharaoh; to whom, after many instances of stubbornness and rebellion, He said, as it is recorded in Scripture, **For this very thing have I raised thee up**—that is, unless thou repent, this will surely be the consequence of My raising thee up, making thee a great and glorious king, that **My power** will be **shown upon thee** (as indeed it was, by overwhelming him and his army in the sea), **and My name declared through all the earth**—as it is at this day. Perhaps this may have

a still further meaning. It seems that God was resolved to show His power over the river, the insects, other animals (with the natural causes of their health, diseases, life, and death), over the meteors, the air, the sun (all of which were worshipped by the Egyptians, from whom other nations learned their idolatry), and at once over all their gods, by that terrible stroke of slaying all their priests, and their choicest victims, the firstborn of man and beast; and all this with a design, not only to deliver His people Israel (for which a single act of omnipotence would have sufficed), but to convince the Egyptians that the objects of their worship were but the creatures of Jehovah, and entirely in His power, and to draw them and the neighbouring nations, who should hear of all these wonders, from their idolatry, to worship the one God. For the execution of this design (in order to the display of the Divine power over the various objects of their worship, in variety of wonderful acts, which were at the same time just punishment for their cruel oppression of the Israelites) God was pleased to raise to the throne of an absolute monarchy, a man, not whom He had made wicked on purpose, but whom He found so,—the proudest, the most daring and obstinate of all the Egyptian princes; and who, being incorrigible, well deserved to be set up in that situation, where the Divine judgments fell the heaviest" —WESLEY.

"From the case of **Pharaoh**, S. Paul will prove that God hardens whom He will, and thus put it beyond doubt that He has mercy on whom He will. **The Scripture says**—as in ch. 4. 3. For the solemn and express words of God to Pharaoh, S. Paul claims no higher authority than that they are the voice of Scripture. (See ch. 11. 2; Gal. 4. 30; 3. 8, 22.) This implies that the whole of the Scriptures had for S. Paul the authority of God. (Comp. ch. 3. 19.) The quoted passage is Ex. 9. 15 f. Instead of destroying the king at once, God permitted him to continue his resistance, and thus reserved him for a more conspicuous overthrow, which should spread to all nations the name and fame of the God of Israel. This purpose was attained. (Josh. 2. 10.) For 'made thee to continue,' S. Paul writes **I raised thee up**. (Comp. Acts 13. 22 f.) S. Paul's alternation embodies a correct inference. Those who occupy thrones are placed on them by God (Dan. 4. 25) to work out His purposes (Isa. 37. 26). God said that He had formed a purpose that through Pharaoh His name should be made known. Therefore we cannot doubt that, for this end, God not only spared his life, but placed on the throne of Egypt at that time a man of Pharaoh's character. In later days, to accomplish a different purpose, He placed on the throne of Babylon (Ezra 1. 2) a man of different character. God's perfect foreknowledge (ch. 8. 29) enabled Him to do all this without interfering with human freedom. He knew beforehand the men to whom He gave the sceptre, and knew that their character would serve His purpose. We therefore infer from Ex. 9. 16 that God placed Pharaoh on the throne, that his obstinacy and overthrow might be the means of making known to the nations around the greatness of God"—BEET. ELLICOTT says: "The converse proposition is also true, that God also uses the wickedness of men as a means of exhibiting His power and justice. **Raised thee up**—brought into the world and on to the scene of history. **Show My power**—by the plagues of Egypt and by the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea." MOULE adds: "**Pharaoh** is here quoted as an example of Divine sovereignty. He appears as one who *might* (in human judgment) have been dealt with and subdued by a process of grace and mercy, but who was left to his own evil will. No evil was infused into him, but good influences were not infused, and his evil took its course. It is instructive and a relief in a certain sense to read this passage in the light of the history of Exodus, where it is remarkable that the 'hardening' seems to be attributed in ten places to the Lord, and certainly in ten to Pharaoh himself; and where the narrative, in its living simplicity, at least shows how perfectly *real* was the action of the human consciousness and will. But we must not think that this *solves the mystery*, nor must we lose sight of S. Paul's object in quoting Pharaoh's case here, viz. to establish the fact of the *sovereignty* with which God shows, or does not show, mercy."

18. **So then**—that is, accordingly, He does show mercy on "His own terms, namely, on them that believe. **And whom He willeth**—namely, them that believe not—**He hardeneth**—leaves to the hardness of their hearts"—WESLEY.

"The doctrine of the Divine sovereignty is here expressed in its most trenchant and logical form. In Ex. 8. 32; 9. 34; 13. 15, etc., the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is attributed to his own act. God's decrees include human free will, without destroying it. But *how* they do this we cannot say"—ELLICOTT. "The final obduration of all Pharaohs must be regarded as judicial; and as the last, and not the first, act of a righteous judge. God foresaw what Pharaoh would do; but it can never be conceded that a father who, with weeping eyes, foresees the destruction of his prodigal, is accessory to his ruin"—SUTCLIFFE.

19. **Why doth He still find fault?** "The particle 'still" is strongly expressive of the objector's sour, morose murmuring. **For who hath resisted His will?** The word 'His' likewise expresses his surliness and aversion to God, whom he does not even deign to name" —WESLEY.

"S. Paul is still, as so often before, writing as if an opponent were at his side. How vividly this suggests that he had *himself* ex-

perienced the conflicts of thoughts which indeed every earnest mind more or less encounters! But conflicts do not always end in further doubts. But why, *after* such statements of His sovereignty, does He go on to treat us as free agents? Here is the second head of objection. God's justice was the first, now it is man's accountability"—C. B. **"For who hath resisted His will?** Who hath been, is, or ever will be, able to hinder that from coming to pass which God willeth shall come to pass?"—BENSON. The brief and peremptory questions of this verse have a tone of discontent and presumption, which is met in ver. 20 by a stern rebuke: explanation follows later, in ver. 22.

20. **Nay, but who art thou, O man**—"little, impotent, ignorant man—**that repliest against God**—that accusest God of injustice, for Himself fixing the terms on which He will show mercy? **Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?**—Why hast Thou made me capable of honour and immortality, only by believing?"—WESLEY.

"God is infinitely just, whether we apprehend the fact or not. It is impossible for Him to do anything but what is right; but it is very possible that we, who are but men, may fail to discern it. He is the *Creator*, we are His creatures, and are not therefore in a position to judge Him. When we regard His ways imperfect, it is because we do not comprehend them. **Nay but, O man.** The answer is not so much a solution of the intellectual difficulty, as an appeal to the religious sense to prevent it from being raised. That His dealings should be questioned at all is a breach of the reverence due to God"—ELLICOTT. **"Why hast Thou made me thus?** Why hast Thou made me capable of honour and immortality, only on the terms of repentance and faith? Or, why was I not entitled by birth to advantages which others were born to?"—BENSON. "What makes the prophet's language (see Isa. 29. 16; 45. 9; 64. 8) so exactly appropriate to the apostle's argument is, that they are both dealing with the same subject, namely, God's formation of Israel as a nation, and His consequent unquestionable right to deal with it as seems good to Him"—GIFFORD.

21. **Hath not the potter power over the clay**—"and much more hath not God power over His creatures, to appoint **one vessel**, namely, the believer, **to honour, and another**, the unbeliever, **to dishonour?** If we survey the right which God has over us, in a more general way, with regard to His intelligent creatures, God may be considered in two different views—as Creator, Proprietor, and Lord of all; or, as their moral Governor and Judge. God, as sovereign Lord and Proprietor of all, dispenses His gifts or favours to His creatures with perfect wisdom, but by no rules or methods of proceeding that we are acquainted with. The time when we shall exist, the country where we shall live, our parents, our constitution of body and turn of mind,—these, and numberless other circumstances, are doubtless ordered with perfect wisdom, but by rules that lie quite out of our sight. But God's methods of dealing with us, as our Governor and Judge, are clearly revealed and perfectly known, namely, that He will finally reward every man according to his works: 'He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' Therefore, though 'He hath mercy on whom He willeth, and whom He willeth He hardeneth'—that is, suffers to be hardened in consequence of their obstinate wickedness—yet, His is not the will of an arbitrary, capricious, or tyrannical being. He wills nothing but what is infinitely wise and good; and therefore His will is a most proper rule of judgment. He will show mercy, as He hath assured us, to none but true believers, nor harden any but such as obstinately refuse His mercy"—WESLEY.

"When the apostle speaks of the potter making of the **same lump one vessel to honour and another to dishonour**, the last term does not fully apply to the state of a people devoted to inevitable destruction. It is true that, in a following verse, he speaks of 'vessels of wrath fitted to destruction'; but that is another view of the case of the Jews; nor does he affirm that they were 'fitted to destruction' by God. There he speaks of what men fit themselves for; or that fitness for the infliction of the Divine wrath upon them which they themselves, by their perverseness, create. Here he speaks of an act of God, using the figure of a potter forming some vessels **to honour, others to dishonour.** But dishonour is not destruction, No potter makes vessels to destroy them; and we may be certain that when Jeremiah went down to the potter's house to see him work the clay upon the wheel, that the potter was not employed in forming vessels to destroy them. On the contrary, says the prophet, when the lump of clay was 'marred in his hand,' so that, not for want of skill in himself, but of proper quality in the clay, it took not the form he designed: of the same lump he made 'another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make it'; a meaner vessel, as the inferior quality or temper of the clay admitted, instead of that finer and more ornamental form which it would not take. The application of this was natural and easy to the house of Israel. It had become a lump of marred clay in the hands of the potter, which answered not to his design, and yielded not to his will"—WATSON. "What does the **lump** represent? Some think that it is the *people of Israel*, and that God is described as having the right to make them either His elect people, or a rejected nation. This meaning breaks down in vers. 23 and 24, where we see that the vessels unto honour are elected from among the Gentiles as well as from among the Jews.

The lump, therefore, represents the whole of *humanity*, not humanity as God creates it, but in the state in which He finds it every moment when He puts it to the service of His kingdom. This state includes for each individual the whole series of free determinations which have gone to make him what he is. It belongs to God Himself to decide, according to His wisdom, the part which He will assign to every human being. (Comp. 2 Tim. 2. 21)"—GODET.

22. **What if God, being willing**—"referring to vers. 18, 19—that is, although it was now His will, because of their obstinate unbelief—**to show His wrath**—which necessarily presupposes sin—**and to make His power known.** This is repeated from ver. 17. **Yet endured**—as He did Pharaoh—**with much long-suffering**—which should have led them to repentance—**the vessels of wrath**—those who had moved His wrath by still rejecting His mercy—**fitted for destruction**—by their own wilful and final impenitence. Is there any injustice in this?"—WESLEY.

"Describes still further the man who replies to God, and makes still more evident the folly of his reply. **Has borne**—as if it were a burden to Him. **In much long-suffering.** (Comp. ch. 2. 4.) God not only delays punishment, but takes active means to lead them to repentance. **Vessels**—keeps up the idea of ver. 21. **Of anger**; so 'children of anger' (Eph. 2. 3), vessels with which God is angry. So 'vessels' on which God has 'mercy.' **Made ready**; by whom? S. Paul leaves us to infer. Since they were hardened by God, they were made ready by Him for destruction; since their hardening was the punishment of their own resistance, they had, by rejecting the gospel, made themselves ready. Every act of sin makes the sinner more fit for perdition. **Destruction.** It is the second death. (Matt. 7. 13; John 17. 12; Phil. 1. 28; 3. 19; 1 Tim. 6. 9; Heb. 10. 39)"—BEET.

23. **That He might make known.** "What if by showing such long-suffering even to 'the vessels of wrath,' He did the more abundantly show the greatness of His glorious goodness, wisdom, and power, **on the vessels of mercy**—on those **whom He had** Himself, by His grace, **prepared for glory.** Is this any injustice?"—WESLEY.

This is a direct and primary purpose of God's long-suffering towards **vessels of wrath. The glory** of God is, in general, the manifestation of the Divine perfections, and, here, more especially the manifestation of His goodness and mercy (Ex. 33. 18, 19), and "the riches of His glory" (Eph. 1. 18; 3. 16; Col. 1. 27), is that inexhaustible wealth of goodness which embraces all **vessels of mercy** in the fulness of blessing. ELLICOTT says: "Now the apostle explains who are meant by these abstract terms. The 'vessels of glory' are those who were intended to accept the Christian teaching, whether Jews or Gentiles. The 'vessels of wrath' are the unbelieving mass of the people of Israel."

24. **Even us.** "Here the apostle comes to the other proposition, of grace free for all, whether Jew or Gentile. **Of the Jews.** This he treats of, ver. 25. **Of the Gentiles**—treated of in the same verse"—WESLEY.

"**He has drawn**—by long-suffering, not only from the midst of the lost mass of the Jews, but also from among the Gentiles. This was what Jesus had declared: 'I have yet other sheep which are not of this fold' (John 10. 16). And this S. Paul had in view in the words, 'the riches of His glory.' While He gleaned among the Jews, He reaped a harvest among the Gentiles, and thus carried out the free and large plan of salvation which He had formed on the sole prevision of faith"—GODET.

25. **Beloved**—"as a spouse. **Who** once **was not beloved**—consequently, not unconditionally elected. This relates directly to the final restoration of the Jews"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul quotes these words, which refer primarily to the ten tribes, in proof that God, when He called men from the midst of the Gentiles to be vessels of mercy, acted on the principles announced by Hosea. The Gentiles could not be more completely aliens than those whom God declared to be neither His people nor objects of His mercy. But He foretold that, in days to come, He would speak again to the outcasts, and call them His children"—BEET.

26. **There shall they be called the sons of God**—"so that they need not leave their own country and come to Judea"—WESLEY.

"In the gospel this prophecy is fulfilled. And the fulfilment, though wider than the promise, exactly accords with its spirit. What in the days of Hosea, God promised to say in days then future, He really said (ch. 8. 14) in the gospel preached by S. Paul"—BEET. (See Hos. 1. 10; 2. 23.)

27. "**But Isaiah** testifies, that as many Gentiles will be accepted, so many Jews will be rejected; that out of all the thousands of **Israel, a remnant only shall be saved.** This was spoken originally of the few that were saved from the ravage of Sennacherib's army"—WESLEY.

"**Crieth**—with reference to the impassioned utterance of the prophet. **A remnant**—rather, 'the remnant.' 'The remnant, and only the remnant.' **Shall be saved**—in the original, 'shall return'—*i.e.* as explained in the previous verse, 'return to God.' S. Paul has followed the LXX. in putting the consequences of such conversion for the conversion itself"—ELLICOTT. "There is a contrast: Hosea speaks of the bringing in of Gentile believers; Isaiah of the rejection of all Jews except Jewish believers"—MOULE. "The force of the quotation (Isa. 10. 22) is evident. In ch. 9, S. Paul looks at the gospel in its bearing upon the relation of Jew and Gentile.

If it be true, many Gentiles are members of the family of God, and many Jews are, and apparently will be for ever, excluded from that family and from the salvation brought by the Messiah. This latter thought gave S. Paul deep sorrow. But he has shown that it involves neither unfaithfulness nor injustice in God. And the quotation from Hosea proves that the reception of the Gentiles, and that from Isaiah proving the limitation of salvation to a portion of the Jews, accord with prophecy"—BEET.

28. **For He is finishing** or **cutting short His account**—"in rigorous justice, will leave but a small remnant. There will be so general a destruction that but a small number will escape"—WESLEY.

"**For He will finish.** *Lit.*, according to the correct rendering, 'For a sentence, accomplishing and abridging it, will the Lord execute upon the earth'—in other words, 'A short and summary sentence will the Lord execute upon the earth.' The severity of the sentence is a proof that only a remnant can be saved from it"—ELLICOTT.

29. **As Isaiah had said before**—"namely, Isa. 1. 9, concerning those who were besieged in Jerusalem by Rezin and Pekah—**Unless the Lord had left us a seed**—which denotes, (1) The present paucity; (2) The future abundance. **We had been as Sodom**—so that it is no unexampled thing for the main body of the Jewish nation to revolt from God, and perish in their sin"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul says that Isaiah's description of things around him was a prophecy of gospel days. God treated the covenant people on definite principles. Consequently, His dealings with them at one time were prophetic of times to come. **Sabaoth** a Hebrew word denoting 'armies.' The Lord of Sabaoth is Jehovah, whose bidding is done by the powers of heaven and earth. (Dan. 4. 35; Ps. 103. 20 f.; 148. 2.) **Seed**—from the LXX., instead of 'remnant.' The remnant of Judah in the days of Isaiah was a seed in which the life of the sacred people was preserved for future generations. It might be objected to the gospel that, by making faith the condition of salvation, it practically reduced the ancient people to a small remnant, viz. the believing Jews. But Isaiah tells us that in his day, by death and captivity, the covenant people was reduced to a small remnant; and that, but for the help of God, it would then have been as completely destroyed as were Sodom and Gomorrah. Consequently, if the gospel be true, God is doing now only what Isaiah says He did then"—BEET. CHRYSOSTOM says: "Here again he points out another circumstance, that not even the small remnant escaped of themselves, but would all have perished, had not God in great mercy saved them by faith."

Vers. 30, 31. **What shall we say then**—"what is to be concluded from all that has been said but this, **That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness**—who a while ago had no knowledge of, no care or thought about it—**have attained to righteousness**—or justification—**even the righteousness which is by faith.** This is the first conclusion we may draw from the preceding observations. The second is, that **Israel**—the Jews, although **following after the law of righteousness**—that law which, duly used, would have led them to faith, and thereby to righteousness—**have not attained to the law of righteousness**—to that righteousness or justification which is one great end of the Law"—WESLEY.

"**What shall we say then?** What conclusion shall we draw from this view of God's dealings? The answer consists of two parts—(1) A statement of facts (vers. 30, 31) drawn from the whole preceding discussion (vers. 6–29); and (2) A declaration of the cause (vers. 32, 33). 'The two strange things are that **Gentiles** attained righteousness, and that they attained it without seeking it' (CHRYSOSTOM). (Comp. ch. 2. 14.) **Gentiles, that have not a law,** to quicken the moral sense, are not, like Jews, consciously seeking to obtain righteousness; yet they **attained to righteousness, but the righteousness that is of faith.** If here S. Paul 'with the fewest words touches the deepest foundations of the matter' (EWALD), it is because he has already (ch. 3. 4) fully discussed the nature of that righteousness of faith in which the whole solution lies. Observe the thrice-repeated 'righteousness,' as in ver. 31, the repetition of **law of righteousness.** The whole passage is framed for pointed effect. The hearer is strongly affected by the repetition of the same word, as if a weapon were to pierce the same part of the body again and again"—MEYER. "**Israel**—the mass of the Jews, in contrast with the believing Gentiles. To obey a rule of right or wrong was to their mind the only way to obtain God's favour. Such a rule, if they could find out and obey it, would be to them a **law of righteousness.** This ideal law they set before themselves; and by morality, anxiety, or ritual, they were striving to realise it in themselves. **Come up to**—continues the idea of a race. They had not come up practically to their ideal law, and were therefore destitute of righteousness. That some who were striving after righteousness had not obtained it, while others who till lately thought nothing about it now lived in its enjoyment, illustrates ver. 16. (Comp. Matt. 21. 31)"—BEET.

32. "And **wherefore** have they not? It is because God eternally decreed they should not? There is nothing like this to be met with; but agreeable to his argument the apostle gives us this good reason for it, **Because they sought it not by faith**—whereby alone it could be attained—**but as it were**—in effect, if not professedly, **by works.**

For they stumbled at that stumblingstone—Christ crucified"—WESLEY.

"The great reason for the rejection of Israel and for the admission of the Gentiles is that the Gentiles did, and that they did not, base their attempts at righteousness upon faith. Righteousness is the middle term which leads to salvation. The Gentiles, without seeking, found; the Jews, seeking in a wrong way, failed to find it"—ELLICOTT. BEET says: "Reason why the Jews have not obtained righteousness—they sought it, **not** in God's way, **by faith, but** in their own way, **as** though righteousness came **by works. They stumbled,** etc. Comment on their failure, 'stone of stumbling'; one against which men strike their foot. Same word in ch. 14. 13, 20; 1 Cor. 8. 9; and 1 Pet. 2. 6, referring, as here, to Christ. (Comp. Luke 20. 1 f.) The Jews rejected the gospel because Christ was not what they expected. He thus became a stone against which the men of Israel, as they ran after righteousness, struck their foot. (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 23; Matt. 13. 58.)"

33. **As it is written**—"foretold by their own prophet. **Behold, I lay in Sion**—I exhibit in My Church, what, though it is in truth the only sure foundation of happiness, yet will be in fact a **stumblingstone and rock of offence**—an occasion of ruin to many, through their obstinate unbelief"—WESLEY.

"**As it is written.** (Isa. 28. 16.) This is a remarkable example of the freedom with which S. Paul quotes the language of the Old Testament. This passage, as well as Ps. 118, were referred by the Jews to Messiah. S. Paul by taking the words, 'stone of stumbling and rock of offence' (Isa. 8. 14) and substituting them in Isa. 28. 16, instead of 'for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation,' has combined both the threat and the promise in one quotation. The best comment is 1 Pet. 2. 6–8, where the different passages are all quoted separately"—Dr. GIFFORD. "What are we to conclude from all this? That the apostle in this chapter, far from vindicating, as is ordinarily thought, the rights of Divine election over against human freedom, vindicates, on the contrary, the rights of God's freedom in regard to His own election relating to Israel. His decree does not bind Him, as an external law imposed on His will would. He remains sovereignly free to direct His mode of acting at every moment according to the moral conditions which He meets with in humanity, showing grace when He finds good, even to men who were not in His covenant, rejecting when He finds good even men who were embraced in the circle which formed the object of His election. S. Paul did not therefore think of contending in behalf of Divine sovereignty against human freedom; he contended for God's freedom in opposition to the chains which men sought to lay on him in the name of their own election. We have here a treatise not *for*, but *against* unconditional election"—GODET.

CHAPTER X.

SECTION XXIV.—Vers. 1–13. IGNORANCE A CAUSE OF UNBELIEF.—The subject of this chapter is the fact asserted in ch. 9. 31–33, that Israel failed to attain a law of righteousness, because they sought a righteousness dependent on the merit of their own works. But before entering on the painful and invidious task of condemning his own nation, S. Paul renews the assurance of his heartfelt interest in their salvation.

1. **My prayer to God is, that they may be saved.** "He would not have prayed for this, had they been absolutely reprobated"—WESLEY.

My heart's desire—*strictly*, "the goodwill of my heart." Israel had rejected salvation, and they had been plainly warned of their peril, but their case was not hopeless. It is a blessed thing when every desire for our own, or for another's good prompts to prayer to God.

2. **They have a zeal, but not according to knowledge.** "They had zeal without knowledge; we have knowledge without zeal"—WESLEY.

"They were zealous for the Law and the Temple; but (like himself, 1 Tim. 1. 13) they acted 'ignorantly in unbelief.' None deserve our sympathy and prayer more than those who are earnest for God, but know not how to serve Him"—BEET. Justice must be done to the heroic spirit of the Jews. But it was zeal directed into the most mistaken channels. Their religion was legal and formal to the last degree. Under an outward show of punctilious obedience, it concealed all the inward corruption described by the apostle in ch. 2. 17–29.

3. **For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God**—"of the method God has established for the justification of a sinner—**and seeking to establish their own righteousness**—their own method of acceptance with God—**have not submitted to the righteousness of God**—the way of justification which He hath fixed"—WESLEY.

"Mere right-doing, and abstinence from wrong-doing, is not all that is required of men. A man's whole life is more than any individual act. The opposition of the heart to God is of itself a thing meriting judgment-day condemnation. Nothing more than this is required to exclude a man from the glory of the eternal heavens"—BEECHER.

4. **For Christ is the end of the Law**—"the scope and aim of it. It is the very design of the Law, to bring men to believe in Christ for justification and salvation. And He alone gives that pardon and life which the Law shows the want of, but cannot give. **To every one**—whether Jew or Gentile, treated of, ver. 11,

etc.—**that believeth**—treated of, ver. 5, etc."—WESLEY.

"Christ put an end to the Law in order that all who believe in Him may have the righteousness He only can bestow. We may so receive this righteousness, and rejoice in its possession. The Messiah brought a free righteousness—offered to faith; His coming consequently put an end to man's attempt to establish his own righteousness on the observance of the Law; thus, then, fell the whole legal economy, which had now fulfilled its task. It was not so the Jews understood it. If they, in a measure, accepted the salvation of the Gentiles, they thought of it only as an annexation to Israel and a subjection to the sovereignty of Moses. It was under this idea 'that they compassed sea and land, to make proselytes' (Matt. 23. 15). But Jesus taught Matt. 5; 9. 11–17; 15. 1. S. Paul declares the same profound truth in this verse. The Law falls to the ground with the coming of Him who brings a completely made righteousness to the believer"—GODET.

5. **For Moses describeth the** only **righteousness** which is attainable **by the Law**, when he saith, **The man who doeth these things shall live by them**—"that is, he that perfectly keeps all these precepts in every point, he alone may claim life and salvation by them. But this way of justification is impossible to any who have ever transgressed any one law in any point"—WESLEY.

So Moses wrote in Lev. 18. 5. The same teaching is found in Ezek. 18. 22, 24. In these scriptures God declares that only by obedience to the Law can men obtain the blessings promised in the Law. *We* certainly can never be made righteous in this way. Our obedience to the commandments of God is as imperfect as our nature is sinful. Calvin reasons thus: "You wish to be justified by your own *doing*. Well! But in that case let your *doing* be complete! If your obedience is to make you live, it must be worthy of Him to whom it is offered."

Vers. 6, 7. **But the righteousness which is by faith**—"the method of becoming righteous by believing—**speaketh** a very different language, and may be considered as expressing itself thus (to accommodate to our present subject the words which Moses spake, touching the plainness of his Law), **Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven,** as if it were **to bring Christ down: or, Who shall descend into the grave,** as if it were **to bring Him again from the dead?** Do not imagine that these things are to be done now, in order to procure thy pardon and salvation"—WESLEY.

The original of the quotations here is Deut. 30. 12–14. Alford argues that the practical import of the passage in Deuteronomy is that the Law, as the revelation of God's will, is not an unintelligible mystery to man, but a thing that can be known and loved; but that, if so, then this is true "of Him who is the end of the Law, and of the commandment to believe in Him, which (1 John 3. 23) is now *God's commandment*." Our duty now is to believe in Christ, that we may be saved.

8. "**But what saith he**—Moses. Even these words, so remarkably applicable to the subject before us. All is done ready to thy hand. **The word is nigh thee**—within thy reach; easy to be understood, remembered, practised. This is eminently true of **the word of faith**—the gospel—**which we preach**—the sum of which is, If thy heart believe in Christ, and thy life confess Him, **thou shalt be saved**"—WESLEY.

"**But what does it** (the righteousness of faith) **say?** Moses' words apply to the gospel; and are therefore a voice of the righteousness of faith. (Comp. Gal. 3. 8.) God has put the gospel, has He then put the Law, into human lips and hearts? **That is**—asserts that Moses' words apply to the gospel. **Word of faith** — the word concerning faith"—BEET. "In the passage quoted, Moses said (Deut. 30. 14), This saying was, in the ancient economy, a relative truth. It becomes in Christ absolute truth. In these words Moses had in a sense, without suspecting it, given the exact formula of the righteousness of faith; and it is because the apostle was conscious of this fundamental identity of feeling between Moses and the gospel on this point, that he could venture, as he does here, to apply the saying of the one to the teaching of the other. S. Paul has done what we do or should do in every sermon—(1) Disentangle from the temporary application, which is the strict sense of the text, the fundamental and universal principle which it contains; (2) Apply freely the general principle to the circumstances in which we are ourselves speaking"—GODET.

9. **If thou confess with thy mouth**—"even in time of precaution, when such a confession may send thee to the lions"—WESLEY.

"Simple as these words are, our conscience will not permit us to believe them until we repent, *i.e.* till we resolve to forsake sin. For so long as we continue in sin, the Law written within proclaims in words louder than those of the gospel, and of equal authority, that God is angry with us. Consequently, repentance is absolutely needful for salvation; not as another condition beside faith, but because without repentance faith is impossible"—BEET.

10. **For with the heart**—"not the understanding only—**man believeth to righteousness**—so as to obtain justification. **And with the mouth confession is made** — so as to obtain final *salvation*. Confession here implies the whole of outward, as believing does the root of all inward religion"—WESLEY.

"Belief is not intellectual, but moral. Religion is not a question of mere notions, but the expression of the entire spiritual life. It would be as logical to contend that a man is going a journey because he can explain the con-

struction of an engine, as to contend that a man is going to heaven because he can correctly answer theological questions"—PARKER. "The 'confession with the mouth' represents in fact the whole process by which the Christian, in his life on earth, owns and obeys Christ as his Lord; refuses to 'deny Him' in the evil world. It thus stands here for the 'narrow path,' along which the justified move to their promised and assured home. *Faith*, indeed, 'saves'—the Christian, in every sense, *lives* by *faith* in the Son of God (Gal. 2. 20). But his 'life' is *manifested* in *obedience*, which alone is the path to heaven. (See Eph. 2. 8–10)"—MOULE. "From Abel down to Abraham, and thence to Christ, all the holy fathers obtained righteousness by faith. How should it be otherwise? We are all gone out of the way; we are all guilty before God. We are wholly without strength. The mercy is therefore adapted to the misery of man. Look, and be healed—believe, and be saved;—Come unto Me, and I will give you rest"—SUTCLIFFE.

12. **The same Lord of all is rich**—"so that His blessings are never to be exhausted, nor is He ever constrained to hold His hand. The great truth proposed in the eleventh verse is so repeated here, and in the thirteenth, and further confirmed (vers. 14, 15) as not only to imply, that 'whosoever calleth upon Him shall be saved,' but also that the will of God is, that all should savingly call upon Him"—WESLEY.

"**For there is no difference** (R.V. 'No distinction between Jew and Greek')—as to the way of obtaining salvation"—BENSON. All are equally welcome to this salvation. Here the Jew has no exclusive privilege; and from this the Greek is not rejected. One simple way of being saved is proposed to all, viz., faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; because He is the same Lord who made all and governs all, and is rich in mercy to all that **call** upon Him"—CLARKE.

13. **Whosoever shall call.** "Believing in Christ, or God (ver. 11), and 'calling upon Him' (vers. 12, 13, 14), are in effect the same thing, as *calling upon God* necessarily supposes faith in Him; and he who duly believes in Christ, has such a sense of his dependence upon Divine grace, that he looks unto and trusts in the power and goodness of his God alone for happiness; which is the true religion of the gospel"—Dr. TAYLOR.

SECTION XXV. — Vers. 14–21. ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF WAS FORETOLD.—14–16. **But how shall they preach, unless they be sent?** "Thus, by a chain of reasoning, from God's will that the Gentiles also should 'call upon Him,' S. Paul infers that the apostles were sent by God to preach to the Gentiles also. **The feet**—their very footsteps; their coming"—WESLEY.

And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? "Even the works of nature and providence must be made known to mankind by instructors, to make them able to understand them; much more the gospel of Christ"—BAXTER. "There is—(1) No salvation without the gospel—a dispensation of mercy and grace from God alone; (2) This must be proclaimed in the world for the obedience of faith; (3) The preacher must have a Divine mission—*sent*, must have both *authority* and *power* from on high; (4) The commissioned one must be *heard*, and the 'word' must be *credited*; (5) They who believe must pray"—CLARKE.

17. **Faith**—"indeed, ordinarily **cometh by hearing**, even by hearing **the word of God**"—WESLEY.

So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (R.V.)—"as in Lydia's conversation. Truth illuminates the understanding, and grace persuades the heart"—SUTCLIFFE. "Preaching the gospel is the ordinary means of salvation; faith in Christ is the result of hearing the *word*, the *doctrine of God preached*. Preaching God sends; if heard attentively, faith will be produced; and if men believe the report, the arm of the Lord will be revealed in their salvation"—CLARKE.

18. "**But** their unbelief was not owing to the want of hearing. For they **have heard. Yes, verily**—so many nations have already heard the preachers of the gospel, that I may in some sense say of them as David did of the lights of heaven"—WESLEY. (See Ps. 19. 4; Acts 8. 4.)

The amazing progress that Christianity made in the world, when first promulgated, is a strong argument in its favour. It was not propagated by the sword, nor enforced by the arts of vain philosophy, or the enticing words of man's wisdom; it derived all its force and evidence from the power of God exerted in the performing of miracles.

19. **But hath not Israel known?** "They might have known, even from Moses and Isaiah, that many of the Gentiles would be received, and many of the Jews rejected. **I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are not a nation.** As they followed gods that were not gods, so He accepted in their stead a nation that was not a nation—that is, a nation that was not in covenant with God. **A foolish nation**—such are all which know not God"—WESLEY.

"How much the Jews were irritated at the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles is well known. (Matt. 21. 43, etc.; Acts 22. 21, 22; 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16)"—COKE. "**Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy**—by the Gentiles whom you despise; and Isaiah says, 'I am found of them that sought Me not.' These are bold sayings. Moses and Isaiah, two princes of the prophets, foretelling the accession of the Gentile nations to Christ, and leaving the Jews in their sinful obduracy, were terrific arguments, and very humiliating to the carnal Jews"—SUTCLIFFE. "What Moses had only announced darkly in these words, Isaiah pro-

claimed with open mouth. He declares unambiguously: God will one day manifest Himself to the Gentiles by a proclamation of grace, while the Jews will obstinately reject all the blessings which shall be offered to them"—GODET.

20. **But Isaiah is very bold**—"and speaks plainly what Moses but intimated"—WESLEY.

"**Bold**—speaks in the fullest manner and plainest language (ch. 65. 1), notwithstanding the danger to which such a declaration exposed him. **I was found of them that sought Me not**—the Gentiles, who were not seeking Me, and they have found that redemption which the Jews rejected"—CLARKE.

21. **An unbelieving and gainsaying people**—"just opposite to those who believed with their hearts, and made confession with their mouths"—WESLEY.

"Who are continually objecting, whom no persuasion can induce to regard their own happiness, so as to be willing to admit the evidence of truth and the counsels of wisdom, and whose character is just opposite to that of those who believe with their hearts. The prophet's words are an allusion to the action of an orator, who, in speaking to the multitude, stretches out his arms to express his earnestness and affection"—BENSON. This verse is a picture of "the everlasting arms" spread open in unwearied love, and reveals God's patience and long-suffering towards His own people, though they persist in disobeying and refusing His invitations. The idea of the whole chapter is briefly summed up in these last words.

CHAPTER XI.

SECTION XXVI.—Vers. 1-24. GOD HAS NOT CAST OFF HIS PEOPLE.—1. **Hath God rejected His whole people**—"all Israel? In nowise. Now there is 'a remnant' who believe (ver. 5), and hereafter 'all Israel will be saved' (ver. 26)"—WESLEY.

Did God cast off His people? (R.V.). S. Paul himself, and thousands of other believing Jews, afforded proof that God had not **rejected** Israel. He would have looked upon such a thing with horror, and he rejects the suggestion with indignation. **God forbid.** It is not enough to reject with righteous abhorrence the thought that the unbelief of some could make void God's faithfulness to others. God's truth is absolute and independent; it cannot be impaired, even if man's falsehood be universal.

2. **God hath not rejected** that part of **His people whom He foreknew**—"speaking after the manner of men. For, in fact, knowing and foreknowing are the same thing with God, who knows or sees all things at once, from everlasting to everlasting"—BENSON. "The question in view here is, 'Was the *nation* ever so rejected as that *members of it, as such,* were rejected?' This S. Paul negatives by pointing to the 'nation within the nation,' the elect faithful"—MOULE. "Jehovah promised, without any mention of conduct, to be a God to Abraham's seed for ever. And when He gave that promise, He foresaw all that Abraham's seed would do. God's perfect foreknowledge makes it inconceivable that He should change His purpose, or leave His promise unfulfilled. (Comp. 8. 29)"—BEET.

4. **To Baal**—"nor to the golden calves"—WESLEY.

"Baal was the God of Jezebel; his worship was then the worship of the *state;* but there were thousands of pious Israelites who had not acknowledged this idol, and did not partake in the idolatrous worship"—CLARKE.

5. **According to the election of grace**—"according to that gracious purpose of God, 'He that believeth shall be saved'"—WESLEY.

"**According to that purpose of God**—whereby He hath chosen those, whether Jews or Gentiles, for His people, that break off their sins by repentance, and believe on Jesus, with their hearts, unto righteousness"—BENSON. This idea of the **remnant** may be very profitably studied in Isaiah, chaps. 1 to 39.

6. **And if by grace then it is no more of works**—"whether ceremonial or moral. **Else grace is no longer grace.** The very nature of grace is lost. **And if it be of works, then it is no more grace: else work is no longer work**—but the very nature of it is destroyed. There is something so absolutely inconsistent between the being justified by grace, and the being justified by works, that, if you suppose either, you of necessity exclude the other. For what is given to works is the payment of a debt; whereas grace implies an unmerited favour. So that the same benefit cannot, in the very nature of things, be derived from both"—WESLEY.

The whole of the new covenant is grace; nothing remains for impotent man but consent. "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3. 5). Good works are not the cause of our salvation, but a sign and result of it. Human merit can never be the *cause* of spiritual blessing. GODET says: "The apostle wishes to express the idea, that if Israel possesses the privilege of always preserving within their bosom a faithful remnant, it is not because of any particular merit they have acquired before God by their works, it is purely a matter of grace on the part of Him who has chosen them."

7. **What then?** "What is the conclusion from the whole? It is this: that **Israel in**

"*Knowing* and *foreknowing* are the same thing

general **hath not obtained** justification; **but** those of them only who believe. **And the rest were blinded**—by their own wilful prejudice"—WESLEY.

"**What then?** (Ch. 3. 9.) **What Israel seeks after**—viz. righteousness. (Ch. 9. 31; 10. 3; Acts 26. 7.) **The election**—collective term for the elected ones. Compare 'selection' for selected objects. **Hardened**—more or less deprived of spiritual understanding. It is explained in vers. 8-10. (Comp. ch. 9. 18; Mark 8. 17; John 12. 40, etc.) **But the rest**, etc. The only alternative is righteousness or hardening. S. Paul infers from the present state of the Jews, not that God has cast off His people, but that a portion only of the nation has obtained what all seek for; and that all the others have become spiritually blind"—BEET.

8. "**God hath** at length withdrawn His Spirit, and so **given them** up to **a spirit of slumber**; which is fulfilled **unto this day**"—WESLEY.

"**Spirit of slumber** (R.V. 'Spirit of stupor'). The very word and revelation of God, which should have awakened their consciences, and opened their eyes and ears, have had a different effect"—CLARKE.

9. **And David saith**—"in that prophetic imprecation, which is applicable to them as well as to Judas. **A recompence**—of their preceding wickedness. So sin is punished by sin; and thus the gospel, which should have fed and strengthened their souls, is become a means of destroying them"—WESLEY.

"**And David saith.** (Ps. 69. 22.) The whole Psalm is full of Messiah. The point of the quotation is that the Psalm indicates a judicial turning of blessing into curses, and a judicial blindness and impotence of the soul, as the way in which retribution would come on Messiah's enemies. Seeing, then, that this imprecation remains for all the adversaries of Christ—that their meat should be converted into poison (as we see the gospel is to be the savour of death unto death), let us embrace with humility and trembling the grace of God"—CALVIN. "The **table** is, in the Psalmist's sense, the emblem of the material pleasures in which the ungodly live. Their life of gross enjoyments is to become to them what the snares of all sorts, with which men catch them, are to the lower animals. It is difficult to avoid thinking that the apostle is here applying this figure in a spiritual sense; for the punishment which he has in view is of a spiritual nature—it is moral hardening"—GODET.

11. **Have they stumbled so as to fall**—"totally and finally? No. **But by their fall**—or slip—it is a very soft word in the original—**salvation is come to the Gentiles.** See an instance of this in Acts 13. 46. **To provoke them**—the Jews themselves—**to jealousy**"—WESLEY.

"Here begins a new section of the discussion, lasting to the end of the chapter, and of the subject. S. Paul has shown that the rejection of Israel was never total; he now declares that it is not final. A time is to come when the mass of the bodily Israel shall believe, and be restored to the Church. The salvation of the Gentiles was indeed always in the Divine purpose; but Jewish unbelief was the *occasion* which that purpose took for its actual development"—C. B.

12. "The first part of this verse is treated of, ver. 13, etc.; the latter, **How much more their fulness**—that is, their full conversion, ver. 23, etc. So many prophecies refer to this grand event, that it is surprising any Christian can doubt of it. And these are greatly confirmed by the wonderful preservation of the Jews as a distinct people to this day. When it is accomplished, it will be so strong a demonstration, both of the Old and New Testament revelation, as will doubtless convince many thousand deists, in countries nominally Christian; of whom their will, of course, be increasing multitudes among merely nominal Christians. And this will be a means of swiftly propagating the gospel among Mohammedans and Pagans, who would probably have received it long ago, had they conversed only with real Christians"—WESLEY.

The things which caused the **fall** of the Jews, and their **diminishing**—*i.e.* a "falling short," in respect of *numbers*, also promoted the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. **Their fulness**—the spiritual blessing which shall bring so many of them to Him from whom they fell away, will, in days to come, vastly increase the legions of the true Israel of God. For the glory of God, and the final triumph of His kingdom, we should eagerly seek the salvation of the Jews. By **the riches of the world**, S. Paul understands the grace into which the Gentiles are introduced by faith in a free salvation. **The riches of the Gentiles** denotes that indefinite number of Gentile nations who, as the gospel shall reach them, shall enter into the Church, and thus fill up the void arising from the reduction of Israel to so small a number of believers.

13. **I magnify my office** (R.V. "I glorify my ministry"). "Far from being ashamed of ministering to the Gentiles, I glorify therein; the rather, as it may be a means of provoking my brethren to jealousy"—WESLEY.

Apostle of the Gentiles. (Eph. 3. 8; comp. Acts 22. 21.) No other apostle claimed this distinction. MEYER says, "A noble self-consciousness here finds expression." The claim was just. (See Acts 9. 15; Gal. 2. 7, 8; Eph. 3. 8.) Because of the blessings which will come to the Gentiles, as surely as for their own good. S. Paul will seek the salvation of his own countrymen.

14. **My flesh**—"my kinsmen"—WESLEY.

"See Gen. 37. 27; Judg. 9. 2; 2 Sam. 5. 1. Comp. 1 Cor. 9. 22. For this intense desire to

'save some,' whether Jews or Gentiles, S. Paul does not deceive himself; he does not reckon on a conversion of Israel *en masse* before the last times; but he would like, at least, he adds, to save **some of them**, as first-fruits of the harvest. But we are not at the goal. That even is only a means. The *final* aim is declared in ver. 15"—GODET.

15. **Life from the dead**—"overflowing life to the world, which was dead"—WESLEY.

The argument implies that this is something very much greater than the *reconciliation of the world*. It can therefore be nothing less than the glorious life ushered in by the resurrection of the dead. This verse puts in stronger and more complete form the argument of ver. 12, to show how deep an interest the Gentiles have in the salvation of the Jews"—BEET.

16. And this will surely come to pass. "**For if the first-fruits be holy, so is the lump.** The consecration of them was esteemed the consecration of all; and so the conversion of a few Jews is an earnest of the conversion of all the rest. **And if the root be holy**—the patriarchs from whom they spring, surely God will at length make their descendants also holy"—WESLEY.

"The main effect of this passage, to ver. 24, is to prove that the restoration of the Jews to the Church of the Messiah, so far from being unlikely is in the nature of the case likely. Their peculiar connection, by lineal descent, with the fathers, makes it certain that their *return* will be as abundantly welcome to their God, as the *admission* of the Gentiles. We might say *more* welcome, but for the fact that *no* welcome can be fuller than that which awaits the true believer of whatever nation. **The first-fruits**—the Jewish patriarchs, but perhaps specially Abraham, who was eminently 'holy' in the sense of *consecration to the purposes of God*. **The root.** Here again the figure points to the patriarchs, and especially to Abraham. (Comp. Isa. 51. 2 for yet another figure, that of the quarry, with the same reference)"—C. B.

17. **Thou**—O Gentile—**being a wild olive tree.** "Had the graft been nobler than the stock, yet its dependence on it for life and nourishment would leave it no room to boast against it. How much less when, contrary to what is practised among men, the wild olive tree is engrafted on the good"—WESLEY.

"What a transfer of covenant favour, from the unbelieving Jews to the believing Gentiles! What forms does grace assume to gain the heart and bring the soul to God!'—SUTCLIFFE. An illustration similar to that of our Lord in John 15. 5, of the union of true believers to Christ and His Church.

18. **Boast not against the branches.** "Do not they do this who despise the Jews? or deny their future conversion?"—WESLEY.

"**Boast not**—there is no merit in the graft. The Jew may yet come in, and the haughty Gentile be again cut off, and perish. This verse is a reason why they should not exult. The root owes nothing to the twigs, the twigs everything to the root. All the spiritual life of the world was developed in Israel. (Comp. ch. 15. 27.) To exult over Israel was to exult over the nation to which they owed all their real good"—BEET.

20. **They were broken off for unbelief, and thou standest by faith**—"both conditionally, not absolutely: if absolutely, there might have been room to boast. 'By faith'—the free gift of God, which therefore ought to humble thee"—WESLEY.

Neither will He spare thee (R.V.). "It might be possible for the Gentile to claim a special providence in his substitution for the Jew. He should rather be reminded that there is a condition—faith—which is attached to this substitution; this he must be careful to observe, or else he will lose all that he has gained"—ELLICOTT.

21. **Be not highminded, but fear.** "We may observe, this 'fear' is not opposed to trust, but to pride and security"—WESLEY.

"Be not 'highminded' is applicable to every Christian: a sanctifying 'fear' is the guard of sanctifying joy. Learn to flee apostasy, pride, and all the errors which ruined the Jews, and come daily to the atoning righteousness of our Redeemer and Lord"—SUTCLIFFE.

22. **Else shalt thou**—"also, who now 'standest by faith,' be both totally and finally **cut off**'—WESLEY.

"**Goodness and severity of God.** Look round this world. The aspect of things is stern; very stern. If they be ruled by love, it is a love which does not shrink of human agony. There is a law of infinite mercy here, but there is a law of boundless rigour too. Sin, and you will suffer—that law is not reversed. The young and the gentle and the tender are inexorably subjected to it. We would shield them if we could; but there is that which says they shall not be shielded. They shall weep and fade and taste of mortal anguish, even as others. Carry that out into the next world, and you have wrath to come"—ROBERTSON.

24. **Contrary to nature.** "For, according to nature, we graft the fruitful branch into the wild stock; but here the wild branch is grafted into the fruitful stock"—WESLEY.

If Gentiles, who were aliens, can be brought into the family of God, we may be sure that those who, by birth, belong to the chosen people will not be rejected if they seek His mercy through Jesus Christ.

SECTION XXVII.—Vers. 25-36. THERE IS SALVATION FOR THE JEW. PRAISE TO GOD.—25. "S. Paul calls any truth known but to a few, a **mystery.** Such had been the calling of the Gentiles: such was now the conversion of the Jews. **Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits**—puffed up with your present

advantages; dreaming that ye are the only church, or that the church of Rome cannot fail. **Hardness in part is happened to Israel, till**—Israel therefore is neither totally nor finally rejected — **the fulness of the Gentiles be come in**—till there be a vast harvest among the heathens"—WESLEY.

The illustration of the olive tree is now left, and S. Paul declares in plain language that Israel will be saved. This prediction he supports by an ancient prophecy (Isa. 59. 20), vers. 5, 7, 17, and the expressions here **in part**, show that even in the darkest days of Israel there had been some of the people who had not rejected Christ. Instead of boasting, and of consequent "conceits," he would have us keep in view the great and glorious consummation of the Divine plan, when Jews and Gentiles shall **come in**. Their number, and their eternal blessedness, is taught in Rev. 7. 9. "The Lord is King!"

26, 27. **And so all Israel shall be saved**—"being convinced by the coming of the Gentiles. But there will be a still larger harvest among the Gentiles, when all Israel is come in. **The Deliverer shall come**—yea, the Deliverer is come; but not the full fruit of His coming"—WESLEY.

This mighty triumph—the salvation of *all Israel*—has not yet come. As a prophecy, the words are still unfulfilled, but the **Deliverer shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.** He said Himself, "I will draw *all men* unto Me" (John 12. 32). Moreover, the "covenant" declares the same glad truth. (Isa. 31. 31-34.) Men may doubt, or deny the possibility of so great a triumph of the Messiah. They are answered, if not yet silenced, by the reply to all such unbelievers. "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

28. **They are** now **enemies**—"to the gospel, to God, and to themselves, which God permits. **For your sakes: but as for the election**—that part of them who believe—**they are beloved**"—WESLEY.

"The real position of the Jews is this: They have been suffered to fall into a state of estrangement. But this does not abrogate God's original choice of them. They are still His beloved people, for the sake of their forefathers, the patriarchs, if not for their own"—ELLICOTT. "God hates the sinner in the same sense in which the sinner ought to hate himself, that is to say, *his own life*. This sentiment is only the hatred of holiness to evil; and then to the wicked man in so far as he is identified with evil"—GODET.

29. **For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.** "God does not repent of His 'gifts' to the Jews, or His 'calling' of the Gentiles"—WESLEY.

"The Lord changeth not. (Matt. 3. 6.) He repents not of the design of grace in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. The covenant declares His grace: it has its oath, its promises, its conditions, as in the preceding words—vers. 20–22. (1 Sam. 2. 30; 1 Chron. 28. 10.) It is enough for a child to rest on a father's love, lending a willing ear to all the cautions in the Christian Scriptures"—SUTCLIFFE.

32. **For God hath shut up all together in disobedience**—"suffering each in their turn to revolt from Him. First, God suffered the Gentiles in the early age to revolt, and took the family of Abraham as a peculiar seed to Himself. Afterwards, He permitted them to fall through unbelief, and took in the believing Gentiles. And He did even this to provoke the Jews to jealousy, and so bring them also in the end to faith. This was truly a mystery in the Divine conduct, which the apostle adores with such holy astonishment"—WESLEY.

"This verse is a restatement, in reference to God's mercy and to the division of mankind into Jews and Gentiles, of the teaching of ver. 18. We have not the words 'all men,' because S. Paul speaks here, not of human beings as such, but of the two theological divisions of the race. But the first **all** certainly includes the unbelieving Jews of S. Paul's day, whose *disobedience* to the gospel had led to the salvation of the Gentiles to whom he writes. And if so, they must be included in the second **all**. Yet there were sad reasons to fear that many of them would perish. Now if the unbelieving Jews were included in God's purpose of mercy, all men are included. That in many God's purpose will not be accomplished is no reason for putting aside the plain meaning of the plain words, which say that all are objects of His purpose of mercy"—BEET.

33. **the depth of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God.** "In the ninth chapter, S. Paul had sailed but in a narrow sea: now he is in the ocean. The 'depth of the riches' is described, ver. 35; the 'depth of wisdom,' ver. 34; the 'depth of knowledge,' in the latter part of this verse. 'Wisdom' directs all things to the best end; 'knowledge' sees that end. **How unsearchable are His judgments**—with regard to unbelievers. **His ways**—with regard to believers. 'His ways' are more upon a level; 'His judgments' a great deep. But even His ways we cannot trace"—WESLEY.

From this verse to the end of the chapter has been called the "Doxology to the Eternal Sovereign." His majesty and His mercy, as revealed in all that S. Paul has taught, alike demands the praise here offered to Him. The mystery of His sovereignty and grace and judgment is profound, and beyond all human computation; but even we may wonder and adore. His **riches** (Phil. 4. 19), **wisdom, knowledge, judgments**, are all **unsearchable**, all beyond human conception; but we may join the apostle in his triumphant exclamation ascribing "Glory to God." From Jew and Gentile, of whom he has written so much, and for whose salvation he so ardently desires,

he turns to Him whose grace and power has provided, through Christ, eternal blessedness for all, and to Him he presents worship and praise. We also may respond "Amen!"

34. **Who hath known the mind of the Lord**—before or any further than He has revealed it"—WESLEY.

See Isa. 40. 13 and Jer. 23. 18. S. Paul will further show that God has the right to all the adoration he presents to Him. He who existed "from everlasting" could need no **counsellor.** Nay, none could know the **mind** of the Eternal. God's designs are impenetrable until He reveal them Himself to His apostles and prophets, and by them to His people.

35. **Given to Him**—"either wisdom or power"—WESLEY.

This question is also a Scripture quotation, which S. Paul employs to glorify God. It is taken from Job 41. 11. Who can pretend to have any *demands* upon God? To whom is He *indebted*? Have either Jews or Gentiles any *right* to His blessings? May He not bestow His favours *as* He pleases, and to *whom* He pleases? How can the *Creator* be indebted to the creature? How can the *Author* of *Providence*, and the *Father of every good and perfect gift*, be under obligation to *them* for whom He provides, and who are wholly *dependent* on His bounty?

36. **Of Him**—as the Creator—**through Him**—as the Preserver—**to Him**—as the ultimate end, **are all things. To Him be the glory** of His riches, wisdom, knowledge. **Amen**—a concluding word, in which the affection of the apostle, when it is come to the height, shuts up all"—WESLEY.

"**For of Him**, etc. This is so far from being the case, **for OF Him**, as the original designer and author; **and BY Him**, as the prime and efficient cause; **and TO Him**, as the ultimate end for the manifestation of His eternal glory and goodness, **are all things** in universal nature, through the whole compass of time and eternity. **To whom be glory**—let Him have the praise of all His works, from all His intelligent creatures, **for ever**—throughout all the generations of men. **Amen**—so be it! Let this be established for ever"—CLARKE. "God's absolute independence, man's total dependence in everything which might be a matter of glory to Him. Such is the thought of this verse, the termination of this vast survey of the plan of God. What the apostle was concerned to say in closing was that, all things proceeding from the creative will of God, advancing through His wisdom and terminating in the manifestation of His holiness, must one day celebrate His glory, and His glory only. The application of the word **all things** might be restricted to the two portions of mankind spoken of (as in ver. 32). But S. Paul rises here to the general principle, of which ver. 32 was only a particular application, and hence also he substitutes the neuter 'all things' for the masculine 'all.' What is meant, therefore, is the totality of created things, visible and invisible. The glory of God, the reflection of His perfections in all that exists,—that glory, now veiled, in so many respects in the universe, must shine forth magnificently and perfectly for ever and ever. For, as HODGE says, 'the highest end for which all things can exist and be ordered, is to display the character of God.' This goal of history is, as it were, anticipated by the wish and prayer of the apostle: 'To Him be glory'"—GODET. "As the rivers return again to the place whence they came, they all come from the sea, and they all run into the sea again; so all our store, as it issued at first from the fountain of His grace, so should it fall at last into the ocean of His glory"—Bp. SANDERSON.

CHAPTER XII.

SECTION XXVIII.—Vers. 1, 2. A CONSECRATED BODY AND A RENEWED MIND.—1. **I exhort you.** "S. Paul uses to suit his exhortations to the doctrines he has been delivering. So here the general use from the whole is contained in the first and second verses. The particular uses follow, from the third verse to the end of the Epistle. **By the tender mercies of God.** The whole sentiment is derived from chaps. 1–5. The expression itself is particularly opposed to 'the wrath of God' (ch. 1. 18). It has a reference here to the entire gospel, to the whole economy of grace or mercy, delivering us from 'the wrath of God,' and exciting us to all duty. **To present**—(so ch. 6. 13; 16. 19; now actually to exhibit before God)—**your bodies**—that is, yourselves: a part is put for the whole; the rather, as in the ancient sacrifices of beasts, the body was the whole. These also are particularly named in opposition to that vile abuse of their bodies mentioned. (Ch. 1. 2.) Several expressions follow, which have likewise a direct reference to other expressions in the same chapter. **A sacrifice**—dead to sin, and **living**—by that life which is mentioned in ch. 1. 17; 6. 4, etc. **Holy.** Such as the holy Law requires. (Ch. 7. 12.) **Acceptable.** (Ch. 8. 8.) **Which is your reasonable service**—the worship of the heathens was utterly unreasonable (ch. 1. 18, etc.), so was the glorying of the Jews (ch. 2. 3, etc.). But a Christian acts in all things by the highest reason, from the mercy of God inferring his own duty"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul now passes from the main argument of the Epistle to practical exhortations based upon the preceding doctrines. His thoughts seem to flow on in a natural order, of which the general course can be easily traced. He begins by requiring personal consecration to God's service. "It will be observed how comprehensively he surveys the whole range of human action and conduct. He passes in review the private and public duties—ministering, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, and

obeying; he depicts the spirit of the Christian in business and in rest, in joy and in sorrow, in hope and in tribulation, towards friends and towards enemies, in peace and in wrath; and he lays down the Christian principles of civil government and civil obedience"—WACE. **I beseech you therefore.** "The apostle now urges the application of truth to life. He would teach men how to live. He has asserted the Divine majesty and sovereignty in ch. 11. 33–36; and with equal earnestness he sets forth the duties of the creature. **Your bodies**—answer to 'your members' (ch. 6. 13); practically, *your energies*. Through our body the world acts upon us, and we upon the world. **Living sacrifice**—a contrast to Mosaic sacrifices. This metaphor is used elsewhere of the Christian's tokens of thanksgiving. (Phil. 4. 18; 1 Pet. 2. 5)"—C. B. "The spirit of this exhortation is, seeing that God had called the Roman saints to all the glory of His covenant, they should now be a holy nation, consecrated to the living God, serving Him daily with prayer and praise. Such sacrifice must be presented without spot, and acceptably. It is a rational obligation, that a creature should live to the glory of his Creator, and especially with regard to spiritual endowments"—SUTCLIFFE.

2. **And be not conformed**—"neither in judgment, spirit, nor behaviour—**to this world**—which, neglecting the will of God, entirely follows its own. **That ye may prove**—know by sure trial; which is easily done by him who has thus presented himself to God—**what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.** 'The will of God' is here to be understood of all the preceptive part of Christianity, which is in itself so excellently 'good,' so 'acceptable' to God, and so 'perfective' of our natures"—WESLEY.

And be not fashioned according to this world (R.V.)—as in 1 Pet. 1. 14. **Transformed**—same word as in Matt. 17. 2, was "transfigured." "A saint must be separated, not locally, but in regard to intimate friendship. There are some remote courtesies that come from us, as men, to all, be they what they will; there are others to those that are nearer, and there are others that are nearest of all; and those are they with whom we hope to have communion for ever in heaven, the blessed people of God"—SIBBES. "If the views and conduct of others coincide with the Christian, it is well. If they do not, they are not at liberty to demand that he shall be conformed to them. He has higher laws, and a higher object. He has a purpose which strikes on to eternity. His aim is to prepare for heaven; theirs, to live for time. Nor can they claim jurisdiction over conduct that has been directed by the Son of God, and that He has judged best in ordering His peculiar community. The simple question is, whether a proposed course of conduct or opinion is consistent with the spirit and life demanded by the King of Zion?"—BARNES. "Sanctification must extend to man's whole nature, and include both separation from all that is unholy, and an inward change in the man himself. But this work of the Spirit does not exclude the co-operation of man's will, which is presupposed in the exhortation, 'Be ye transformed'"—GIFFORD.

SECTION XXIX.—Vers. 3–8. VARIETY OF GIFTS.—3. **And I say.** "He now proceeds to show what that will of God is—**through the grace which is given to me.** He modestly adds this, lest he should seem to forget his own direction. **To everyone that is among you**—believers at Rome. Happy, had they always remembered this! **The measure of faith**—treated of in the first and following chapters, from which all other gifts and graces flow"—WESLEY.

God had given great **grace** to the apostle, and special qualifications for teaching others. (See ch. 1. 5; 15. 15, 16; comp. also 1 Cor. 3. 10; 15. 10; Gal. 2. 9; Eph. 3. 2, 7, 8.) Here he commends "sober thinking." It is easy to over-estimate our own powers; and self-exalting thoughts are inconsistent with Christian discipleship. The man who deludes himself by self-esteem is generally guilty of contempt of others. The Pharisee not only looked upon himself as a great saint, but regarded the publican as a wretched sinner. He was, unfortunately, not the last of his race. A man's *faith* determines his spiritual condition, and God graciously bestows this *gift* on all Christians.

5. "**So we**—all believers—**are one body**—closely connected together **in Christ**, and consequently ought to be helpful to each other"—WESLEY.

4, 5. A happy illustration. **One body in Christ**—our union with Him involves our relationship with each other. The *body* and its *members* show the mutual connection, and the mutual dependence of the saints of God. (See 1 Cor. 10. 17; 12. 12–30; Eph. 1. 23; 4. 4–16; 5. 23–30; Col. 1. 18, 24; 2. 19; 3. 15.) God has distributed His gifts according to His holy will and infinite wisdom (Matt. 25. 14–30), and no man can afford to be independent of others. Christian fellowship, with its mutual helpfulness, is intended to bring each one into closer communion with Christ.

6. **Having then gifts differing according to the grace which is given us.** Gifts are various; grace is one. **Whether it be prophecy.** "This, considered as an extraordinary gift, is that whereby heavenly mysteries are declared to men, or things to come foretold. But it seems here to mean the ordinary gift of expounding Scripture. **Let us prophesy according to the analogy of faith.** S. Peter expresses it, 'as the oracles of God'; according to the general

tenor of them; according to that grand scheme of doctrine which is delivered therein, touching original sin, justification by faith, and present, inward salvation. There is a wonderful analogy between all these; and a close and intimate connection between the chief heads of that faith 'which was once delivered to the saints.' Every article, therefore, concerning which there is any question, should be determined by this rule; every doubtful scripture interpreted according to the grand truths which run through the whole"—WESLEY.

Here is further teaching from the preceding comparison. Our **gifts** differ; and graces are not bestowed by God in equal proportions, but each one may use "that which he hath," and must be responsible for its employment. "We live in an age of ordinary gifts, but it is as true of these ordinary, as of those extraordinary, gifts of the Spirit, that there is as much utility as beauty in the diverse temperaments and endowments of Christian men. What is diverse is not of necessity adverse. God has different kinds of work to do; and since He chooses to employ men, He has need of different kinds of instruments"—GUTHRIE. "Men have different spheres. It is for some to evolve great moral truths, as the heavens evolve stars, to guide the sailor on the sea and the traveller on the desert; and it is for some, like the sailor and the traveller, simply to be guided"—BEECHER. "Some people forget that there are diversities of gifts. He who taught the lark to trill, taught the eagle to scream; He who moulded the dewdrop and caused it to hang in silence on the fringe of the flower, poured out the boundless sea and caused it to roar night and day, as if uttering the prayer of all earthly trouble. We should allow more for all this marvellous diversity. The foot and hand, the eye and ear, are members of the same body, and there should be no schism"—PARKER.

7. **Ministering** — "as deacons. **He that teacheth**—catechumens; for whom particular instructors were appointed. **He that exhorteth**—whose peculiar business it was to urge Christians to duty, and to comfort them in trials"—WESLEY.

"The word rendered **ministry** is the same word as ch. 11. 13, where it means the *apostolic* service. It is a largely inclusive word; the main fixed idea being that of active 'practical' duty in the Church, of whatever kind or degree. Almost any work other than that of inspired utterance, or miracle working, may be included in it here. '*In the service*,' *i.e.* 'let us be really *in it*, devoted to it.' So 'in the teaching,' 'in the exhortation,' just below. **He that teacheth.** In 1 Cor. 12. 28, 29, 'teachers' are mentioned as a class of commissioned workers in the Church. Perhaps they were especially the *expositors* of revealed truth"—MOULE. "Since in this passage S. Paul is speaking of various special gifts, and distinguishes **ministry** from prophecy, teaching, and exhortation, the word must be taken in a limited sense, as service in things temporal and external, such as the wants of the poor, the sick, and the stranger. **Or he that teacheth.** The teacher's gift lies in an enlightened understanding, and a faculty of clear exposition: he uses '**the word of wisdom**' or '**the word of knowledge**' to arrange, develop, and enforce truths previously revealed. In 1 Cor. 12. 28, he is ranked next after the apostles and prophets"—GIFFORD.

8. **He that presideth** — "that hath the care of a flock. **He that showeth mercy** —in any instance — **with cheerfulness** — rejoicing that he hath such an opportunity"—WESLEY.

Here also other Christian works are specified. To **exhort** demands less knowledge than to **teach**, but not less earnest devotion. **Giving** is a duty of every Christian, and is most blessed when done **in simplicity**, *i.e.* with **liberality. Ruling with diligence**, means not only with earnestness of purpose, but with careful attention; and showing **mercy with cheerfulness**, surely implies works of self-sacrificing love, done with the gladness and kindliness which ever adds so much to their value.

SECTION XXX. — Vers. 9–21. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL DUTY IN LIFE. — 9. "Having spoken of faith and its fruit (ver. 3, etc.), he comes now to **love.** Vers. 9, 10, and 11 refer to ch. 7; ver. 12 to ch. 8; ver. 13, of communicating to the saints, whether Jews or Gentiles, to ch. 9, etc.; ver. 16 is repeated from ch. 11. 25. **Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good**—both inwardly and outwardly, whatever ill-will or danger may follow"—WESLEY.

Here we have plain teaching on Christian duty and practice. We are under obligation to live to bless men, as we are to serve God. He demands our love (Deut. 6. 5), and this is declared impossible unless we love one another. (1 John 4. 20.) Love to man, as to God, must be sincere — **without hypocrisy** (R.V.). (2 Cor. 6. 6; 1 Pet. 1. 22; 1 Tim. 1. 5; 2 Tim. 1. 5; Jas. 3. 17.) **Abhor** (R.V. "Hate"), as in Ps. 97. 10. **Cleave to good.** The two duties are connected, as in Isa. 1. 16, 17. "Love is the bond of perfection. Earthly societies associate and obey by interest, by custom, or by fear; but love, the pure and perfect charity of Christ, actuates the saints. They visit the sick and help the needy with true benevolence of heart"—SUTCLIFFE. "This is not here a commonplace recommendation to detest evil and love good. S. Paul means that love is not *pure* except when it is the declared enemy of evil, even in the person of those whom we love, and that it applies all its energy to labour for their progress in goodness. Destitute of this moral rectitude, which is the

spirit of holiness, love is only a form of selfishness"—GODET.

10. **In honour preferring one another**—"which you will do, if you habitually consider what is good in others, and what is evil in yourselves"—WESLEY.

In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another (R.V.). "The members of the spiritual body should do the same good offices for one another as the members of the natural body"—CHRYSOSTOM. "Christian affection has the *permanence* it derives from an indissoluble bond; the *vigour* given it by a participation in sufferings and reproaches; and the *depth* it receives from the prospect of an unbounded futurity"—TAYLOR.

11. Whatsoever ye do, do it with your might. **In** every **business** diligently and fervently **serving the Lord**—"doing all to God, not to man"—WESLEY.

"**In diligence not slothful** (R.V.). An idle, slothful person can never be a Christian"—CLARKE. "Oh for grace to be in the world and not of the world,—to be performing diligently and cheerfully our part in the present life—yet ever pressing towards our eternal rest"—NEWMAN HALL. **Not slothful.** The precept *includes* an exhortation to thoroughness in earthly duty, but much more besides. **Serving the Lord.** DE WETTE remarks that "the Christian should certainly *employ* the opportunity, but not *serve* it." He will often have to go apparently counter to it, in the path of duty. **Fervent in spirit—continuing instant in prayer.** "Earnestness does not express itself in long, inflated, pompous sentences. It is brief; it is simple. S. Peter sinks amid the boisterous waves of Galilee, and all the prayer of lips the cold water kisses is, as he stretches out his hand to Jesus, 'Save me, I perish!' And the publican, like a man who is falling over a crag, catches the arm of a friendly tree, throws his whole soul into this cry—these few, blessed, accepted words, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'"—GUTHRIE.

12. "**Rejoicing in hope**—of perfect holiness and everlasting happiness. Hitherto of faith and love; now of hope also—see chaps. 5 and 8; afterwards of duties towards others; saints (ver. 13); persecutors (ver. 14); friends, strangers, enemies (ver. 15, etc.)"—WESLEY.

"**Rejoicing in hope**—of that glory of God that to each faithful follower of Christ shall shortly be revealed"—CLARKE. "The fervour of devotion, referred to in ver. 2, has no more powerful auxiliary than *joy;* for joy disposes us to kindness, and even to self-sacrifice. But this applies only to Christian joy, to that which is kept up in the heart by the glorious *hopes* of faith. The passage (ch. 5. 3, 4) shows the intimate bond which unites this joy of hope with the **patient endurance** which the believer should display in the midst of trial. (Comp. 1 Thess. 1. 3.) And what are we to do to keep up in the heart the joyful spring of hope, and that firmness of endurance which holds out? **Continue instant in prayer,** says the apostle. Such is the fruitful principle of those admirable dispositions"—GODET.

13. **Communicate to the necessities of the saints.** "Relieve all Christians that are in want. It is remarkable that the apostle, treating expressly of the duties flowing from the communion of saints, yet never says one word about the dead. **Pursue hospitality**—not only embracing those that offer, but seeking opportunities to exercise it"—WESLEY.

"**Distributing** — communicating, sharing your own with them. This was almost the first instinct of the Church of Christ; and it was felt to be connected naturally with the sublimest truths of eternity. **Given to hospitality.** (Comp. Heb. 13. 2, where *lit.* 'forget not hospitality.') The duty of succouring and aiding fellow-Christians from a distance would be a chief (though by no means the only) point of exhortation"—MOULE. "We are to seek opportunities of Christian **hospitality.** (Comp. 1 Tim. 3. 2; Tit. 1. 8; Heb. 13. 2; 1 Pet. 4. 9; 1 John 3. 17; Matt. 10. 42.) It is not only needful to enable the servants of God to do their work, but it is a practical proof of brotherly love"—BEET. The two duties here and elsewhere enjoined by S. Paul were of special importance in the circumstances of the early churches.

14. **Curse not**—"no, not in your heart"—WESLEY.

According to the Lord's own example (Luke 23. 34) and His express precept (Luke 6. 28). S. Paul had not yet seen our present written Gospels, but he must have known the substance of our Lord's teaching.

15. **Rejoice.** "The direct opposite to weeping is laughter; but this does not so well suit a Christian"—WESLEY.

"On this beautiful and precious precept, comp. 1 Cor. 12. 26, and see the Lord's example at Cana and at Bethany. S. Paul himself knew how to practise his own precept. (2 Cor. 2. 2-4)"—C. B. "Sympathy is a duty of our common humanity, but far more of our regenerated manhood. Those who are one in the higher life should show their holy unity by true fellow-feeling. Joyful sympathy is doubly due when the joy is spiritual and eternal"—SPURGEON. "The degree to which the success and joy of others causes joy to us, and the converse, is the measure of our Christian life. Many cherish feelings exactly opposite to this. And to rejoice at the joy of others is more difficult than to share their sorrow"—BEET.

16. **Mind not high things**—"desire not riches, honour, or the company of the great"—WESLEY.

"'Let there be, in the breast of each, one thought and purpose touching all the others.' The context implies that this one thought

must be 'according to Christ' (ch. 15. 5). This oneness of purpose is the true and only source of real Christian harmony. **Prudent in your own eyes** recalls Prov. 3. 7 (LXX.). To take to ourselves credit for prudence is to betray ignorance. For we are wise only so long as we are guided by the presence and wisdom of God. Apart from His guidance all human prudence is folly in disguise"—BEET.

17. **Provide**—"think beforehand; contrive to give as little offence as need be to any"—WESLEY.

"From the mutual duties of brethren in Christ, S. Paul passes to the wider relations of the Christian towards all men, and especially towards his enemies. Enmity being the world's prevailing attitude, how must the Christian meet it? The question is answered in the following verses (17–21). The precept, **render to no man evil for evil**, is derived from the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5. 38–48.) **Provide things honest.** Again, to disarm enmity, use such forethought that your conduct may not only be blameless in the sight of God, who reads the heart, but may be also **honourable in the sight of all men**, through its transparent goodness and justice. A Christian should give no cause of suspicion or offence. Ver. 18 may be paraphrased, 'Live peaceably with all men, if through their conduct it be possible; at least, as far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men.' Peace is a mutual relation which may be broken on either side; accordingly the duty of living peaceably with all men is absolute, so far as it depends on ourselves, conditional so far as its possibility depends on others"—GIFFORD.

19. **Dearly beloved**—"so he softens the rugged spirit—**revenge not yourselves, but** leave that to God. Perhaps it might more properly be rendered, **leave room for wrath**, that is, the wrath of God, to whom vengeance properly belongs"—WESLEY.

"The apostle's purpose throughout the verse is to put in the strongest light of emphasis and contrast the truth that vengeance is not for us but for God"—GIFFORD. "Instead of punishing those who injure us, we must give place for God's anger, and treat them with kindness"—BEET. "In Heb. 10. 30 the same words are quoted with another view, namely, to warn *Christians* that their God will visit *their* transgressions, as the chastiser of His people"—MOULE. "Some professors pass for very meek, good-natured people until you displease them. They resemble a pool or pond, which, while you let it alone, looks clear and limpid, but if you put in a stick and stir the bottom, the rising sediment soon discovers the impurity that lurks beneath"—TOPLADY.

20. **Feed him**—"with your own hand; if it be needful, even put bread into his mouth. **Heap coals of fire upon his head**—that part which is most sensible.

'So artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
By heaping coals of fire upon its head;
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow;
And pure from dross the silver runs below.'"
—WESLEY.

"The passage means, show to thine enemy such kindness as shall make him ashamed of his hatred; so wilt thou inflict the sharpest and the most salutary pain. The figure is probably that of the melting-pots. As the object of heaping coals of fire on a vessel is to melt down its contents, so here the object is to melt a stubborn heart, a process not least painful when effected by undeserved kindness. This interpretation is confirmed by the closing sentence of Prov. 25. 22 (not quoted by S. Paul), 'and the Lord shall reward thee,' namely, for the good deeds done to thine enemy"—GIFFORD. ALFORD'S explanation is: "In thus doing, you will be taking the most effectual vengeance, the idea of vengeance being, in the Christian's view, *transformed*, so as to become the *victory of love*. *Q.d.* 'You shall thus exactly secure that sort of vengeance which alone a servant of God can desire.'"

21. "And if you see no present fruit, yet persevere. **Be not overcome with evil**—as all are who avenge themselves. **But overcome evil with good.** Conquer your enemies by kindness and patience"—WESLEY.

"Never allow any evil principle or act to conquer the gifts of God's grace. Every triumph of the **good** over **evil** develops and strengthens our moral character. Religion does not consist in dreading evil, but rather in gaining constant victories over it. We must watch against it daily, but if we do nothing more, it will never be overcome. **The evil: the good**—that of the evil-doer and the sufferer respectively. *Q.d.* 'Do not let his evil principles and acts conquer the better mind that is in thee by grace, but use "the good" given to thee—the good of Divine peace and love shed abroad in thy heart—to subdue the evil in him'"—MOULE. "If we retaliate, we do wrong, and thus evil gains a victory over us. But if the injury be met with kindness, it develops our moral character, and thus does us good. In this way, by doing good, we gain a victory over evil. And if our kindness lead the adversary to repentance, goodness gains a double victory. The alternative here mentioned is the only one. If a man do wrong to us, we must always either conquer or be conquered by the evil"—BEET;—who also adds, "In this section (vers. 9–21) which treats of Christian morals, S. Paul refers three times to the Book of Proverbs; another example of his respect, in every point, for the Old Testament. Each verse of this section will repay the most careful study. Observe the easy and natural flow, and the intense reality of the whole. There are no formal divisions, and no artificial order. But each thought suggests some other suitable thought, and the whole sets before us with

wonderful completeness the principles which ought to regulate our dealings one with another."

CHAPTER XIII.

SECTION XXXI.—Vers. 1–7. OBEDIENCE TO RULERS.—1. "S. Paul, writing to the Romans, whose city was the seat of the empire, speaks largely of obedience to magistrates; and this was also, in effect, a public apology for the Christian religion. **Let every soul be subject to the supreme powers** — an admonition peculiarly needful for the Jews. 'Power,' in the singular number, is the supreme authority; 'powers' are they who are invested with it. That is more readily acknowledged to be from God than these. The apostle affirms it of both. They are all from God, who constituted all in general, and permits each in particular by His providence. **The powers that be are appointed by God.** It might be rendered, 'are subordinate to,' or 'orderly disposed under, God,' implying that they are God's deputies or vicegerents, and consequently their authority being, in effect, His, demands our conscientious obedience"—WESLEY.

"This passage states, as a primary truth of human society, that civil authority is, as such, a Divine institution. Whatever may be the details of error or of wrong in its exercise, it is nevertheless, even at its worst, so vastly better than anarchy, that it forms a main instrument and ordinance of the will of God. It does not touch on the question of the *forms* of government. It distinctly forbids revolutionary action in a Christian, and yet it by no means forbids Christians to take full advantage of existing authority and law, as S. Paul himself took advantage of his civil rights. But its unmistakable drift is, what is always the drift of Scripture (as it is *not* that of human nature), to emphasise the Christian's *duties* far more than his *rights*"—C. B. "**Every soul**—not exactly the same as every man. Our submission must be inward. (Comp. ch. 2. 9; Acts 2. 13; Eph. 6. 6; Matt. 22. 37.) **For**, etc. (reason for submission). **There is**, etc. (emphatic). The very existence of civil authority is the work of God, who has so constituted society that men are compelled to appoint rulers, and thus to create authority. **And those that exist**, etc. Not only is civil authority as an abstract principle the work of God, but the persons who now exercise it have been put by God in their place of power"—BEET. "In enforcing the duty of submission, S. Paul clearly asserts a Divine right of civil government, as derived from God, the source of all authority and power; and he extends that Divine right to all rulers 'as the bearers of a Divine ordained office' (MEYER), but does not touch any question of the Christian's duty in reference to conflicting claims on his allegiance"—GIFFORD. "S. Paul means, first, that the institution of the State is according to the plan of God, who created man a social being, so that we are called to recognise in the existence of a power (authority) the realisation of a Divine thought. In the second proposition he goes further. He declares that at each time the very persons who are established in office occupy this exalted position only in virtue of a Divine dispensation"—GODET.

2. **Whosoever resisteth the power**—"in any other manner than the laws of the community direct—**shall receive condemnation**—not only from the magistrate, but from God also"—WESLEY.

"This verse exhibits the guilt, and as a consequence the inevitable punishment of revolt. The application of the principle laid down here remains always the same, whatever may be the form of government, monarchical or republican. S. Paul here reproduces in a certain sense, but in another form, the sayings of Jesus. (Matt. 26. 52.) It is obvious that Jesus and S. Paul have only one and the same watchword to give to the believer in regard to his relations to the State—submission, and, when necessary, patience"—GODET.

3. **For rulers are**—"in the general, notwithstanding some particular exceptions—**a terror to evil works**—only. **Wouldest thou then not be afraid?** There is one fear which precedes evil actions, and deters from them; this should always remain. There is another fear which follows evil actions; they who **do** well are free from this"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul enforces the certainty of 'judgment' in this case by pointing out its manifest justice. **Rulers** are, as a fact, an agency on the side of right and order; it is just, then, a sin in the sight of God to resist their authority"—MOULE. "In this and the following verse it is clearly the ideal aspect of the magistracy that the apostle has in view. Occasional failures of justice on the part of the executive do not make the strict administration of justice any the less its proper duty and office"—ELLICOTT.

4. **The sword**—"the instrument of capital punishment, which God authorises him to inflict"—WESLEY.

"Experience proves that the last punishment of the law is often the means of opening up in the heart of the malefactor a way for Divine grace. The penalty of death was the first duty imposed on the State at the time of its Divine founding. (Gen. 9. 6.) It is profound respect for human life, which in certain cases enjoins the sacrifice of human life. The question involved is not that of simple social expediency, but that of keeping up the human conscience to the level of the value which God Himself attaches to the human person"—GODET.

5. **Not only for** fear of **wrath**—"that is, punishment from man—**but for conscience' sake**—out of obedience to God"—WESLEY.

In other words, we are bound to submit to

the ruler, not only for fear of punishment, but also that we may have a consciousness that we are doing right. (Comp. 1 Cor. 10. 25, 29; 1 Pet. 2. 19.) MATTHEW HENRY'S Note is: "Thou hast the benefit and advantage of the Government, and therefore must do what thou canst to preserve it, and nothing to disturb it. Protection draws allegiance. By upholding the Government we keep up our own hedge."

6. **For this cause**—"because **they are the ministers** (officers) **of God** for the public good. **This very thing**—the public good"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul says that our admitted obligation to pay taxes rests upon the sacred authority of the power which imposes them. Since this obligation cannot otherwise be accounted for, it affords confirmation of the teaching that the rulers of the State are ordained by God"—BEET. **Ministers.** "The choice of such terms harmonises with the conception which is presented in this chapter of the Divine origin and character of the State system"—ELLICOTT.

7. **To all**—"magistrates. **Tribute**—taxes on your person or estates. **Custom**—for goods exported or imported. **Fear**—obedience. **Honour**—reverence. All these are due to the supreme power"—WESLEY.

"**Tribute**—the general tax or national impost, which was paid by Joseph in Bethlehem. (Luke 2. 2.) **Custom**—a local or occasional tax paid by our Saviour. (Matt. 17. 24.) What good is the farmer's corn, and the merchant's wealth, if they be not protected by the civil power? The seaman who holds the helm must be supported as well as the men before the mast. A contraband trade is an injustice to the State, and also to the fair trader"—SUTCLIFFE. "This section must have been written before the civil power began deliberately to oppose Christianity, as it did in the latter days of Nero, and at intervals afterwards. For, although the opposition of the State to Christianity did not altogether destroy the obligation to obedience, it introduced into the question difficulties which no one who wrote on the subject could pass over in silence. This section is therefore a mark of the early date, and consequently of the genuineness of the epistle"—BEET.

SECTION XXXII.—Vers. 8–14. CHRISTIAN DUTIES.—8. "From our duty to magistrates he passes on to general duties. **To love one another**—an eternal debt, which can never be sufficiently discharged; but yet, if this be rightly performed, it discharges all the rest. **For he that loveth another**—as he ought—**hath fulfilled the** whole **Law**—towards his neighbour"—WESLEY.

"**Owe no man anything.** The special precept here beautifully expands into the general. Not rulers only but all men (and here particularly all Christians) are to receive 'their dues.' The precept, in its particular application to money-debts, no doubt counsels immediate payment where possible and desirable. Its spirit, however, *obliges* the Christian only to a watchful avoidance of a *state of debt*, by careful restriction of expenses within means, and a thoughtful care for the interests of the *creditor*, to whom deferred payment may be a serious loss. (See Prov. 3. 27, 28.) But it is obvious that the 'owing' here is not of money only, but of every kind of 'due' from man to man"—C. B.

9. "**If there be any other**—more particular—**commandment**—toward our neighbour, as there are many in the Law—**it is summed up in this**—so that if you was not thinking of it, yet if your heart was full of love, you would fulfil it"—WESLEY.

If there be any other . . . it is summed up. In Lev. 19. 18, sundry laws forbidding injury to one's neighbour are summed up in a saying which contains them all in principle, as it also contains all the commandments of the Decalogue, to which S. Paul here applies it. The several laws which flow from love are thus gathered up again in love, their fountain-head. **Thou shalt love**, etc. (Lev. 19. 18.) See the Lord's own quotation of the words, Matt. 22. 39. (Comp. Jas. 2. 8.)

10. **Therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.** "For the same love which restrains from all evil, incites us to all good"—WESLEY.

"Charity is the bond of perfection, the consummation of every other grace"—SUTCLIFFE. "In the room of burdensome rites and former rules, Jesus Christ gave us the law of faith and love; and thereby made His doctrine a *doctrine of principles*—living, active, pure, universal, eternal"—HARE. "Love is spoken of here only as the means and pledge of the fulfilment of justice. S. Paul has thus closed his exposition of the Christian's duties as a member of civil society"—GODET.

11, 12. **And do this**—"fulfil the law of love in all the instances above mentioned—**knowing the season**—full of grace, but hasting away—**that it is high time to awake out of sleep.** How beautifully is the metaphor carried on! This life, a night; the resurrection, the day; the gospel shining on the heart, the dawn of this day; we are to awake out of sleep, to rise up and throw away our night-clothes, fit only for darkness, and put on new; and, being soldiers, we are to arm and prepare for fight, who are encompassed with so many enemies. The day dawns when we receive faith, and then sleep gives place. Then it is time to rise, to arm, to walk, to work, lest sleep steal upon us again. Final **salvation**, glory, is **nearer** to us now, **than when we first believed.** It is continually advancing, flying forward upon the swiftest wings of time. And that which remains between the present hour and eternity is comparatively but a moment"—WESLEY.

"The apostle now gives a reason for enforcing this and other duties upon his readers. The end of the world itself is near. Like others (comp. 1 Pet. 4. 7; Rev. 22. 20), S. Paul certainly believed that the second coming of Christ was near at hand. This was in strict accordance with Mark 13. 32, and resulted naturally from the peculiar form of the Jewish messianic expectation. A great shock had been given to the disciples by the crucifixion of Him whom they thought to be the Messiah, and though they began to recover from this as soon as they were convinced of His resurrection, they yet could not reconcile themselves to it entirely. The humiliation of the cross was still a stumbling-block to them, *taken alone;* but, falling back upon another portion of their beliefs, they looked to see it supplemented, and its shameful side cancelled, by a second coming 'in power and great glory.' Their previous expectations, vague as they were, led them to regard this as part of the one manifestation of the Messiah, and they did not expect to see a long interval of time interposed"—ELLICOTT. The apostle enforces all his teaching by the assertion of the coming of the day of resurrection; the eternal day of full and complete deliverance from every penalty of sin. (See 1 Thess. 5. 5.) There are many other passages where 'the day' means the Lord's return. **The works of darkness.** (Comp. John 3. 19; Acts 25. 18; 2 Cor. 6. 14; Eph. 5. 11; 1 Pet. 2. 9; 1 John 1. 6.) Every evil habit must cease—must be **cast off**; and the **armour,** or the **weapons of light,** must be **put on.** The whole of this language describes the Christian's earthly experience. The night of his natural condition is past, the brighter day of eternal reward is nigh. The light of the coming day is dispelling the darkness of the night. The glorious light of the gospel shines into our hearts, and will lead us to the heaven of which it is written, "And there shall be night no more" (Rev. 22. 5).

13. **Banqueting**—"luxurious, elegant feasts" —WESLEY.

As in the day—with light all around him. Probably the "light" of 1 John 1. 7; the light of the knowledge of God. (See Ps. 139. 12.) God ever condemns the idle and unmanly, as surely as the envious and the contentious. Such men are out of harmony with the spirit of Christianity.

14. **But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.** "Herein is contained the whole of our salvation. It is a strong and beautiful expression for the most intimate union with Him, and being clothed with all the graces which were in Him. The apostle does not say, Put on purity and sobriety, peacefulness and benevolence; but he says all this, and a thousand times more at once, in saying, **Put on Christ.** And **make not provision**—to raise foolish desires, or, when they are raised already, to satisfy them"—WESLEY.

"To lay aside what belongs to the night of worldly life is only the first part of the preparation to which we are called by the rising of the great day. Our concern must be, besides, to put on the dispositions which are in keeping with so holy and brilliant a light. What is this new equipment which we must haste to substitute for the old? S. Paul indicates it in the expression: **to put on Jesus Christ.** He certainly speaks of Christ here not as our *righteousness,* but as our *sanctification.* (1 Cor. 1. 30.) The toilet of the believer, if one may venture so to speak, in view of the approaching salvation, consists solely in putting on Christ, in appropriating, by habitual communion with Him, all His sentiments and all His manner of acting. He thus becomes for His redeemed ones Himself the robe for the marriage feast. The Christian will be unable to stand before Him except, in so far as he is 'found *in Him*' (Phil. 3. 9)"—GODET. "The essential element of union with Christ is the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit's power is needed continually to maintain and develop the life once bestowed. Each new step in the development of this life may be regarded as a new putting on of Christ, and so may be the subject of special exhortation"—GIFFORD.

CHAPTER XIV.

SECTION XXXIII.—Vers. 1–23. MUTUAL TOLERATION AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. —"The great principle of Christian love commended in the preceding chapter is here applied to enforce the special duty of mutual forbearance in all things indifferent.—1. **Him that is weak**—through needless scruples—**receive**—with all love and courtesy into Christian fellowship—**but not to doubtful disputations** —about questionable points"—WESLEY.

One of the many cautions against disputes, which have so frequently divided the Church of Christ, and so accomplished more mischief than all its enemies. The religion which improves a man's morals is intended to also improve his manners. Respect the conscientious scruples of others, as you wish them to respect yours.

2. **All things**—"all sorts of food, though forbidden by the Law"—WESLEY.

The meaning is, "*who has a faith* firm enough to be able to eat anything without scruple." **Eateth herbs.** This is given as an extreme case. Anxiety to avoid "defilement" of animal food by idol sacrifices, the **weak** man will eat "herbs," that is to say, nothing else.

3. **Despise him that eateth not**—"as overscrupulous or superstitious. **Judge him that eateth**—as profane, or taking undue liberties. **For God hath received him**—into the number of His children notwithstanding this"—WESLEY.

Avoid all such judgment. (Matt. 7. 1–5.) The man who feels himself **strong** must sym-

pathise with rather than look with disdain upon the timidity or anxious doubts of the **weak. For God hath received him**—when he accepted and acknowledged Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Although, it may be, still "weak," he is a "new creature." God has made him one of His own people, and his stronger brother is not to condemn him for his conscientiousness. S. Paul's meaning is, "Condemn not for his freedom the man whom God has taken to Himself and received into His Church in this freedom." (1 Cor. 10. 29; Gal. 5. 13.)

4. **To his own master he standeth or falleth.** "The idea is: it is to the advantage or disadvantage of his master, not of his fellow-servants, that a servant fulfils or neglects his task. The terms 'standing' and 'falling' refer, not to the servant's absolution or condemnation at the judgment, but to his daily faithfulness or unfaithfulness, and to the strengthening or weakening his inward relation to Christ. **Yea, he shall be made to stand** (R.V.). It is as if S. Paul said to the *weak*, 'Thou mayest assure thyself about him; for, even if he is mistaken, his Master is powerful enough to avert the bad effects of a piece of flesh.' This argument applies, of course, only to things which arise exclusively in the domain of the individual conscience"—GODET.

5. **One day above another**—"as new moons, and other Jewish festivals. **Let every man be fully persuaded**—that a thing is lawful, before he does it"—WESLEY.

"The question has been much debated whether the observance of the Sabbath was one of the tenets of the 'weak brethren,' and so whether it is here ruled by S. Paul to be not of permanent moral obligation. (Comp. Col. 2. 16.) If by 'the Sabbath' is meant the last day of the week strictly, the answer to both questions must be *yes*. But, as to the observance of a divinely consecrated weekly rest, it is evident (from Gen. 2. 3; Ex. 20. 8–11) that the institution stands on a very different level from that of the monthly and yearly Mosaic festivals. It is antecedent to all Jewish law, and in the decalogue of Exodus it is based on strictly universal grounds, and placed among the great elements of moral duty. No doubt it is impossible to trace the whole process of transition from the observance of the seventh day to that of the first; but the plain fact remains that the sanctity of the primeval weekly worship-rest was of a kind most unlikely to be *slightingly put aside* by the apostles; and thus, in such places as this and Col. 2. 16, it is far more likely that the wrong opinion in question was that the whole Mosaic code of festivals was still binding in full detail, that therefore the Saturday was the only possible Sabbath, and that it was to be observed by the Rabbinic rules"—C. B.

6. **Regardeth it to the Lord**—"that is, out of a principle of conscience toward God. **To the Lord he doth not regard it**—he also acts from a principle of conscience. **He that eateth not**—flesh—**giveth God thanks**—for His herbs"—WESLEY.

There may be many variations of opinion and of practice, without sin; and their existence should make manifest forbearance and brotherly love, not jealousy and disputation. In everything the example of Christ is to be our model. (See Mark 9. 38–40.) It being presupposed that each is fully assured in his own mind that he is doing right, then he that sets his mind upon the day in question, and is zealous for its observance, does so for the Lord's sake, considering that "this day is holy to the Lord." This passage shows the universal custom of thanksgiving before a meal. (Matt. 15. 36; Acts 27. 35; 1 Cor. 10. 30; 11. 24.)

7. **None of us**—"Christians, in the things we do—**liveth to himself**—is at his own disposal; doeth his own will"—WESLEY.

"Sages of old contended that no sin was ever committed whose consequences rested on the head of the sinner alone, that no man could do ill and his fellows not suffer. They illustrated it thus:—'A vessel sailing from Joppa, carried a passenger who, beneath his berth, cut a hole through the ship's side. When the men of the watch said, "What doest thou, O miserable man?" the offender calmly replied, "What matters it to you? The hole I have made lies under my own berth."' This ancient parable is worthy of the utmost consideration. No man perishes alone in his iniquity; no man can guess the full consequences of his transgression"—SPURGEON.

8. "The whole of this passage is deeply significant of the true object of a Christian's life. We are bound indeed to 'live to others'; but this bond is but a part of the supreme obligation to 'live and die unto the Lord'"—C. B. "Death divides us not from Christ, but brings us home to Him (2 Cor. 5. 6)"—TRAPP.

9. **That He might be Lord both of the dead and living.** "The Christian's relation to his Lord, both in life and in death, is founded on the facts of Christ's personal history. Here S. Paul states one great intended effect of the *mode* of salvation. It was redemption, deliverance by *purchase*, and thus it made the saved the personal possession of the Saviour. It was also, specially, through *death and revival*, with a view to the realisation by His servants that He who, to save them, had *dwelt in both worlds*, was *their Master in both*"—C. B.

10. **Or why dost thou despise thy brother?** "Hitherto the apostle has addressed the weak brother; now he speaks to the stronger"—WESLEY.

"If Christ is the Lord of all, what right has the weak to judge, or the strong to despise his brother? For, instead of judging each other, *all* are to be judged of the Lord. **The judgment seat** here is that of the great day, when 'the books will be opened.' This

passage by no means implies that the Christian must wait till then to know whether he is accepted or not; but it does imply that the judicial declaration of his acceptance, and also of the Lord's verdict upon his life of new obedience, will be made to him as to one *at the bar*, and *before the Judge*"—C. B.

11. **As I live.** "An oath proper to him, because he only possesseth life infinite and independent. It is Christ who is here termed both Lord and God; as it is He to whom we live, and to whom we die. **Every tongue shall confess to God**—shall own Him as their rightful Lord; which shall then only be accomplished in its full extent. The Lord grant we may find mercy in that day; and may it also be imparted to those who have differed from us! yea, to those who have censured and condemned us for things which we have done from a desire to please Him, or refused to do from a fear of offending Him"—WESLEY.

"The certainty of the universal judgment is attested by the solemn declaration of Isa. 45. 23, where for the Hebrew phrase, 'By Myself have I sworn' (Gen. 22. 16), which is literally rendered in LXX., S. Paul, quoting from memory, substitutes the more frequent form, 'I live,' equivalent to 'By My own life I swear.' (Comp. Numb. 14. 21, 22, 28; Deut. 32. 40)"—GIFFORD. "God solemnly proclaims that the day is coming when everyone in the world will do homage and swear allegiance to Him. He refers to the willing submission of the re-created earth. Therefore God claims the homage of all. And, if so, He will require an account from those who resist His claim. Isaiah's words do not refer expressly to the judgment day, but it is evident that they will then be fulfilled. This quotation is not needed for logical proof, but adds greatly to the weight of the argument. Notice the vivid reality depicted by **every knee** and **every tongue**"—BEET.

12. **Each of us**—"emphatic, like 'we all,' 'every knee,' 'every tongue.' If we walk in the light of that day we shall see our own littleness, and be saved from contempt of the least of our brethren; we shall see our heavy responsibility, and be kept back from judging others"—BEET. "S. Paul here applies to every individual in particular what has just been said of all in general. The preceding context signifies, 'Judge not thy brother, for God will judge *him*'; this verse signifies, 'Judge thyself, for God will judge *thee*'"—GODET.

13. **But judge this rather**—"concerning ourselves—**not to lay a stumblingblock**—by moving him to do as thou doest, though against his conscience—**or a scandal**—moving him to hate or judge thee"—WESLEY.

"Wonderfully does this passage show the harmony of true Christian independence with Christian unselfishness. The gospel teaches that man has not merely a *right to his opinion*, a truth which, taken alone, leads to little save mutual repulsion or indifference. It teaches that he is *responsible for his opinion* to the Lord; and this leads his Christian neighbour to thoughtful watchfulness lest *his own example* should lead another astray in this deep matter of forming opinions for which account must be given. (See 1 Cor. 8. throughout for illustrations)"—C. B.

14. **I am assured by the Lord Jesus**—"perhaps by a particular revelation—**that there is nothing**—neither flesh nor herbs—**unclean of itself**—unlawful under the gospel"—WESLEY.

"**I am persuaded** indicates that this conviction has penetrated to his very conscience, and set it practically free from all perplexity. The words **in the Lord Jesus** remind us that it is He who has put an end to the obligations imposed by the Ceremonial Law. The emancipation which faith finds in Him arises not only from His doctrine (Matt. 15. 11, for example), but above all from the redemption wrought by Him. There is nothing except the possession of salvation which can practically give full liberty to the soul. S. Paul says 'everything is clean through Him'"—GODET.

15. **If thy brother is grieved**—"that is, wounded, led into sin. **Destroy not him for whom Christ died.** So we see, he for whom Christ died may be destroyed. **With thy meat.** Do not value thy meat more than Christ valued His life"—WESLEY.

"The Christian should not put a stumbling-block in his brother's way. Not, indeed, that there is anything unclean in itself, but relatively to the person who so regards it, it is unclean. (Therefore the Christian should be careful of what he does.) For to cause distress to another about a mere matter of food is to be uncharitable"—ELLICOTT. "We refrain from that which may injure those whom we love. Therefore, to eat food which may be to our brother an occasion of spiritual loss and sorrow proves that *love* is *no longer* the guiding principle of our life. This verse teaches plainly that there is danger lest the spiritual *sorrow* end in final apostasy. How frequently do those who have fallen away look back to some one wrong step as the cause of all that followed. And the danger is greatest in those who, like this man, are weak in faith. That spiritual injury may lead to eternal death is a strong reason why we should carefully avoid whatever may cause injury. **Christ died**—supports the exhortation by contrasting Him who died to save with those whose indulgence destroys their brethren. The verse clearly implies the possibility of the death of those for whom Christ died, of those who are now, as S. Paul assumes throughout, servants of Christ. If we were sure that God would not permit the injury occasioned by our conduct to go to the length of final ruin, we could not be kept back from it by fear of destroying him for whom Christ died"—BEET.

16. "**Let not then your good** and lawful

liberty **be evil spoken of** by being offensive to others"—WESLEY.

Let no uncharitable use of your liberty give occasion to the weak in faith to condemn and speak evil of that which is to you a real good. Men must not use their liberty so as to provoke the indignation and blame of their weaker brethren. (Comp. 1 Cor. 8. 9–11, and 10. 29, 30.)

17. **For the kingdom of God**—"that is, true religion, does not consist in external observances. **But** in **righteousness**—the image of God stamped on the heart; the love of God and man, accompanied with the **peace** that passeth all understanding, **and joy in the Holy Ghost**"—WESLEY.

"**The kingdom of God.** (See 1 Cor. 4. 20; 6. 9, 10; Gal. 5. 21; Eph. 5. 5; Col. 4. 11; 1 Thess. 2. 12; 2 Thess. 1. 5; 2 Tim. 4. 18.) In these passages (as generally in the New Testament) the radical meaning of the phrase is always the same—the reign of God over the redeemed man, revealed and effectuated by the gospel. Its special meaning here is, the dignity and privilege (here or hereafter) of the subjects of the kingdom. *Q.d.* 'What we gain as the subjects of the kingdom of God is not freedom to eat what we please, but the possession of righteousness, peace, and joy'"—MOULE. "Religion is the product of the soul. It is a vital, mental state. It is a living power in the individual man"—BEECHER. "To be godly is to be godlike. The full accord of the soul with His character, in whom, as their native home, dwell 'whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,' and the full conformity of the will to His sovereign will who is the life of our lives—this, and nothing shallower, nothing narrower, is religion in its perfection; and the measure in which we have attained to this harmony with God is the measure in which we are Christians. As two stringed instruments may be so tuned to one keynote that, if you strike the one, a faint, ethereal echo is heard from the other, which blends undistinguishably with its parent sound; so drawing near to God, and brought into unison with His mind and will, our responsive spirits vibrate in accord with His, and give forth tones, low and thin indeed, but still repeating the mighty music of heaven"—MACLAREN.

18. **In these**—"righteousness, peace, and joy. **Men**—wise and good men"—WESLEY.

"You are to accept as a Christian everyone whose life and disposition are Christlike, no matter how heretical the denomination may be to which he belongs. Wherever you find faith and righteousness and love and joy in the Holy Ghost—**these things**—you are to look upon them as the stamped coin of Christ's kingdom, and as a legal tender from God to you"—BEECHER. "**Acceptable to God.** He is a happy man that can be acquitted by himself in private, in public by others, in both by God"—TRAPP.

19. **Peace** and **edification** are closely joined. Practical divinity tends equally to peace and to edification. Controversial divinity less directly tends to edification, although sometimes, as they of old, we cannot build without it. (Neh. 4. 17)"—WESLEY.

"Practical lesson from the above—**Pursue** (as in ch. 12. 13). **Of peace**—explains 'peace' in ver. 17. **Edification** (*lit.* 'building up'). The 'work of God' in us is often represented as a building. (Ch. 15. 20; 1 Cor. 3. 9; Eph. 11. 21 f.) It makes most progress in those who are at 'peace' with each other. Since the approval both of God and of our fellows depends, not upon what we eat, but upon righteousness, peace, etc., let us do those things which tend to peace and to advance God's work in each other. (So ch. 15. 2.) To act thus is (ver. 15) to work according to love"—BEET. "The apostle considered *that* gift most desirable by which men might most edify one another. The most trifling act which is marked by usefulness to others is nobler in God's sight than the most brilliant accomplishment of genius. To teach a few Sunday-school children, week after week, commonplace simple truths—persevering in spite of dulness and mean capacities—is a more glorious occupation than the highest meditations or creations of genius which edify or instruct only our own solitary soul"—ROBERTSON.

20. **The work of God**—"which **He** builds in the soul by faith, and in the Church by concord. **It is evil to that man who eateth with offence**—so as to offend another thereby"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul is not speaking here of the evil which the strong believer does to himself, but of that which he does to his brother, carried away into sin. We may be astonished to find the apostle regarding the salvation of the weak as compromised by this one trespass. But is not one voluntary sin interposing between Christ and the believer enough to disunite them, and if this sin is not blotted out, and the state is prolonged, to plunge him again in death?"—GODET.

21. **Thy brother stumbleth**—"by imitating thee against his conscience, contrary to righteousness. **Or is offended**—at what thou doest to the loss of his peace. **Or made weak**—hesitating between imitation and abhorrence, to the loss of that joy in the Lord which was his strength"—WESLEY.

"This verse is the summing up of the whole warning addressed to the strong from ver. 13. Here S. Paul teaches, there is nothing except what is honourable, in abstaining when we sacrifice our liberty to charity"—GODET. **It is good**—is worthy and noble conduct in one who denies himself rather than offend a brother. (1 Cor. 8. 13.) S. Paul does not limit his maxim to the eating or drinking of things which cause offence, but extends it to all actions which are in themselves morally indifferent.

For a still stronger expression of the noble principle of this verse, see 1 Cor. 8. 12.

22. **Hast thou faith**—"that all things are pure? **Have it to thyself before God**—in circumstances like these, keep it to thyself, and do not offend others by it. **Happy is he that condemneth not himself**—by an improper use of even innocent things! and happy he who is free from a doubting conscience! He that has this may **allow** the thing, yet **condemn himself** for it"—WESLEY.

The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth (R.V.). Dr. TAYLOR says on the first part of the verse, "The apostle means, 'I own thou hast a right persuasion concerning thy Christian liberty; and I advise thee to hold that persuasion steadfastly, with respect to thyself, in the sight of God.'" And Dr. CLARKE has written of the latter part, **Happy is he**, etc., "That man only can enjoy *peace of conscience* who acts according to the full persuasion which God has given him of the lawfulness of his conduct; whereas he must be miserable who allows himself in the practice of anything for which his conscience upbraids and accuses him. Take good heed that conscience **approve** what passions **allow**."

23. **Because it is not of faith**—"he does not believe it lawful; and, in all these cases, **whatsoever is not of faith is sin**—whatever a man does without a full persuasion of its lawfulness, it is 'sin' to him"—WESLEY.

"**Is damned** (R.V. 'Condemned'). What a man cannot do as Christ's redeemed one, and in the joy of His salvation, must not be done at all. Otherwise this act, of which faith is not the soul, becomes sin, and may lead to the result indicated (ver. 20), the total destruction of God's work in us"—GODET. "Whatever a man does without a *full persuasion* of its lawfulness (see ver. 22) is to him **sin**; for he does it under a conviction that he may be wrong in so doing. Therefore if he makes a distinction in his own conscience between different kinds of meats, and yet eats of all indifferently, he is a *sinner* before God; because he eats either through *false shame, base compliance,* or an *unbridled appetite;* and any of these is in itself a *sin* against the sincerity, ingenuousness, and self-denying principles of the gospel of Christ"—CLARKE.

CHAPTER XV.

SECTION XXXIV.—Vers. 1-13. THE LORD'S EXAMPLE TO HIS PEOPLE.—1. **We who are strong**—"of a clearer judgment, and free from these scruples. **And not to please ourselves**—without any regard to others"—WESLEY.

"Because of the weakness of some we put a restraint upon ourselves, and we thus save them from that which might crush them into the dust. Their weakness is thus a burden which we **bear**, a burden light to us because of the strength which faith gives, but dangerously heavy to them. (Comp. Gal. 6. 1 f.) Thus in some small sense we are permitted to imitate Him 'who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.' Where mutual love is, weakness gives one a claim to help from the strong"—BEET.

2. **For his good.** "This is a general word; **edification** is one species of good"—WESLEY.

"There are two ways of seeking to **please our neighbour.** In the one we are self-seeking; we seek to satisfy our interest or self-love. In the other we seek the good of our neighbour himself. It is this latter way only which the apostle recommends. The life of S. Paul was all through the realisation of this precept. (Comp. 1 Cor. 10. 33, 34)"—GODET.

3. "**But** bore not only the infirmities, but **reproaches**, of His brethren; and so fulfilled that scripture"—WESLEY.

"Reason why we should please, not ourselves, but others: it develops an argument suggested by 'Christ died.' (Ch. 14. 15.) If Christ instead of gratifying self submitted willingly to sufferings caused by His countrymen's inexcusable hostility to God, in order to save them from the well-merited consequence of their hostility, can we refuse to save a brother and a servant of Christ from the terrible danger to which his weakness exposes him, by submitting to a restraint not otherwise needful?"—BEET.

4. **Aforetime** — "in the Old Testament. **That we through patience and consolation of the Scriptures may have hope** — that through the consolation which God gives us by these we may have patience and a joyful hope"—WESLEY.

"The translation from ver. 3 to ver. 4 is this: 'If I thus apply this saying of the Psalmist to Christ and ourselves, it is because, in general, all Scripture was written to instruct and strengthen us'" — GODET. "**Written aforetime.** This refers not only to the quotation from Psalm 69, but to all the *Old Testament Scripture.* And, from what he says here of them, we learn that God had not intended them merely for those generations in which they were first delivered, but for the instruction of all the succeeding generations of mankind"—CLARKE.

5. "**According** to the power of **Christ Jesus**"—WESLEY.

"From patience and comfort, and the hope of glory, S. Paul passes at once to the duty of affectionate unanimity. The stronger was the sense of peace and hope in each individual believer, the more would the believing community be lifted above the bitterness and littleness of secondary controversies"—S. C.

6. **That ye** — "both Jews and Gentiles, believing **with one mind**, and confessing **with one mouth**"—WESLEY.

"Further purpose to be gained by the 'one

mind'; and consequent by a further motive for harmony. **With one accord**, else the **one mouth** is hypocrisy. But where there is inward harmony, outward union will follow as its suitable expression. **Glorify.** (Ch. 1. 21.) We glorify God with our mouth, when by telling His greatness and goodness we express our own admiration, and call forth admiration of God in those who hear us. Our oneness of heart and voice, being evidently God's work, itself shows forth His glory. (John 17. 21)"—BEET. **Glorify God**—whose praise is the ultimate aim of all His gifts to His people. (Comp. on ch. 11. 33–36; see, on the holy unanimity enjoined here, Phil. 3. 15. 16.)

7. **Receive ye one another**—"weak and strong, with mutual love"—WESLEY.

"The compassionate welcome which Christ has given to all the members of the Church individually ought to be perpetually reproduced in the welcome of goodwill and tenderness which they give one another in all the relations of life. And if there is some concession to make, some antipathy to surmount, some difference of opinion to allow, some injury to forgive, one thing ought to lift us above all these conveyances—the thought that we are thereby labouring for the glory of God, who received us in grace through Jesus Christ. Mutual love ought to reign supremely in a church wholly composed of the Lord's well-beloved"—GODET.

8. **Now I say.** "The apostle here shows how Christ received us. **Christ Jesus**—'Jesus' is the name, 'Christ' the surname. The latter was first known to the Jews, the former to the Gentiles. Therefore He is styled *Jesus Christ*, when the words stand in the common, natural order. When the order is inverted, as here, the office of Christ is more solemnly considered. **Was a servant**—of His Father. **Of the circumcision**—for the salvation of the circumcised, the Jews. **For the truth of God**—to manifest the truth and fidelity of God"—WESLEY.

"That his statement, and the proof of it, are addressed more especially, though not exclusively to the strong in faith, is evident both from the repetition of the phrase used in ch. 14. 1, and also from the great prominence given in the following context to the reception of the Gentiles, to whom 'the strong' for the most part belonged"—GIFFORD. "The distinction of Jews and Gentiles, so prominent in this Epistle, but lost sight of since ch. 11, here meets us again. It suggests that the weak in faith were chiefly Jews, and the strong in faith chiefly Gentiles. (Comp. Acts 21. 20.) If so, the united praise of weak and strong, which in ver. 6, S. Paul desires, would also be the united praise of Jews and Gentiles. And if so, the quotations which follow have a very evident bearing upon the matter in hand, viz. our treatment of the weaker brethren. We have thus an explanation of the apparently sudden change of subject"—BEET.

9. **As it is written**—"in Ps. 18, where the Gentiles and Jews are spoken of as joining in the worship of the God of Israel"—WESLEY.

S. Paul is appealing more especially to "the strong," *i.e.* to the Gentiles, and in order to move them to greater forbearance and goodwill towards their weaker Jewish brethren, he shows that Christ Himself became in all things a Jew to fulfil God's promises to the Jews, and thereby to extend His mercy to the Gentiles. Even for Gentiles "salvation is of the Jews," not secured by covenant, but granted of free mercy.

10. See Deut. 32. 43.

11. See Ps. 117. 1. Both clauses are addressed to Gentile nations.

12. **There shall be the Root of Jesse.** "That kings and the Messiah should spring from his house, was promised to Jesse before it was to David. **In Him shall the Gentiles hope**—who before had been 'without hope' (Eph. 2. 12)"—WESLEY.

"**The root**—which lives unseen in the ground after the trunk has been cut down, and from which, after a time, a new sprout rises up to be an ensign to the people. The passage evidently refers to Christ and to the final victory, and is an express prophecy that in the blessings of the kingdom of Christ the Gentiles will share"—BEET. "The quotation is from Isa. 11. 10. The literal meaning of the Hebrew is: 'And in that day there shall be a shoot of Jesse, which shall be set up as a banner for the peoples.' . . . For the figure of an erected *banner*, the LXX. have substituted the idea of a person rising up to reign; S. Paul quotes after them. In meaning it comes to the same thing. With what emotion does S. Paul refer to all these passages, each of which was the motto, as it were, of his own work among the Gentiles. One understands, in reading such quotations, what he said in ver. 4, undoubtedly from his own experience of the patience and consolation which are kept up in the believer by the daily use of the Scriptures, as well as of the ever new hope which they inspire. This idea of *hope* is that which is expressed in the prayer uttered (ver. 13). For this adoration of the Gentiles, to which the four preceding quotations refer, is the fruit not only of the enjoyment of present blessings, but also, and above all, of the hope of future blessings"—GODET.

13. **Now the hope of God**—"a glorious title of God, but till now unknown to the heathens; for their goddess Hope, like their other idols, was nothing; whose temple at Rome was burned by lightning. It was, indeed, built again not long after, but was again burned to the ground"—WESLEY.

"**The God of hope**—*i.e.* of *our* hope, the special hope in question; the Christian's hope of glory. **That ye may abound in the hope.** S. Paul takes up the word of the last quotation,

and applies it in this expression of holy and loving desire. He ceases now to speak of controversy, and looks joyfully heavenward. On the whole verse, comp. ch. 5. 1–5. **In believing.** The word seems to sum up the great argument of the Epistle. Here closes its course of explicit instruction, whether concerning doctrine or practice. The remainder is devoted to personal and other incidental topics. Meyer calls the passage (ch. 15. 14–33) the 'Epilogue' of the Epistle"—C. B. "The last words: **the power of the Holy Spirit,** point out once more (as in ch. 14. 17) the true power which they ought to seek, in opposition to the factitious power by which one exalts himself so easily above others. The former unites, for it strives to serve (ch. 15. 1), whereas the second disunites"—GODET. "S. Paul begs us to receive them, because the united praise of them and us will show forth the grandeur of God. He reminds us that for this end Christ received us; that this united song of praise was foretold in ancient prophecy; and that peace with our brethren will increase the hope with which, by God's grace, we already look forward to the coming glory"—BEET.

SECTION XXXV.—Vers. 14–33. S. PAUL'S APOSTOLATE AND WORK.—14. There are several conclusions of this Epistle. The first begins at this verse; the second, ch. 16. 1; the third, ver. 17; the fourth, ver. 21; and the fifth, ver. 25. "**Ye are full of goodness**—by being created anew. **And filled with all knowledge**—by long experience of the things of God. **To admonish**—to instruct and confirm"—WESLEY.

The apostle passes on from exhortation to an explanation of his own motives and intentions. The rest of the Epistle contains personal matters between S. Paul and the Romans (ch. 15. 14–33); salutations and doxology (ch. 16). MOULE says: "In this verse and the next we have an echo, as it were, of ch. 1. 8, 11, 12, 15. What S. Paul says here is no insincere diplomatic compliment, but the well-grounded conviction of his mind as to the Roman Christians *as a body*. And it is quite in harmony with the substance and tone of the Epistle, which is evidently written for those who were no novices in Christian doctrine, and who were also comparatively free from such faults of Christian practice as defiled, for instance, the Corinthian church. He wrote to them as he had written, just because they were in a state of spiritual vigour and maturity. Perhaps, too, he instinctively *expresses* this conviction the more strongly, because he is writing to the church of the imperial metropolis, the mighty centre of influence."

15. **Because of the grace**—"that is, because I am an Apostle of the Gentiles"—WESLEY.

"**As putting you in mind.** He has been telling them of something they did not know before, but merely reminding them of what they knew. And he claims the right to do this because of the special grace given to him as an apostle. The judaising section in the church at Rome did not go so far as that in Galatia. It recognised the apostleship of S. Paul, and he knew that he could safely appeal to this recognition"—ELLICOTT.

16. **The offering up of the Gentiles**—"as living sacrifices"—WESLEY.

BEET says of vers. 14–16: "Notice the courtesy and modesty of S. Paul. He apologises for the earnest tones which in some parts of his letter seems to betray a consciousness of superiority; and assures his readers that he does not undervalue their goodness, and their ability to instruct each other. He does but recall to their mind what they already know. And his boldness in doing so is prompted, not so much by their need as by God's undeserved kindness to himself, by the sacredness of the office to which God has called him, and by God's purpose to make him a channel of blessing to the Gentiles, of blessing wrought, not by S. Paul, but by the Spirit of God."

17. **I have whereof to glory through Jesus Christ**—"all my glorying is in and through Him"—WESLEY.

"This is really the title on which I rest my claim. I *can* boast of a specially sacred office and ministry given to me by Christ, and not merely of my own devising. The sphere of this office is a religious sphere, it relates to 'the things pertaining to God'"—ELLICOTT.

18. **By word**—"by the power of the Spirit. **By deed**—namely, through 'mighty signs and wonders'"—WESLEY.

The apostle explains and confirms the limit of his glorying in ver. 17 as a "glorying in Christ Jesus." "I will glory," he means, only of what has been accomplished, not by me, but by Christ through me. This verse may be paraphrased, "To justify this exultation, I *need not presumptuously intrude* on the work of others, putting in a false claim to credit for that work; I need only speak of what Christ has done through my personal efforts, both of preaching and miracle, in bringing Gentile converts to Him," etc.

19. **Through mighty signs.** "The 'might of signs' is the might (of influence and effect) resulting from the display of miracle. **Signs and wonders.** Same words as Matt. 24. 24; Mark 13. 22; John 4. 48; Acts 2. 19, 22; 15. 12; 2 Cor. 12. 12; 2 Thess. 2. 9; Heb. 2. 4. There is, no doubt, a difference of precise meaning between the words; but taken together they are a summary phrase for supernatural works of all kinds"—C. B.

20. **Not where Christ had been named.** "These places he generally declined, though not altogether, having an holy *ambition* (so the Greek word means) to make the first proclamation of the gospel in places where it was quite unheard of, in spite of all the difficulty and dangers that attended it. **Lest I should only**

build upon another man's foundation. The providence of God seemed in a special manner, generally, to prevent this, though not entirely, lest the enemies of the apostle, who sought every occasion to set light by him, should have had room to say that he was behind other apostles, not being sufficient for planting of churches himself, but only for preaching where others had been already; or that he declined the more difficult part of the ministry"—WESLEY.

"To confirm the reality of his apostleship to the Gentiles, S. Paul has referred to the successes with which his activity thus far had been crowned in the east; and now, to pass to the idea of his future work in the west and of his visit to Rome, he recalls the principle by which he has always been guided in the direction of his labours. An apostle is not a simple pastor or evangelist; his mission is, as S. Paul himself says (1 Cor. 3. 10), to '*lay* the foundation' on which others after him may build, consequently to preach where others have not yet come. S. Paul might have said 'to preach the gospel where Christ has not yet been named,' but he prefers to give his expression a still more negative turn, and to say more precisely, 'to preach the gospel, not where He has been named.' He wishes to preach the gospel, but not where anyone has done so before him"—GODET. "The apostle set it before him as a point of honour, not merely not to carry forward a work that others had begun, but to build up the whole edifice from the foundation himself"—ELLICOTT.

22. **Therefore I have been long hindered from coming to you**—"among whom Christ had been named"—WESLEY.

"My considering it a point of honour to build on no other man's foundation; and, finding that the gospel has been long ago planted at Rome, I have been prevented from going thither, purposing rather to spend my time and strength in preaching where Christ has not, as yet, been proclaimed"—CLARKE.

23. **Having no longer place in these parts**—"where Christ has now been preached in every city"—WESLEY.

"The work had been finished, so far as the apostle was concerned, in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. The churches had been founded, and fairly set going; and now he felt it his duty to go on to new fields, his duty in this respect also falling in with his wishes, as it would bring him to Rome"—ELLICOTT.

24. **Into Spain**—"where the gospel had not yet been preached. **If first I may be somewhat satisfied with your company.** How remarkable is the modesty with which he speaks! They might rather desire to be satisfied with his. 'Somewhat satisfied'—intimating the shortness of his stay; or, perhaps, that Christ alone can thoroughly satisfy the soul"—WESLEY.

"Before setting out for the west, the apostle has yet a task to fulfil; he proposes to seal by a solemn act the union between the two portions of the Church in that part of the world which he is about to leave. Such is the object of a last visit which he yet reckons on making to Jerusalem. He must transmit to the mother church of Jerusalem, on behalf of the churches of Greece, the fruits of a collection which they have made spontaneously for it. The apostle is concerned to inform the Christians of Rome on this point, not only because this journey will detain him some time yet in the east, but especially because it may involve him in danger, and because he has a request to address to them in this relation. Such are the perfectly natural contents of the end of the chapter"—GODET.

25. **"I go unto Jerusalem.** (See Acts 19. 21; 24. 17.) **To minister,** *i.e.* to carry temporal relief. He gives a good, because wholly unselfish, reason for the new delay of his visit to Rome. This very journey to Jerusalem was, in fact, in God's purpose, his way to Rome"—C. B.

26. **The poor of the saints that are in Jerusalem.** "It can by no means be inferred from this expression, that the community of goods among the Christians was then ceased. All that can be gathered from it is, that in this time of extreme dearth (Acts 11. 28, 29) some of the church in Jerusalem were in want; the rest being barely able to subsist themselves, but not to supply the necessities of their brethren"—WESLEY.

Lit. **For the poor among the saints.** "It cannot, therefore, be inferred from this that the church at Jerusalem consisted entirely of poor. Still, from the first it would seem as if persons like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, and Mary the mother of Mark, were exceptions, and we know that the church at Jerusalem suffered severely during the famine in the reign of Claudius. Wealthier churches, such as those of Macedonia and Greece, would naturally be glad to have the opportunity of sending relief to the mother church, from which they might be said to be derived themselves. S. Paul himself proceeds to urge this very argument. From Jerusalem went forth the gospel which had been preached in Greece and Macedonia, and it would be but a small and due return if some of the superfluous wealth of those more favoured regions found its way to Jerusalem"—ELLICOTT.

27. **It hath pleased them; and they are their debtors**—"that is, they are bound to it, in justice, as well as mercy. **Spiritual things**—by the preaching of the gospel. **Carnal things**—things needful for the body"—WESLEY.

"Alms are called righteousness. (Ps. 112. 9.) Being but stewards of what we have, we owe it there where our great Master orders us to dispose of it; but here there was a special debt owing; the Gentiles were greatly beholden to the Jews, and were bound in gratitude to be

very kind to them. From Israel came Christ Himself according to the flesh; out of the same flock came the prophets and apostles and first preachers of the gospel. Thus did the Gentiles **partake of their spiritual things**, and therefore their duty is to **minister unto them in carnal things**"—M. HENRY.

28. **When I have sealed to them this fruit**—"when I have safely delivered to them, as under seal, this fruit of their brethren's love—**I will go by you into Spain.** Such was his design; but it does not appear that S. Paul went into Spain. There are often holy purposes in the minds of good men, which are overruled by the providence of God so as never to take effect. And yet they are precious in the sight of God"—WESLEY.

"**This fruit**—of the success of my ministry and of your conversion to God. **I will come by you into Spain.** This was his desire; he had fully purposed it, if God should see meet to permit him; but it does not appear that he ever went. (See ver. 24)"—CLARKE. "There are often holy purposes in the minds of good men, which are overruled by the providence of God. It is evident from this, and from ver. 28, as well as from ch. 1. 10, 11, that S. Paul wrote this Epistle while he was at liberty, and before Christ had told him, as mentioned Acts 23. 11, that he must testify of Him at Rome; and before he was constrained to appeal to Cæsar, as is related Acts 25. 11, for in this Epistle he speaks still of his journey to Rome as of a voluntary undertaking, not supposing that he should be sent thither as a prisoner"—BENSON.

30. **I beseech you by the love of the Spirit**—"that is, by the love which is the genuine fruit of the Spirit—**to strive together with me in your prayers.** He must pray himself, who would have others strive together with him in prayer. Of all the apostles, S. Paul alone is recorded to desire the prayers of the faithful for himself. And this he generally does in the conclusions of his Epistles; yet not without making a difference. For he speaks in one manner to them whom he treats as his children, with the gravity or even the severity of a father, such as Timothy, Titus, the Corinthians, and Galatians; in another, to them whom he treats rather like equals, such as the Romans, Ephesians, Thessalonians, Colossians, Hebrews"—WESLEY.

"A touching request for his readers' prayers, supported by an appeal to their loyalty to their **Master, Jesus Christ**, whose work S. Paul is doing, and to the **love** with which **the Spirit** fills their hearts. 'Love' to our fellow-men, as in ch. 12. 9; 13. 10; 14. 15; 1 Cor. 13, and always when not otherwise defined. **Of the Spirit.** It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5. 22). Therefore, to refuse S. Paul's appeal is to resist the Spirit. **Wrestle** (*lit.* 'contend as in public games'). It sets forth, better than any other English word, the intense efforts of the combatants. Same word (Col. 1. 29; 4. 12; Luke 13. 24). In prayer we struggle with all our spiritual power against unbelief, and against our spiritual foes. S. Paul begs his readers to join with him and thus help him in this conflict"—BEET.

31. **That I may be delivered.** "He is thus urgent from a sense of the importance of his life to the Church. Otherwise he would have rejoiced 'to depart, and to be with Christ.' **And that my service may be acceptable**—in spite of all their prejudices; to the end the Jewish and Gentile believers may be knit together in tender love"—WESLEY.

"There was need for prayer lest the prejudices of the Jewish Christians should lead them to misunderstand the kindness of the Gentile believers"—BEET. "The enemies to be removed are, above all, the unbelieving Jews. It is to them the first **that** refers; the second intimates that there are other adversaries within the Church itself; they are 'those thousands of Jews who have believed' (Acts 21. 20, 21), and who have been filled with prejudices against S. Paul's person and work. All those hearts must be prepared by God Himself to receive well the offering which is about to be brought them"—GODET.

32. **That I may come to you**—"this refers to the former, **with joy** to the latter, part of the preceding verse"—WESLEY.

This verse gives a further purpose of these prayers. **In joy**—seeing the success of my ministry for the Jewish Christians (2 Cor. 9. 12 ff.). **Through the will of God**—as in ch. 1. 10. **With you be refreshed** (ch. 1. 12). He looked forward to rest in the bosom of the Roman church after the conflict he foresaw at Jerusalem. The earnestness of S. Paul's request proves his firm belief that prayer avails to rescue us even from the violence of bad men; and, therefore, that such violence is under God's control. (Comp. 2 Cor. 1. 11; also Eph. 6. 19; Col. 4. 3.)

33. "**The God of peace be with you.** The whole object of the Epistle is to establish peace between the believing Jews and Gentiles, and to show them their mutual obligations, and the infinite mercy of God to both; and he concludes with praying that the God of peace—He from whom it comes, and by whom it is preserved—may be for ever with them"—CLARKE. "It is quite needless to take this verse as an *intended close* to the Epistle. We may be sure that some personal greetings must have been all along in S. Paul's intention; and none have yet been written. The wish here expressed quite naturally follows the previous context, and also marks the pause before the commendation and salutations now to follow"—C. B.

CHAPTER XVI.

SECTION XXXVI.—Vers. 1–27. SALUTATIONS AND WARNING.—1. **I commend unto you Phebe**—"the bearer of this letter. **A servant.**

The Greek word is a 'deaconess.' **Of the church in Cenchrea.** In the apostolic age some grave and pious women were appointed deaconesses in every church. It was their office, not to teach publicly, but to visit the sick, the women in particular, and to minister to them both in their temporal and spiritual necessities"—WESLEY.

This is the only mention of Phebe. Probably she was the bearer of the Epistle to Rome, hence the special prominence given to her name. SUTCLIFFE says: "A deaconess in the oriental churches corresponded with a matron of the synagogue. She was ordained; and their forms of ordination still exist in the Greek Church. They prophesied, and helped the apostles in the Lord. They visited the sick among the women, to whom ministers had no access. Such offices were essential in all the oriental churches." **Cenchrea** — the eastern port of Corinth. Mentioned also in Acts 18. 18.

2. **In the Lord** — "that is, for the Lord's sake, and in a Christian manner. S. Paul seems fond of this expression"—WESLEY.

As becometh saints (Phil. 2. 29)—"with all the attention and delicacy due from the Church to a saintly woman. She had further claim on their attention from the fact that she had given care and succour to many, including the writer himself."

3. **Priscilla and Aquila**—mentioned also in Acts 18. 2, 18, 26; 1 Cor. 16. 16; and Tim. 4. "Priscilla is an example of what a married woman may do, for the general service of the Church, in conjunction with home duties, just as Phebe is the type of the unmarried servant of the Church, or deaconess"—HOWSON.

4. **Who have for my life,** as it were, **laid down their own necks** — "that is, exposed themselves to the utmost danger. **But likewise all the churches of the Gentiles**—even that at Rome, for preserving so valuable a life" —WESLEY.

It is here plainly implied that Aquila and his wife had risked their lives for S. Paul's. Such self-sacrifice of Christian love well deserved remembrance, and the **thanks**, not only of the apostle, but of **all the churches**, to whom the apostle had been preserved. We do not know where or when these Christians had so proved helpful to S. Paul.

5. **Salute the church that is in their house.** "Aquila had been driven from Rome in the reign of Claudius, but was now returned, and performed the same part there which Caius did at Corinth. (Ch. 16. 23.) Where any Christian had a large house, there they all assembled together; though as yet the Christians at Rome had neither bishops nor deacons, so far were they from any shadow of papal power. Nay, there does not appear to have been then in the whole city any more than one of these domestic churches. Otherwise there can be no doubt but S. Paul would have saluted them also. **Epenætus.** Although the apostle had never been at Rome, yet had he many acquaintances there. But here is no mention of Linus or Clemens; whence it appears, they did not come to Rome till after this. **The first-fruits of Asia**—the first convert in the proconsular Asia"—WESLEY.

There are other scriptures which show that **the church** assembled for divine worship, and for Christian fellowship, in private houses. (See 1 Cor. 16. 19; Col. 4. 15; Philem. 2.) On this passage GODET says: "What is certain is, that these two persons are saluted here, not only as particular friends of S. Paul, but because of the important part they played in the work of his apostleship. The passage (Acts 18. 24–28) presents an example of their activity, and of the powerful influence they exercised; and it is most probable that what they had been at Ephesus, they had also been at Rome, from the day when they returned to it. In a word, they were evangelists of the first order. This is what recommends them to the respectful attention of the Church, and assigns them the first rank in this list of apostolic salutations. This circumstance throws light on the character of the whole list."

7. **Who are of note among the apostles.** "They seem to have been some of the most early converts. **Fellow-prisoners** — for the gospel's sake"—WESLEY.

My kinsmen. Probably S. Paul means no more than that they were Jews; for, in ch. 9. 3, he calls all the Jews 'his kinsmen according to the flesh'"—CLARKE. **Were in Christ**—*i.e.* had become Christians.

9. **Our fellow-labourer** — "mine and Timothy's (ver. 21)"—WESLEY.

Our helper in Christ—the "helper," that is, both of S. Paul and of the Roman church by her efforts in spreading the gospel.

10. **Apelles, approved in Christ.** "Some suppose the 'Appelles' was the same with 'Apollos'"—CLARKE.

11. **Those of the family of Aristobulus and Narcissus, who are in the Lord.** "It seems only part of their families were converted. Probably some of them were not known to S. Paul by face, but only by character. Faith does not create moroseness, but courtesy, which even the gravity of an apostle did not hinder" —WESLEY.

Narcissus is an historical name. There had been a famous Narcissus, a freed man and favourite of Claudius, who had been put to death three or four years before this Epistle was written. His household would naturally pass into the hands of the emperor, though still keeping his name. In the case of Aristobulus, the transference would be effected by bequest, in that of Narcissus by confiscation. Many instances of both methods occur in the history and records of the time. This interpretation, and the identification of Aristobulus and Narcissus with the historical bearers of those names, is some way short of certain, but

may be said to have some degree of probability"—ELLICOTT.

12. "**Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa**—probably they were two sisters"—WESLEY.

It is supposed they were attached to the court, who had been distinguished in the service of the Church.

13. **Salute Rufus**—"perhaps the same that is mentioned (Mark 15. 21)—**and his mother and mine.** This expression may only denote the tender care which Rufus's mother had taken of him"—WESLEY.

"**Chosen in the Lord.** HOFMANN, judging from what follows, understands, 'The man whom I have specially chosen as my brother in the Lord.' But it more probably means *distinguished*, excellent, as in 2 John 1. 13. **His mother and mine** prove that S. Paul was united to this family by the closest ties—that he had even lived in it"—GODET.

14. **Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon**, etc. "He seems to join those together, who were joined by kindred, nearness of habitation, or any other circumstance. It could not but encourage the poor especially, to be saluted by name, who perhaps did not know that the apostle had ever heard of them. It is observable that whilst the apostle forgets none who are worthy, yet he adjusts the nature of his salutation to the degrees of worth in those whom he salutes"—WESLEY.

"Of the names in this and the next verse, **Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus, Julia, Nereus** (with the corresponding female name **Nereis**) all occur with more or less frequency in inscriptions relating to the household. Hermas and Hermes are very common. The first is a contraction from several longer forms. Patrobas is contracted from Patrobius. We find that a freed man of Nero's who bore this name was put to death by Galba; but the person saluted by S. Paul is more likely to have been a dependant of his than the man himself. Taking the list of names as a whole, and comparing them with the inscriptions, we may—without going so far as to identify individuals, which would be precarious ground—nevertheless note the general coincidence with the mention of 'Cæsar's household' in Phil. 4. 22"—ELLICOTT.

15. **Salute all the saints.** "Had S. Peter been at Rome, S. Paul would doubtless have saluted him by name; since no one in this numerous catalogue was of an eminence comparable to his. But if he was not then at Rome, the whole Roman tradition, with regard to the succession of their bishops, fails in the most fundamental article"—WESLEY.

"**The saints which are with them**—perhaps forming, with those whose names are given, a 'church,' such as that of ver. 5. If so, the next verse may similarly be a greeting to a similar district 'church,' meeting under another roof. At the close of this long roll of names we cannot but remark on it as a noble and beautiful illustration of the 'family affection of Christianity.' It is often observed that a peculiar charm attaches to successions of names, 'Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore;' and such a rhythmical charm is not absent here. But far above it is the charm of the pure, intense, spiritual intimacy of hearts, an intimacy created by the possession of 'one Lord, one hope,' and which, with the advent of the gospel, touched the weary world as a new and unknown visitor from heaven"—C. B.

16. **Salute one another with an holy kiss**—"termed by S. Peter, 'the kiss of love' (1 Pet. 5. 14). So the ancient Christians concluded all their solemn offices; the men saluting the men, and the women the women. And this apostolical custom seems to have continued for some ages in all Christian churches"—WESLEY.

"As a mark of brotherly feeling among themselves, S. Paul desires those who are assembled at the reading of his Epistle to greet each other in a Christian way. It is to be their own act, and not a salutation coming from him"—ELLICOTT. "**Salute, with an holy kiss.** We may be assured that in the apostolic churches all was done with order and dignity. This is what is expressed by the epithet 'holy,' which recurs in 1 Cor. 16. 20; 2 Cor. 13. 12; and 1 Thess. 5. 26. Probably the president of the assembly gave the kiss to the brother who sat next him, and he to his neighbour, while the same thing took place on the part of the women"—GODET.

17. **Mark them who cause divisions**—"such there were, therefore, at Rome also. **Avoid them**—avoid all unnecessary intercourse with them"—WESLEY.

"It is probable he means either those Jews who pleaded the necessity of circumcision and observation of the Mosaic rites, as necessary to the salvation of the Gentiles, or the Gnostics, to whom the following characters do well agree. Whoever they were, they were dangerous seducers, and to be avoided" — BURKITT. Bishop LIGHTFOOT, in his Note on Phil. 3. 18, gives good reason to think that the teachers specially in view here are not Judaisers, but their antipodes — Antinomians. "They (the persons in this passage) are described as . . . holding plausible language (ver. 18), as professing to be wise beyond others (ver. 19), and yet not innocent in their wisdom. They appear therefore to belong to the same party to which the passage in ch. 6. 1–23; 14. 1; 15. 6, of that Epistle (to the Romans) are chiefly addressed."

18. **By good words** — "concerning themselves, making great promises. **And fair speeches**—concerning you, praising and flattering you. **The harmless**—who, doing no ill themselves, are not upon their guard against them that do"—WESLEY.

These words condemn all selfish indulgence. Meyer remarks that S. Paul did not write thus

severely till after long and full experience. It equally condemns all false professions. The man who seeks to enter the Church of Christ from no higher motive than *worldly* gain is utterly unworthy to be there. He would serve **himself, not our Lord Jesus Christ**, and his rewards can only be those *of unrighteousness*.

19. **But I would have you** — "not only obedient, but discreet also. **Wise with regard to that which is good**—as knowing in this as possible. **And simple with regard to that which is evil**—as ignorant of this as possible" —WESLEY.

"This verse may be paraphrased, These sectaries deceive the simple. I do not say they deceive **you**; for your heartfelt acceptance of the truth is known everywhere, and I rejoice to think of *you* in this light, whatever I may have to mourn over in others. But a caution, even for you, may be in season; do not be led astray by tempting baits of fancied *wisdom*. Be deep in the wisdom of humble faith; be content to be untainted by acquaintance with a wisdom which at its root is evil"—C. B.

20. **And the God of peace**—"the author and lover of it, giving a blessing to your discretion—**shall bruise Satan under your feet** —shall defeat all the artifices of that sower of tares, and unite you more and more together in love"—WESLEY.

"**The God of peace.** We can well understand how the apostle, in the midst of 'fightings without and fears within,' should look forward with joyous confidence to the time when, both for him and his readers, all this turmoil and conflict would give way to 'peace.' The reference seems to be to his near expectation of the Messiah's return, and with it the final victory of the faith"—ELLICOTT. "**The God of peace** (ch. 15. 33). From the authors of discord S. Paul turns to the author of peace. **Satan**—the real and superhuman author of all confusion, in contrast to the God of peace. Only here in this Epistle. **Will crush Satan.** etc.—recalls the first promise (Gen. 3. 15), which is in part fulfilled in each victory over evil. **Under your feet**—our feet will crush Satan, but only as God makes them strong to do so. **Quickly**—as soon as the enemy comes. **The grace**, etc. May you live in the favour of our Master, Jesus Christ!"—BEET.

21. **Timotheus, my fellow-labourer**—"here he is named even before S. Paul's kinsmen. But as he had never been at Rome he is not named of in the beginning of the Epistle"—WESLEY.

(See Acts 16. 3; 17. 14 f.; 18. 5.) When S. Paul started from Corinth for Jerusalem (Acts 20. 4), **Timothy** was with him. **Lucius**, same name in Acts 13. 1. **Jason**, same name in Acts 17. 5. **Sosipater** may be the same as Sopater (Acts 20. 4). Timothy's name appears in eleven epistles—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Philemon, and Hebrews.

22. **I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you.** "Tertius, who wrote what the apostle dictated, inserted this, either by S. Paul's exhortation or ready permission. **Caius** —the Corinthian (1 Cor. 1. 14)—**my host, and of the whole church**—who probably met for some time in his house"—WESLEY.

"**Tertius**—the apostle's amanuensis. It was the custom of S. Paul to add a few words of parting benedictory encouragement or admonition in his own handwriting, partly as a mark of his own personal interest in his readers and partly as a precaution against forgery. (See especially Gal. 6. 2 and 2 Thess. 3. 17)"—ELLICOTT. "**Tertius**, who had hitherto written from S. Paul's dictation and in his name, is now permitted to send a greeting in his own name. To have sent his greeting in the third person, would have been to treat him as a mere machine"—GODET. We have therefore in this little detail an instance of S. Paul's characteristic courtesy, and at the same time a strong proof of the genuineness of the passage; for what forger would have thought of introducing such an incident?

23. **The chamberlain of the city**—"of Corinth"—WESLEY.

The officer here mentioned had charge of the revenues of the city.

25. **Now to Him who is able.** "The last words of the Epistle exactly answer the first (ch. 1. 1-5); in particular, concerning the power of God, the gospel, Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, the obedience of faith, all nations. **To establish you**—both Jews and Gentiles. **According to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ**—that is, according to the tenor of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which I preach. **According to the revelation of the mystery**—of the calling of the Gentiles, which, as plainly as it was foretold in the prophets, was still hid from many even of the believing Jews"—WESLEY.

The power of God is needed to **stablish**—*i.e.* to strengthen and confirm the Christian character, as surely as it is to save from sin. "Christ the power of God in man" is to sanctify the nature, and so to make the life accord with the profession. To "stand fast" to the principles of the gospel, and to "let patience have her perfect work," is as much an evidence of the work of grace in man as the joy of salvation, and man may be so *stablished* by devotion to those duties which the gospel enjoins. **And the preaching of Jesus Christ**—and in accordance with that preaching, the subject-matter of which is Christ. The establishment of the Roman Christians was to take place through those appointed ways and means that are laid down in the gospel, and form the main topic of Christian preaching. All means of grace centre in Christ, and it is only in accordance with the due proclamation of Him that the Christian can hope to become confirmed and strengthened.

26 **According to the commandment**—"the foundation of the apostolical office—**of the eternal God**—a more proper epithet could not be. A new dispensation infers no change in God. Known unto Him are all His works, and every variation of them, from eternity. **Made known to all nations**—not barely that they might know, but enjoy it also, through obeying the faith"—WESLEY.

Unto obedience of faith (R.V.). "There is a grievous error in inquiring whether we have faith, instead of seeking 'the obedience of faith.' It is childish folly to be inquiring whether we have faith, when we should be exclusively directing our attention to the object of the promise, and going forwards at the voice of invitation"—CHALMERS. "So far from its being true that we have to trust only, to leave all in the hands of Jesus, having committed ourselves to Him, having put our faith in Him, we should now care more for His commandments than ever; we should feel more responsible than ever; we should feel that our obligations are heavier; and that, more than ever, we should be giving ourselves to the great work involved in the duties of the Christian life"—DAVID THOMAS. "**The everlasting God.** The gospel is now revealed and proclaimed according to the will of God, who appoints and adjusts all the developments of His providence, alike past, present, and to come. He who rules all duration knows when to keep silence and when to break it"—C. B.

27. **To the only wise God**—"whose manifold wisdom is known in the Church through the gospel. (Eph. 3. 10.) 'To Him who is able' and 'to the wise God' are joined, as in 1 Cor. 1. 24, where Christ is styled 'the wisdom of God' and 'the power of God.' **To Him be glory, through Christ Jesus for ever.** And let every believer say **Amen!**"—WESLEY.

The construction of this doxology is remarkable, not only in itself, but in the fact that it was evidently left unaltered by S. Paul and his friends. No various reading of the least importance occurs throughout it. **For ever, Amen.** Justly does the great Epistle end with the highest of all thoughts—the **GLORY OF GOD** everlastingly manifested and confessed. *Amen, so be it.*

"Thus this glorious Epistle leaves us gazing into the endless succession of ages, whose moments are ages, and listening to the song which throughout each successive age will rise with louder and with sweeter note to Him who, before the ages were, formed for us, whom He foresaw in sin and ruin, His wondrous and costly purpose of salvation and life; who throughout the successive ages of the earlier dispensation carried His purpose towards and to its historic completion in Jesus of Nazareth; and who now day by day carries forward the same purpose by His Spirit in the hearts of us His children, until that day when we and Paul, and the whole family of earth and heaven, shall join in that anthem of praise whose notes from afar, as the weary pen of the apostle falls from his hand, are already ringing in his ears"—BEET.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

"CORINTH was a city of Achaia, situate on the isthmus which joins Peloponnesus, now called the Morea, to the rest of Greece. Being so advantageously situated for trade, the inhabitants of it abounded in riches, which, by too natural a consequence, led them into luxury, lewdness, and all manner of vice.

"Yet even here S. Paul planted a numerous church, chiefly of heathen converts, to whom, about three years after he had left Corinth, he wrote this Epistle from Ephesus, as well to correct various disorders of which they were guilty, as to answer some questions which they had proposed to him.

"THE EPISTLE CONSISTS OF—

I. The Inscription, ...	Chap. i. 1–3.
II. The Treatise itself, in which is—	
1. An Exhortation to concord, beating down all glorying in the flesh, . . .	,, ,, 4; iv. 21.
2. A Reproof—	
(1) For not excommunicating the incestuous person, ...	,, v. 1–13.
(2) For going to law before heathen judges, ...	,, vi. 1–11.
3. A Dissuasive from fornication, . .	,, ,, 12–20.
4. An Answer to the questions they had proposed concerning marriage, . .	,, vii. 1, 10, 25, 36, 39.
5. Concerning things sacrificed to idols, .	,, viii. 1–ix. 1.
6. Concerning the veiling of women, . .	,, ix. 2–16.
7. Concerning the Lord's Supper, . .	,, ,, 17–34.
8. Concerning Spiritual Gifts, . . .	,, xii., xiii., xiv.
9. Concerning the Resurrection, . .	,, xv. 1–58.
10. Concerning the Collection for the Poor, the coming of himself, of Timothy, of Apollos, the sum of all, ...	,, xvi. 1, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14.
III. The Conclusion, ...	,, ,, 15, 17, 19–24."

—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.—Vers. 1–9. THE ADDRESS.—**1. Paul, called to be an apostle.** "There is great propriety in every clause of the salutation, particularly in this, as there were some in the church of Corinth who called the authority of his mission in question. **Through the will of God**—called 'the commandment of God' (1 Tim. 1. 1). This was to the churches the ground of his authority; to S. Paul himself, of an humble and ready mind. By the mention of God, the authority of man is excluded (Gal. 1. 1); by the mention of the will of God, the merit of S. Paul (ch. 15. 8, etc.). **And Sosthenes**—a Corinthian, S. Paul's companion in travel. It was both humility and prudence in the apostle thus to join his name with his own, in an Epistle wherein he was to reprove so many irregularities. **Sosthenes the brother**—probably this word is emphatical; as if he had said, who, from a Jewish opposer of the gospel, became a faithful brother"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul belonged to Jesus of Nazareth,

the Anointed One, as one sent by Him on a special mission to men, and thus placed by Him in the first rank in His Church. (Acts 26. 17; ch. 12. 28.) **Through the will of God.** (2 Cor. 1. 1; Eph. 1. 1; 2 Tim. 1. 1; more fully, 1 Tim. 1. 1.) As usual, S. Paul rises from the Son to the Father, whose will is the source of whatever Christ has done, and therefore of S. Paul's apostleship. (Comp. Gal. 1. 4.) In this letter S. Paul will be compelled to use his apostolic authority. He therefore begins by reminding his readers that he received this authority by an express summons, and by the will of God"—BEET. **Through the will of God.** "This was, to the churches, the ground of his authority; to S. Paul himself, of a humble and ready mind. By the mention of *God*, the authority of *man* is excluded (Gal. 1. 1), by the mention of the *will* of God, the *merit* of Paul (ch. 15. 8, etc.)"—BENSON. "This extraordinary humility and equally remarkable boldness and authority had one common root in his perception, that it was through Christ's call and by God's will he was an apostle. The work of going to all the busiest parts of the world and proclaiming Christ was to his mind far too great a work for him to aspire to at his own instance. But God called him to it; and, with this authority at his back, he feared nothing, neither hardship nor defeat. And this is for us all the true and eternal source of humility and confidence. It is altogether a new strength with which a man is inspired when he is made conscious that God calls him to do this or that; when behind conscience or the plain requirements of human affairs and circumstances the presence of the living God makes itself felt"—DODS.

2. **To the church of God which is in Corinth.** S. Paul, writing in a familiar manner to the Corinthians, as also to the Thessalonians and Galatians, uses this plain appellation. To the other churches he uses more solemn address. **Sanctified through Jesus Christ**—and so undoubtedly they were in general, notwithstanding some exceptions. **Called**—of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 1. 6.) **And**—as the fruit of that calling made *holy*. **With all that in every place.** Nothing could better suit that Catholic love which S. Paul labours to promote in this Epistle than such a declaration of his good wishes for every true Christian upon earth. **Call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.** This plainly implies that all Christians pray to Christ, as well as to the Father through Him"—WESLEY.

S. Chrysostom says these opening words are a protest against the party-spirit prevailing at Corinth. "The Church of God—not of this or that man." "**Sanctified in Christ Jesus.** This is not another class of persons, but a description of those who compose 'the Church,'—who are further described as 'called to be saints'—*i.e.* 'holy.' The term **saints** is never used by S. Paul with its restricted modern meaning, but it is applied to the whole Church. The English word which most nearly expresses the apostolic idea is 'Christians'—used in its most comprehensive sense'—ELLICOTT. "**Called to be saints.** We are apt to form mistaken notions of God's saints. To think of them as if they were beings of a different order from ourselves, raised above the level of human infirmity. And from this mistaken notion flows great practical mischief. We imagine that no man is a saint who is mixed up in the daily intercourse of society. Why not? What one sound reason can be assigned why there should not be now men as zealous, as devoted, as simple-minded as the apostles and saints of the primitive Church"—GOULBURN.

4. **Always**—"whenever I mention you to God in prayer"—WESLEY.

The grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. Rather, perhaps, the "favour" of God which is given you "in" Jesus Christ. "We are to conceive of Jesus Christ as filled with grace and as pouring it out upon the human race"—OLSHAUSEN.

5. **In all utterance and knowledge**—"of Divine things. These gifts the Corinthians particularly admired. Therefore this congratulation naturally tended to soften their spirits, and make way for the reproof which follows"—WESLEY.

"A mind divinely illuminated and, like Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures, pours forth the effusions of the heart as a copious fountain to water the Church of God. A people so taught by an associated ministry, 'come behind in no gift,' being glorious within and beautiful without, waiting for the Bridegroom's return"—SUTCLIFFE. "Only from the state of grace could the abundance of gifts arise which distinguishes the church of Corinth, and which more especially gives occasion to the apostle's gratitude. The **in everything** is qualified by the two following terms—**knowledge** and **utterance.** The sequel of the Epistle leaves no doubt as to the meaning of these two terms. Chaps. 12–14 will show what a wealth of gifts, both of Christian knowledge and of manifestations in utterance (tongues, prophecies, doctrines) had been bestowed upon the Church"—GODET. "See here what is the Christian's riches. So David reckons his wealth. (Ps. 119. 32.) He cannot be poor in whom the word of God dwells richly (Col. 3. 16)"—TRAPP.

6. **The testimony of Christ**—"the gospel **—was confirmed among you**—by these gifts attending it. They knew they had received these by the hand of S. Paul; and this consideration was highly proper, to revive in them their former reverence and affection for their spiritual father"—WESLEY.

"The testimony of Christ was S. Paul's preaching concerning Christ. It was 'confirmed' by the outpouring of His Spirit. **Even the testimony of Christ.** The gospel, which testifies of Christ, and declares the will of God

concerning the way of saving sinners (Matt. 24. 14) **was confirmed in**, or among **you**—*i.e.* was plainly proved to be from God (Rev. 19. 10), by these gifts bestowed upon you"—BENSON. **All utterance**—"ability to speak forth the truth in 'all' the modes needful to convey it to the various sorts of men. **All knowledge.** Mental comprehension of the truth in 'all' its aspects. These gifts seldom go together in one man. But he who possesses either of them is an enrichment to his church. And the church which possesses, in its various members, these gifts in a special degree is truly rich. 'Utterance' is put first as the more conspicuous"—BEET.

7. **Waiting** — "with earnest desire. **For the glorious revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ**—a sure mark of a true or false Christian, to long for, or dread, this revelation"—WESLEY.

"**So that ye come behind in no gift.** The hallowed end of all eloquence and tongues—of all divine endowments shed down on this church, and enumerated in the twelfth chapter—was to nourish their souls in faith and holiness, and confirm them in all their joyful expectations of the coming of the Lord, that in the day of His glory they might appear blameless in His presence"—SUTCLIFFE. "**Waiting for.** (Rom. 8. 19, 23, 25.) They already possessed spiritual gifts which were a proof of God's favour, while at the same time they were eagerly looking forward to that day when Jesus will visibly appear to bring in the final glory. These added words remind us that the Christian life is essentially a looking forward to future glory. All present enrichment is but an earnest of the better things which Christ, at His coming, will bring"—BEET.

8. **Who will also**—"if you faithfully apply to Him—**confirm you to the end. In the day of Christ.** Now it is our day, wherein we are to work out our salvation; then it will be eminently **the day of Christ,** and of His glory in the saints"—WESLEY.

"Since God confirmed S. Paul's preaching at Corinth by the gifts which His Spirit produced there, He will certainly confirm believers in their faith in the gospel to the end. This end is the Lord's coming again, for which the Church should constantly watch, for the very reason that it knows not the time of it. (Comp. Luke 12. 35-36; Matt. 13. 32.) If this event does not happen during the life of this or that generation, death takes its place for each, till that generation for which it will be realised externally"—GODET.

9. **God is faithful**—"to all His promises; and therefore 'to him that hath shall be given.' **By whom ye are called**—a pledge of His willingness to save you unto the uttermost"—WESLEY.

"Were the establishing on the part of Christ not to take place, God's calling unto fellowship with His Son would remain without effect, which would not be compatible with the *faithfulness* of Him from whom the call comes"—MEYER. "**God is faithful.** It will not be God's fault, but our own, if the promises of the last verse are not realised. **The fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ.** The important word here rendered 'fellowship' has unfortunately different renderings in our version. Sometimes, as in ch. 10. 16, it is rendered 'communion'; and in 2 Cor. 6. 14, where it is thus rendered, another word is rendered 'fellowship.' In 2 Cor. 9. 13 it is rendered 'distribution.' Its usual signification would appear to be the 'sharing together, joint participation' as common possessors of anything. Here it refers to the life which, by means of faith, is common to the believer and his Lord. (Comp. Gal. 2. 20.)"—C. B.

SECTION II.—Vers. 1-10. (Ch. 4. 21.) THE PARTIES IN THE CHURCH OF CORINTH.—10. **Now I exhort you.** "Ye have faith and hope; secure love also. **By the** endearing **name of our Lord Jesus Christ**—infinitely preferable to all the human names in which ye glory. **That ye all speak the same thing**—they now spoke different things (ver. 12). **And that there be no schisms among you**—no alienation of affection from each other. Is this word ever taken in any other sense in Scripture? **But that ye be joined in the same mind**—affections, desires. **And judgment**—touching all the grand truths of the gospel"—WESLEY.

"**Brothers**—exact term used for sons of one human father. S. Paul supports his earnest and affectionate appeal (Rom. 15. 30; 16. 17) by mentioning that one great **Name** (ver. 2; comp. Rom. 1. 5) which awakens in all Christians the deepest emotions of love and gratitude, which all Christians profess and seek to exalt among men, and which should be a bond of union to the universal Church. **Divisions** — separations arising naturally from expressed difference of opinion. **Fully equipped**—quite ready for use or service; akin to 'thoroughly-furnished' (2 Tim. 3. 17)"—BEET. "These words are a pathetical exhortation to a most important duty. In which *note* the duty itself, directed and exhorted to, and that is, unity and unanimity amongst Christians. This is threefold, the unity of the head, of the heart, and of the tongue, *i.e.* unity in judgment and opinion, unity in love and affection, and in language and expression, when all speak the same things, and with one mouth, as well as with one mind, glorify God. S. Paul intimates that this unity in judgment and affection is the first and last thing to be respected among Christians, as being both the beginning and perfection of Christianity"—BURKITT.

11. **It hath been declared to me by them of the family of Chloe**—"whom some suppose to have been the wife of Stephanas, and the

mother of Fortunatus and Achaicus. By these three the Corinthians had sent their letter to S. Paul. (Ch. 16. 17.) **That there are contentions**—a word equivalent with schisms in the preceding verse"—WESLEY.

Chloe was evidently a woman well known in Corinth, and probably was resident there, although EVANS says, "It is more in harmony with S. Paul's discretion to suppose that she was an Ephesian known to the Corinthians, whose people had been in Corinth and returned to Ephesus." **Contentions** (R. V. "Divisions"). Those things which destroy the unity of which he has spoken, and which have so often blighted the fairest prospects of the Church of Christ.

12. **Now this I say**—"that is, what I mean is this: there are various parties among you, who set themselves, one against another, in behalf of the several teachers they admire. **And I of Christ.** They spoke well, if they had not on this pretence despised their teachers. (Ch. 4. 8.) Perhaps they valued themselves on having heard Christ preach in His own person"—WESLEY.

"From this verse we learn that at Corinth there were four parties, calling themselves by these four names; and that to one or other of these parties all the church members belonged. That S. Paul puts all the parties side by side proves that all were to blame, even the last. That **Paul** is mentioned first, then **Apollos**, suggests perhaps that the parties arose in the order here given. That **Cephas** was a party name is no proof that S. Peter, any more than **Christ**, had actually preached at Corinth. The Aramaic name suggests that the party was founded by Jews who appealed to the authority of S. Peter. Possibly something S. Peter had said or done (comp. Gal. 2. 11) may have been misconstrued for their own purposes by unscrupulous partisans. One party had dared to inscribe on its banner, in token doubtless of assumed superiority, the name of *Christ*"—BEET.

13. **Is Christ divided**—"are not all the members still under one Head? Was not He alone crucified for you all; and were ye not all baptized in His name? The glory of Christ then is not to be divided between Him and His servants; neither is the unity of the body to be torn asunder, seeing Christ is one still"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul would ask if Christ, into whose Name the whole Church has been baptized, and whose Body (Eph. 1. 23) the whole Church is, can thus be split up into portions, and each portion appropriated by one of the parties mentioned. **Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?** He is reminding them that the 'Name' of Christ, standing as it does for Himself, is the only way of salvation, that Christ is the only Head of the Church, and he disclaims any attempt to claim for himself that close connection with the inner life of all who profess belief in Christ, which is the prerogative of Christ alone. (Matt. 28. 19; Acts 3. 16; 4. 12)"—LIAS. **Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?** "Here the question implies that he considered the form of baptism as so sacred that the introducing the name of a teacher into it was the same thing as introducing a new master into the kingdom of Christ"—WATSON. "It is with something akin to horror that S. Paul goes on to ask, **'Was Paul crucified for you?'** He implies that only on the death of Christ can the Church be founded. If those who prided themselves on being followers of S. Paul were in danger of exalting him into the place of Christ, they were forfeiting their salvation, and had no right to be in the Church at all. Take away the death of Christ, and the personal connection of the believer with the crucified Redeemer, and you take away the Church"—DODS.

14. **I thank God**—"(a pious phrase for the common one 'I rejoice')—that, in the course of His providence, **I baptized none of you, but Crispus**, once the ruler of the synagogue, **and Caius**"—WESLEY.

Crispus (Acts 18. 8) **and Caius**, with whom he had lodged (Rom. 16. 23). He baptized the jailor's household, and Lydia's also, at Philippi, though he had baptized only two or three at Corinth. SUTCLIFFE says: "The Jews baptized all proselytes by households, as stated in Matt. 3. His 'thanking God' on this occasion conveys by implication a reproach on those who made partisans of the families they had baptized. Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the gospel, which surpasses all other ordinances."

15. **Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name**—"in order to attach them to myself"—WESLEY.

"It is possible that S. Paul had noticed at Corinth a tendency to hero-worship, and to guard against it had been specially careful to keep himself in the background"—BEET.

16. **I know not**—"that is, it does not at present occur to my memory—**that I baptized any other**"—WESLEY.

"How the precise mention of these three names brings out the conscientiousness of S. Paul! Another exception to S. Paul's custom. **House** (Matt. 10. 13; 12. 25)—the household, including wife, children, and servants. The family of Stephanas, as of Crispus (Acts 18. 8), joined its head in accepting the gospel (ch. 16. 15). Perhaps even before S. Paul came they were like Cornelius (Acts 10. 2), who feared God with all his house"—BEET.

17. **For God did not send me to baptize.** "That was not my chief errand; those of inferior rank and abilities could do it: though all the apostles were sent to baptize also. (Matt. 28. 19.) **But to preach the gospel.** So the apostle slides into his general proposition: **but not with wisdom of speech**—with the artificial ornaments of discourse, invented by human wisdom. **Lest the cross of Christ**

should be made of none effect. The whole effect of S. Paul's preaching was owing to the power of God accompanying the plain declaration of that great truth, 'Christ bore our sins upon the cross.' But this effect might have been imputed to another cause, had he come with that 'wisdom of speech' which they admired"—WESLEY.

"Preaching was eminently the work of the apostles. The deacons used to baptize. (Acts 10. 48.) The mention of 'the preaching of the glad tidings' affords an opportunity for the apostle stating in vindication of himself why that, and not philosophy, was the subject of his preaching, 'lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.' Such, and not inability or ignorance, was the grand cause of his simplicity"—ELLICOTT. "Even the less learned can baptize perfectly, but perfectly to preach the gospel is a far more difficult task, and requires qualifications which are far more rare"—AUGUSTINE. "What is to be noted here is that for doing the work proper to the gospel, for making men Christians, it is not theory or explanation, but fact, that is effective. It is the presentation of Christ as He is presented in the written Gospels, the narrative of His life and death, which stands in the first rank of efficiency as a means of evangelising the world. It is the direct vision of the cross, and not anything which is said about it, which is most effective in producing penitence and faith. And it is the business of the preacher to set Christ and Him crucified clear before the eyes of men. Make men see Christ, set the Crucified clear before them, and you need not tell them to repent and believe; if that sight does not make them repent, no telling of yours will make them"—DODS.

18. **To them that perish.** "By obstinately rejecting the only name whereby they can be saved. **But to us who are saved**—now 'saved from our sins, and in the way to everlasting salvation, *it is* the great instrument of **the power of God** "—WESLEY.

For the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God (R.V.). "The connection of this verse with the preceding is not quite clear. It may, however, be thus explained: The doctrine of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, because they conceive of some inherent excellence in humanity, whereas the cross proclaims and justifies God's sentence of death against the human race. The same doctrine is the power of God to those who are in the way of salvation, because it is through faith in Christ's blood alone that man can be justified from sin, crucified to the old man, and united to the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness. To preach the gospel, then, with wisdom of words—to exalt, that is, the human element—is to take away the power of the gospel, and to make it in reality the folly which it is deemed to be by unspiritual men. (Comp. Rom. 1. 16; 3. 22; Eph. 4. 22, 23; Col. 3. 9, 10)"—LIAS. "We are taught, 'as sin is a fact, salvation must be laid hold of above all as a fact, not as a system. It is an act wrought by the arm of God, telling with power on the conscience and on the heart of the sinner: this alone can rescue from ruin a world which is perishing under the curse and in the corruption of sin'"—GODET.

19. **For it is written**—"and the words are remarkably applicable to this great event"—WESLEY.

"See Isa. 29. 14, which refers probably to the invasion of Sennacherib (Isa. 36. 1). Isaiah had said, when Sennacherib was threatening Judah, that the deliverance granted by Jehovah to His people would be His work, not that of politicians who directed the affairs of the kingdom. On the same principle, says the apostle, God now proceeds in saving the world. He snatches it from perdition by an act of His own love, and without deigning in the least to conjoin with Him human wisdom, which on the contrary He sweeps away as folly"—GODET.

20. **Where is the wise?** etc. "The deliverance of Judea from Sennacherib is what Isaiah refers to in these words, in a bold and beautiful allusion to which the apostle, in the clause that follows, triumphs over all the opposition of human wisdom to the victorious gospel of Christ. What could the 'wise' men of the Gentiles do against this? **or the Jewish scribes?** or **the disputers of this world?**—those among both, who, proud of their acuteness, were fond of controversy, and thought they could confute all opponents. **Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world**—that is, shown it to be very foolishness"—WESLEY.

"These are 'triumphant questions' (comp. 15. 55; Rom. 3. 27) suggested in form perhaps by Isa. 19. 12; 33. 18, but prompted by the complete failure of human wisdom to bring salvation. **Scribe**—*lit.* 'man of letters,' 'Scripture man'—a class of Jews devoted to the study of the Scriptures. (2 Sam. 8. 17; 2 Chron. 34. 13; Ezra 7. 6, 11; Matt. 7. 29; 17. 10)"—BEET. "The wise generally, the Jewish scribe, the Greek disputer"—ALFORD. "The words, **of this world,** apply not to the disputer alone, but to all three"—DE WETTE. "But it is asked, why God chose to treat human wisdom so rudely. Did He wish to extinguish the torch of reason which He had Himself lighted? Ver. 21 answers this question: it explains the ground of the judgment which God visits on human reason, by the irrational nature of the gospel—to wit, that, in the period anterior to the coming of Christ, reason had been unfaithful to its mission"—GODET. "**Of this world.** These words qualify all three mentioned, and not exclusively **the disputer.** 'World' (more literally, *age*) does not here mean the physical world, but, in an ethical sense, 'this age,' in contrast to that which is

'to come' (Matt. 12. 32; Mark 10. 30). It is employed afterwards (last word of ver. 20 and in ver. 21) to designate all who are outside the Christian communion, as in the next verse it is contrasted with 'them that believe'"—ELLICOTT.

21. **For since in the wisdom of God**—"according to His wise disposals, leaving them to make the trial—**the world**—whether Jewish or Gentile—**by** all its boasted **wisdom knew not God**—though the whole creation declared its Creator, and though He declared Himself by all the prophets—**it pleased God, by** a way which those who perish count mere **foolishness, to save them that believe**"—WESLEY.

"Even the wisest of the Greeks had attained only to inadequate and indefinite views of God. To pass even from Plato to the Gospel of S. John is really to pass from darkness to light. Plato philosophises, and a few souls seem for a moment to see things more clearly; S. Peter preaches, and three thousand souls spring to life. **The world by wisdom knew not God.** No safer assertion regarding the ancient world can be made. That which, in point of fact, has made God known is the cross of Christ. All the power that dwells in God to draw men out of sin to holiness and to Himself, was actually in the cross. To them that believe in the God there revealed, the cross is the power of God"—DODS. "The apostle says, 'Because men made so ill a use of their power of discovering truth, that they attained only to an apparent wisdom, God, as it were in punishment, has published salvation by means of the foolish preaching of the cross, which they have no power to understand, being blinded by their own false wisdom.' It is true, the preaching of the cross has also its inward and needful foundation, but S. Paul has here no occasion to discourse upon it; he merely brings forward the side which appears to him calculated to show the vanity of confiding in human wisdom"—OLSHAUSEN.

22. "**For whereas the Jews demand** of the apostles, as they did of their Lord, more **signs** still, after all they have seen already; **and the Greeks**, or Gentiles, **seek wisdom**—the depths of philosophy, and the charms of eloquence"—WESLEY.

"The Jews (Matt. 12. 38; 16. 1; Mark 8. 11; Luke 11. 16; John 2. 18; 6. 30) required external attestations of the power of Christ, and especially that of the subjugation of the world to His kingly authority. The Greeks sought dialectic skill from one who aspired to be their teacher"—LIAS. "Jews and Gentiles conspire together in their contempt and rejection of the gospel. **The Jews require a sign**—*i.e.* besides all the miracles and the resurrection of Christ. **And the Greeks seek after wisdom**—they look for profound, eminent learning, and deep philosophy in the gospel, and not finding what they expected they scorn it"—BURKITT.

23. "**We** go on to **preach**, in a plain and historical, not rhetorical or philosophical, manner, **Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block**—just opposite to the "signs" they demand—**and to the Greeks foolishness**—a silly tale, just opposite to the **wisdom** they seek"—WESLEY.

Christ crucified was always the chief subject of apostolic preaching. The multitudes on the day of Pentecost, and the solitary Saul of Tarsus, were alike awakened and converted by this great truth. It was a doctrine the very reverse of what Jews and Greeks demanded. They expected a triumphant king, instead of which the apostles preached salvation through Him who had been "crucified, dead, and buried." No wonder the truth was an offence and foolishness. And yet "in none other is there salvation" (Acts 4. 12). Men must always be pointed to the cross when they seek a demonstration of the power of God in Christ, and when they see there the overpowering love of God, it is no longer a **stumbling-block**, but the means of salvation from sin.

24. **But to them that are called**—"and obey the heavenly calling—**Christ**—with His cross, His death, His life, His kingdom. And they experience, first, that He is **the power**, then that He is **the wisdom of God**"—WESLEY.

"**The called ones**—they in whom the proclamation rejected by others has proved itself to be a summons from God"—BEET. "While all men have been called, they who were minded to obey received the name of 'called ones.' **Called**—S. Paul always speaks of all Christians as 'the called,' not using that word in the narrower sense to which some modern religious sects have restricted it"—ELLICOTT. "**Christ the power of God**—opposite to the power of miracles required by the Jews—**and the wisdom of God**—opposite to the Grecians' worldly wisdom"—TRAPP.

25. **Because the foolishness of God**—"the gospel scheme, which the world judge to be mere foolishness—**is wiser than** the wisdom of **men; and**, weak as they account it, **stronger than** all the strength of **men**"—WESLEY.

"What was folly in the eyes of the Greek, or weakness in the eyes of the Jew, was yet far wiser and stronger than their highest conception. The revelation of God in the Man Christ Jesus—the foolishness of God, the Infinite allying itself to the finite—was the perfection of the Divine wisdom; the crucifixion of sin in the death of Christ—the weakness of God—God suffering, dying—was the highest manifestation of Divine power, in that it destroyed what nothing else could destroy. For whosoever unites himself to Christ by faith in His blood acquires the faculty of putting sin to a lingering death"—LIAS. "**Because**—this introduces the reason why Christ, as being crucified, is the power and wisdom of God,

viz. because God's folly (as they call it) is wiser, not **than the wisdom of men**, as some understand the passage, but than men themselves—embracing in the word all that men can know or hope ever to know; and the **weakness of God** (as they regard it) is stronger than men"—ELLICOTT.

26. **Behold your calling**—"what manner of men they are whom God calls. **That not many wise men after the flesh**—in the account of the world. **Not many mighty**—men of power and authority"—WESLEY.

"The ancient Christians were, for the greater part, slaves and persons of humble rank; the whole history of the progress of the Church is in fact a gradual triumph of the unlearned over the learned, of the lowly over the great, until the emperor himself cast his crown at the foot of Christ's cross"—OLSHAUSEN. "Christianity with the irresistible might of its weakness shook the world."

27, 28. **Things that are not.** "The Jews frequently called the Gentiles, 'Them that are not' (2 Esdras 6. 56, 57), in so supreme contempt did they hold them. **The things that are**—in high esteem"—WESLEY.

"**And things which are not**, *i.e.* 'things which by comparison are non-existent'—things which, by the side of other things of higher importance in our human eyes, appear to us as nothing. Yet these, in the counsels of God, are to change places, and more than change places, with things that are highly regarded in the sight of men"—LIAS. "By choosing as His instruments things reckoned to be nothing, and passing by things reckoned to be much, God made the latter to be practically nothing"—BEET.

29. **That no flesh**—"a fit appellation. Flesh is fair, but withering as grass—**may glory before God. In** God we ought to glory"—WESLEY.

"All ground of boasting is removed from those who are within the Christian Church. It is not their wisdom or strength, but God's work, which has given them superiority to the wise and noble of the world. **No flesh can glory in God's presence.** The wise and mighty of the earth cannot glory, for their wisdom and might availed nothing to bring them to God; those who are in Christ Jesus can as little glory, for it is not on account of any wisdom or might of theirs, but because of God's call and energy, they are what they are. God called them and gave them a new and hopeful life in Christ Jesus"—DODS.

30. **Of Him**—"out of His free grace and mercy—**are ye**—engrafted **into Christ Jesus, who is made unto us** that believe **wisdom**, who were before utterly foolish and ignorant. **Righteousness**—the sole ground of our justification, who were before under the wrath and curse of God. **Sanctification**—a principle of universal holiness, whereas before we were altogether dead in sin. **And redemption**—that is, complete deliverance from all evil and eternal bliss both of soul and body"—WESLEY.

"**Who of God is made unto us wisdom** (R.V.). Ye are not, says he, in this or the other school of vain philosophy; ye have left the wise men after the flesh; **but of God**—that is of His mercy and power—**ye are in Christ Jesus**—in the fellowship of His disciples and family—**who of God is made unto us wisdom**—and truly so; as well as **righteousness, sanctification, and redemption**"—WATSON. "God's law we may have found it possible to resist; its threatenings we may have been able to put out of our mind. The natural helps to goodness which God has given us in the family, in the world around us, in the fortunes of life, we may have found too feeble to lift us above temptation and bring us into a really high and pure life. But in the cross we experience what Divine power is; we know the irresistible appeal of Divine self-sacrifice, the regenerating pathos of the Divine desire to save us from sin and destruction. The cross is the actual point of contact between God and man. To receive the whole benefit and blessing that God can now give us we need only be in true contact with the cross; through it we become direct recipients of the holiness, the love, the power of God. In it Christ **is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption**"—DODS. "This last word sums up the dominant idea of the whole passage from ver. 13, viz. Christ's unique place in relation to the Church. Let others be teachers, He alone is LORD; for He alone has paid the ransom. To Him alone be the praise"—GODET.

31. **Let him glory in the Lord**—"not in himself, not in the flesh, not in the world"—WESLEY.

The whole work of salvation is of God. The Corinthians, like many others since, were inclined to take some of the credit to themselves. The apostle reminds them to whom it is due. These words are a paraphrase of Jer. 9. 23, 24. Our only true boasting before God is that we are in Christ, that all we have we owe entirely to Him; we can only glory in, not ourselves or what we have or are, but in the fact that He is our Benefactor. Thus, in S. CHRYSOSTOM'S quaint words, S. Paul "always fasteneth them on with nails to the name of Christ." This concludes S. Paul's general explanation of God's method, and he then turns to his own conduct, to show how entirely it was in harmony with God's plan, which he has just explained and vindicated.

CHAPTER II.

1. "**And I** accordingly **came to you, not with loftiness of speech or of wisdom**—I did not affect either deep wisdom or eloquence—**declaring the testimony of God**—what God gave me to testify concerning His Son"—WESLEY.

The apostle now proceeds to justify his preaching, and to show how he had acted in accordance with those great principles which he has already explained as God's method. **The testimony of God** is S. Paul's testimony concerning God in Christ. (Ch. 1. 6; 2 Tim. 1. 8.)

2. **I determined not to know anything**—"to waive all my other knowledge, and not to preach anything, **save Jesus Christ and Him crucified**—that is, what He did, suffered, taught. A part is put for the whole"—WESLEY.

"No other system could tell guilty and wretched man that 'God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' Tell a sinful man that he is wrong—he knows it; but that alone breaks not, subdues not, the heart. But tell him that, although he is cast out, he is not forsaken; though he has forgotten God, God has never forgotten him; that He is waiting to forgive and to bless;—by this, how many hearts have been subdued! and by this the wide world shall be subdued also"—WATSON.

"These words must not be understood absolutely, but comparatively; not as if the apostle did absolutely despise or contemn all other study and knowledge, for all knowledge is useful to him that knows how to refer it to right ends, and God has made nothing in vain, but that all other knowledge, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is insignificant and ineffectual"—BURKITT.

3. **And I was with you**—"at my first entrance—**in weakness**—of body (2 Cor. 12. 7)—**and in fear**—lest I should offend any. **And in much trembling**—the emotion of my mind affecting my very body"—WESLEY.

"To show that the real force of his teaching lay in its subject-matter, and not in any power with which he may have proclaimed the gospel, the apostle now dwells upon his own physical weakness. The 'weakness and fear and trembling' of which S. Paul speaks here, had in it probably a large element of that self-distrust which so noble and sensitive a nature would feel in the fulfilment of such an exalted mission as the preaching of the cross. There is a reference also to what we may call a physical apprehension of danger. The bravest are not those who do not experience any sensation of fear, but rather those who keenly appreciate danger, who have an instinctive shrinking from it, and yet eventually, by their moral might, conquer this dread. There are traces of this element in S. Paul's character to be found in several places—as, for example, in Acts 18. 9, when the Lord encourages him when labouring at Corinth with the hopeful words, 'Be not afraid'; again in Acts 23. 11, when the terrible scene before Ananias had depressed him, the Lord is with him to strengthen him, 'Be of good cheer, Paul'; and in Acts 27. 24, when the angel of the Lord appears to him amid the storm and shipwreck, 'Fear not, Paul'"—ELLICOTT.

4. "**And my speech** in private, as well as **my** public **preaching, was not with the persuasive words of human wisdom**, such as the wise men of the world use; **but with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power**—with that powerful kind of demonstration, which flows from the Holy Spirit; which works on the conscience with the most convincing light, and the most persuasive evidence"—WESLEY.

The apostle returns from his person to his preaching. Of the words **speech** and **preaching**, MEYER says, "My discourses in general, and especially my preaching." NEANDER explains them as meaning, "My private conversations, and my public discourses." "**In demonstration of the Spirit and of power**—not persuasive arguments, but appeals to the conscience and to the influence of a higher power. It is doubtful whether we should translate 'the Spirit' here, as though the Holy Spirit were meant, and more than doubtful whether we should interpret 'power' of miracles as generally understood. The apostle is perhaps rather referring to that conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16. 8), which the Spirit of God produces in the spirit of man, and of the power to produce a change of heart and life which is the leading characteristic of the gospel. This view seems confirmed by the next verse, in which S. Paul says that the ground of our faith is not the wisdom of men, but the power of God"—LIAS.

5. "**That your faith might not** be built on **the wisdom** or power **of man, but on the** wisdom and **power of God**"—WESLEY.

"The ground of our faith is not the wisdom of men, but the power of God. The preacher's task in this work lies, not in wishing to act in the place and stead of the Spirit, with the resources of his own eloquence and genius, but in opening up the way for Him by simple testimony rendered to Christ"—GODET.

6. **Yet we speak wisdom**—"yea, the truest and most excellent wisdom—**among the perfect** — adult, experienced Christians. By *wisdom* here he seems to mean, not the whole Christian doctrine, but the most sublime and abstruse parts of it. **But not the wisdom** admired and taught by the men **of this world, nor of the rulers of this world**, Jewish or heathen, **that come to nought**—both they and their wisdom, and the world itself"—WESLEY.

Howbeit we speak wisdom. "I there then no wisdom possible for a Christian? no sphere for the exercise of those faculties of the intellect which we received from God? the hearer may say. Certainly, says the apostle (for to say otherwise would be to contradict the Jewish Scriptures, especially Prov. 1. 9), but it must take as its starting-point the truths re-

vealed by Christ, and it will be proportionate, not to the secular knowledge or intellectual power of the inquirer, but to his moral and spiritual attainments, that is, to his proficiency in the doctrine of Christ"—C. B. "**Perfect**—better, 'full-grown' or 'mature'—that which has reached its full development or goal: common in classic Greek for a full-grown man in contrast to a child. (Comp. ch. 3.1.) Same word in ch. 13. 10; 14. 20; Eph. 4. 13; Heb. 5. 14; Phil. 3. 15; Col. 1. 28; 4. 12; Rom. 12. 2. 'Full-grown' refers, not to knowledge merely, but to the entire Christian life"—BEET.

7. "**But we speak the** mysterious **wisdom of God**, which was **hidden** for many ages from all the world, and is still hidden even from 'babes in Christ'; much more from all unbelievers. **Which God ordained before the world**—so far is this from **coming to nought**, like worldly wisdom. **For our glory**—arising from the glory of our Lord, and then to be revealed when all worldly glory vanishes"—WESLEY.

"Was S. Paul disposed to concede that Christianity, in that simple and inartificial form in which he announced it, was either 'foolish' or contemptible? Just the contrary. He boldly asserted its claims to supremacy. Do the admirers of Gentile philosophy boast of wisdom? **We speak wisdom.** Do they boast of the secrets of their celebrated mysteries?—our religion is a mystery"—BEET. "The wisdom we speak is **the wisdom of God**, and the mystery was **ordained before the world**, formed in the depths of the Divine mind, before time began, and now revealed 'to the glory' of all true believers. Let this wisdom of God be the subject of your daily investigation"—WATSON. "**A mystery.** "The word 'mystery' has taken in theological language a meaning which it has not in the New Testament, to wit, a truth which human reason cannot fathom. In S. Paul's writings it simply signifies a truth or a fact which the human understanding cannot, of itself, discover, but which it apprehends as soon as God gives the revelation of it. (See Luke 8. 10; Rom. 16. 25; Eph. 3. 4)"—GODET.

8. **Had they known it**—"that wisdom—**they would not have crucified**—punished as a slave—**the Lord of glory.** The giving Christ this august title, peculiar to the great Jehovah, plainly shows Him to be the supreme God. In like manner the Father is styled, 'the Father of glory' (Eph. 1. 17); and the Holy Ghost 'the Spirit of glory' (1 Pet. 4. 14). The application of this title to all the three shows that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are 'the God of glory,' as the only true God is called (Ps. 29. 3; Acts 7. 2)"—WESLEY.

Which none of the princes of this world knew. "These words seem to be written for the instruction of the class of persons who attach importance to the opinions of those high in position and influence—the princes, or rather **rulers** of this world, its statesmen. Such persons, the apostle points out, are apt, in spite of, or rather in consequence of, their worldly wisdom, to make strange mistakes. The crucifixion of Christ was a memorable instance of the shortsightedness of worldly policy. Not a single calculation of those who compassed the Saviour's death was destined to be fulfilled. Pilate did not escape the emperor's displeasure. Caiaphas (John 11. 50) did not save Jerusalem. The scribes and Pharisees did not put down the doctrine of Jesus. **The Lord of glory.** The majesty of the Lord, designedly contrasted, says S. Chrysostom, with the ignominy of the cross. Perhaps there is also an allusion to our glory in the last verse, of which He is the source. (Comp. Jas. 2. 1)"—C. B. "What a full proof the apostle gives of their ignorance of this Divine wisdom which the gospel reveals. **Had they known it**—that is, practically known it, so as to believe it, to be influenced and persuaded by it—**they would not have crucified the Lord of glory**"—BURKITT.

9. "**But** this ignorance of theirs fulfils what **is written** concerning the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. No natural man hath either **seen, heard**, or known, **the things which God hath prepared**, saith the prophet, **for them that love Him**"—WESLEY.

"There has been much discussion whence these words are derived, but they are quite sufficiently near to the passage in Isa. 64. 4 to be regarded as a quotation from thence"—C. B. "This is not the only place in which S. Paul would seem to thus refer to the Old Testament Scriptures (see ch. 1. 19, 20) when he is not basing any argument upon a particular sentence in the Scriptures, but merely availing himself of some thoughts or words in the Old Testament as an illustration of some truth which he is enforcing"—ELLICOTT. "The wisdom of which S. Paul has been speaking is not on a level with human philosophies, nor is it of a similar origin. It is not just one more added to human searches after truth. The princes of this world, its men of light and leading, have had their own theories of God and man, and yet have really 'come to nought.' But the wisdom taught by S. Paul is a disclosure made by God of knowledge unattainable by human endeavour. The three great sources of human knowledge—seeing, hearing, and thought—alike fail here. **Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive** this wisdom. Hitherto it has been a mystery, a thing hidden, now God has Himself revealed it (ver. 10)"—DODS.

10. **But God hath revealed**—"yea, and 'freely given' (ver. 12)—**them to us**—even inconceivable peace, and joy unspeakable—**by His Spirit**—who intimately and fully knows them. **For the Spirit searcheth even the deep things of God**—be they ever so hidden

and mysterious; the depths both of His nature and of His kingdom"—WESLEY.

"Here the emphatic word is **us**. The latter part of vers. 8 and 9 are parenthetical, and the sense goes back to the beginning of ver. 8. 'None of the princes of this age know these things, but God hath revealed them unto *us*, His apostles and teachers.' (Matt. 13. 11 ; 16. 17 ; 2 Cor. 12. 1.) This revelation of spiritual truth is made by the Holy Spirit of God to our spirits. (Rom. 8. 16.) The apostle gives two proofs that the apostles have this knowledge, and that the Holy Spirit is the source of it:—(1) (vers. 10 and 11), because the Holy Spirit alone is capable of imparting this knowledge; and (2) (vers. 12–16) because the Holy Spirit has been given to us, the apostles"—ELLICOTT. **For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.** "In this and the next verse we gather (1) the personality of the Holy Ghost, (2) His distinction from the Father. He not only searches the deep things of God, which He could not be described as doing were He identical with the Father, but though, on account of His perfect knowledge of the mind of God, He is likened to the spirit of man which is one of the component elements of His being, the apostle speaks of the one as the 'spirit of a man which is in him,' but of the other as the Spirit which is from (proceeding out of) God. **Searches.** 'The word to search is here indicative not of ignorance, but of accurate knowledge, at least if we may judge from the fact that this is the very phrase the apostle has used even of God, saying, "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit"' (CHRYSOSTOM). The knowledge, in fact, as ver. 11 shows, is of the same kind as the knowledge of the spirit of man concerning what passes within his breast, though, of course, infinitely more complete"—C. B.

11. **For what man knoweth the things of a man**—"all the inmost recesses of his mind; although men are all of one nature, and so may the more easily know one another. **So the things of God knoweth no one but the Spirit**—who, consequently, is God"—WESLEY.

"The things of God are made known to man only by revelation, and that revelation cannot be effectually understood except by the influence and aid of the same Spirit by whom it was first given to mankind. As the internal thoughts of a man are only known to himself, till he informs others of them, so no man can know the things of God, except as they are made known by God Himself"—WATSON. "There is in every man a life hidden from all eyes, a world of impressions, anxieties, aspirations, and struggles, of which he alone, in so far as he is a spirit—that is to say, a conscious and personal being—gives account to himself. This inner world is unknown to others, except in so far as he reveals it to them by speech"—GODET.

12. **Now we have received, not the spirit of the world.** "This spirit is not properly 'received'; for the men of the world always had it. But Christians receive the Spirit of God, which before they had not"—WESLEY.

"We may think of revelation either as the act of God, or as it is received by man. God reveals Himself in all He does, as man discloses his character in all he does. With God's first act, therefore, in the remotest past revelation began. As yet there was none to receive the knowledge of God, but God showed His nature and His purpose as soon as He began to do anything. And this revelation of Himself has continued ever since. In the world around us, and the earth on which we live, God reveals Himself. Still more fully is God's nature revealed in man; in conscience, distinguishing between right and wrong; in the spirit craving fellowship with the Eternal. And at length in Jesus Christ God gave the fullest possible manifestations of Himself. The veil was entirely lifted, and God came as much as possible into free intercourse with His creatures. He put Himself within reach of our knowledge"—DODS. "**That we might know**—a secret mercy; the cormorants of the world will not let their heirs know what they will do for them till they die. But God assures His of heaven aforehand. Thus we have not received of the spirit of this world; but we have received a better thing, and have no reason to repine"—TRAPP.

13. **Which also we speak**—"as well as know. **In words taught by the Holy Spirit**—such are all the words of Scripture. How high a regard ought we, then, to retain for them! **Explaining spiritual things by spiritual words**; or, **adapting spiritual words to spiritual things**—being taught of the Spirit to express the things of the Spirit"—WESLEY.

"**Comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** These words have been interpreted in several ways—(1) Wyclif renders them 'maken a liknesse of (*i.e.* explaining) spyritual things to goostli men'; (2) the Vulgate and English versions render the Greek word by 'compare'; (3) some interpret, 'explaining spiritual things in spiritual ways' (Luther so renders it); (4) another explanation is, 'explaining spiritual things by spiritual,' *i.e.* interpreting the revelation of God by the inward promptings of the spirit. The first would seem preferable and most agreeable to the context, for S. Paul is speaking of the doctrine he delivered, which he says is unintelligible to the natural man, but capable of being brought home to the understanding of him who possesses spiritual qualifications"—C. B. "**Which things** (knowing them true) **we also utter**—utter them how? Not in the rhetoric of human wisdom, not in arguments copied from a formulated philosophy (that would be like putting new wine into old bottles, or dressing a man in a panther's hide), but in arguments taught of spirit, with

spiritual phrase *matching* spiritual truth"—EVANS.

14. **But the natural man**—"that is, every man who hath not the Spirit; who has no other way of obtaining knowledge, but by his senses and natural understanding—**receiveth not**—does not understand or conceive—**the things of the Spirit**—the things revealed by the Spirit of God, whether relating to His nature or His kingdom—**for they are foolishness to him.** He is so far from understanding, that he utterly despises them. **Neither can he know them**—as he has not the will, so neither has he the power. **Because they are spiritually discerned**—they can only be discerned by the aid of that Spirit, and by those spiritual senses, which he has not"—WESLEY.

"**Natural**—that is—*lit.* that part of our nature which we call 'mind.' And hence signifies that man in whom pure intellectual reason and the merely natural affections predominate. Now, such an one cannot grasp spiritual truth any more than the physical nature, which is made to discern physical things, can grasp intellectual things. Spiritual truth appeals to the spirit of the man, and therefore is intelligible only to those who are 'spiritual'"—ELLICOTT. "The word of God and its promises, the throne of grace and its privileges, the things of faith in all their varieties, have no existence to worldly men; and when constrained to bear others company in outward ordinances, they are thankful when the prayer concluded, or the sanctuary closing, sends them back to the world again"—HAMILTON. "**The natural man**—that is, the man whose perceptions do not extend beyond the region of the intellect, the part of his being which he has in common with the animal creation, can never attain to the things of the Spirit. The term must not be understood in the same sense as our word *animal* now bears, *i.e.* as equivalent to sensual. **Because they are spiritually discerned.** There is but little analogy between mental and spiritual discernment, or rather processes which the apostle has been contrasting throughout the whole of this chapter. The one is the result of knowledge, investigation, argument; the faculties which produce the other are sharpened by self-discipline, humility, communion with God, love of Him and the brethren. To those who are thus exercised many things are clear which are mysterious to the most learned and the most acute"—C. B.

15. **But the spiritual man**—"he that hath the Spirit—**discerneth all** the **things** of God whereof we have been speaking. **Yet he himself is discerned by no man**—no natural men. They neither understand what He is, nor what He says"—WESLEY.

"The gospel in its essence is neither theoretic, abstract, nor reflective, nor even imaginative: it is historical, but this history is Divine. The preaching of the gospel is a revelation of God's *doings*. When belief is well established, then, and then alone, may God's acts become subjects of theory or research among the members of the Church, and even then, so far only as the whole investigation proceeds from faith. Of such an inquiry faith could never be the consequence. In God's Spirit alone has faith its origin"—OLSHAUSEN. "**Judgeth all things**—by his spirit of discerning (ch. 14), his spiritual senses exercised to discern good and evil (Heb. 5. 14), his undoubted persuasion of that truth he professeth (Col. 2. 3), and whereof he hath felt the sweetness (Col. 1. 9). **Is judged of no man**—of no natural man, who can judge no more of Divine truths than a blind man can do of colours, or a sick man of meats"—TRAPP.

16. **Who**—"what natural man? **We**—spiritual men; apostles in particular. **Have**—know, understand. **The mind of Christ**—concerning the whole plan of gospel salvation'—WESLEY.

"**But we**—that is, spiritual men, including the apostles. The apostle here identifies Christ with the Spirit, whom he has previously spoken of as the Teacher of spiritual things. He does not mean to assert that the apostles knew all that the mind of Christ knew, but that all things which they did know were from Him, and spiritual (John 15. 15)"—ELLICOTT. "No one had ever greater right than S. Paul to say, 'I have the mind of Christ.' Every day of his life he said the same thing. He once entered into Christ's mind, and more than any other man carried it out. It was by his moral sympathy with Christ's aims that he entered so completely into the knowledge of His person and work. He lived his way into the truth. And all our best knowledge is reached in the same way. The truths we see most clearly and have deepest assurance of are those which our own experience has taught us. Spiritual truth is of a kind which only spiritual men can understand"—DODS.

CHAPTER III.

1. **And I, brethren**—"he spoke before (ch. 2. 1) of his entrance, now of his progress, among them—**could not speak to you as unto spiritual**—adult, experienced Christians—**but as unto** men who were still in great measure **carnal, as unto babes in Christ**—still weak in grace, though eminent in gifts (ch. 1. 5)"—WESLEY.

"The apostle had said much of the superiority of the wisdom which is the result of spiritual illumination. He now warns the Corinthians that the majority of them do not possess it, or at least but in the scantiest measure, and thus remain on the threshold of the Christian life; and he shows how general principles which he has just explained were exemplified in his own conduct. He also teaches them that their own character, wanting in spirituality, was the real hindrance to his teaching them higher spiritual

truth, which may be called 'the wisdom' of the gospel." "**Carnal** is here the opposite of 'spiritual,' and does not involve any reference to what we would commonly speak of as carnal sin. **Babes in Christ.** This is the opposite of the 'full-grown' in ch. 2. 6, to whom the 'wisdom' could be taught. See also Col. 1. 28, 'full-grown in Christ'"—ELLICOTT.

2. **I fed you**—as babes—**with milk.** "The first and plainest truths of the gospel. So should every preacher suit his doctrine to his hearers"—WESLEY.

"The figures used by the apostle relate to the term **babes. Milk**, according to ch. 2. 2, denotes the preaching of Jesus crucified, with its simplest contents and its most immediate consequences—expiation, justification by faith, the sanctification of the justified believer by the Holy Spirit, what saves by converting and regenerating. **Meat** represents what S. Paul has just called 'wisdom,' the contemplation of the Divine plan in its entirety from its eternal predestination to its final consummation"—GODET.

3. "**For while there is among you emulation** in your hearts, **strife** in your words, **and** actual **divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man**—as mere men; not as Christians, according to God"—WESLEY.

"**Are ye not carnal?** The word 'carnal' conveys a stronger reproach than 'natural' (ch. 2. 14). The latter signifies the man whose hopes and desires are bounded by the limits of the physical principle of life. The former is applicable to those who are under the dominion of their sensual passions. If it be asked how 'they who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints,' can at the same time be carnal, we may answer, with Olshausen, that the spiritual man becomes carnal when he mingles his old unregenerate views with the new element of life he has received in Christ"—C. B. **And walk as men.** "Christians should be as Saul was, higher than the people by head and shoulders. Something singular is expected from them (Matt. 5. 47)"—TRAPP.

4. "**I am of Apollos.** S. Paul named himself an Apollos, to show that he would condemn any division among them, even though it were in favour of himself, or the dearest friend he had in the world. **Are ye not carnal**—for the Spirit of God allows no party zeal"—WESLEY.

"**One saith, I am of Paul.** These and the following words explain exactly what the apostle means by their being 'carnal' and walking after a merely human manner. Only two of the factions—those of Paul and Apollos—are mentioned as types of the rest. The factious spirit was in each and all the 'parties' the same, but the particular difference between the teaching of the higher wisdom, and the simpler truths of the gospel, was best illustrated by these two. The selection for rebuke of those who called themselves by the apostle's own name was, no doubt, intended by him to show that it was no matter of personal jealousy on his part. He specially condemns those who magnified his name. It is for his Master alone that he is jealous"—ELLICOTT.

5. "**Ministers**—or servants—**by whom ye believed, as the Lord**, the Master of those servants, **gave to every man**"—WESLEY.

"Since they call themselves followers of Paul or Apollos, S. Paul asks what these men are, *i.e.* what are their position, powers, and achievements. **Ministers** (see Rom. 12. 7) **through whom** (Rom. 1. 2; comp. John 1. 7; 1 Pet. 1. 21)"—BEET.

6. "**God gave the increase.** We are truly taught that the good done upon the earth is done by the Lord. Such declarations as this bring God very near to His Church"—WATSON. "The harp yields no sound till it be touched by the hand of the musician. The heart is never made good till the heavens answer the earth (Hos. 2. 21), till God strikes the stroke. Holy Melancthon, being newly converted, thought it impossible for his hearers to withstand the evidence of the gospel. But soon after he complained that old Adam was too hard for young Melancthon"—TRAPP.

7. **God that giveth the increase**—"is all in all: without Him neither planting nor watering avails"—WESLEY.

What harvest would have sprung up from the labour of the two workers without the life which God alone could give? What, then, are those workers? It is folly to raise servants to the rank of masters. They are not anything in comparison with God. (See ch. 10. 19; Gal. 2. 6; 6. 3.) In the next verse we have a transition to the *recompense of teachers* hereafter, according to the *quality* of their work here.

8. **But he that planteth and he that watereth are one**—"which is another argument against division. Though their labours are different, they are all employed in one general work—the saving souls. Hence he takes occasion to speak of the reward of them that labour faithfully, and the awful account to be given by all. **Every man shall receive his own** peculiar **reward according to his own** peculiar **labour**—not according to his success; but he who labours much, though with small success, shall have a great reward. Has not all this reasoning the same force still? Ministers are still barely instruments in God's hand, and depend as entirely as ever on His blessing to give the increase to their labours. Without this, they are nothing; with it, their part is so small, that they hardly deserve to be mentioned. May their hearts and hands be more united; and, retaining a due sense of the honour God doeth them in employing them, may they faithfully labour, not as for themselves, but for the great Proprietor of all, till the day come when He will reward them in full proportion to their fidelity and diligence!"—WESLEY.

"**Now the planter and the waterer are**

one thing. Viewed in the light of subordination to the high God, they are just one element. Like one bough of two branches, Paul and Apollos are both together in the hand of the Almighty, one ministerial implement, disparting into two distinct lines of office—that of planting or founding a church, and that of nurturing and edifying the same. In relation to Him, who from heaven employs them here on earth, the two persons are but as one thing; even as from the summit of a stately cathedral two neighbouring houses far below seem dwarfed and blended into an undistinguishable one; but when you descend, they are found, on nearer inspection, to be two several habitations. And this relative oneness of element is true of all who are officially engaged in God's service, however manifold their several employments"—EVANS. "**He that planteth and he that watereth are one.** As though to make his depreciation of man as emphatic as possible, the apostle uses the neuter gender here. The instruments are *one thing*, parts of a vast piece of machinery which God has put in motion for the salvation of the world. As channels of Divine grace it is our duty to forget their personality"—LIAS. "**Are one.** The planter and the waterer are one, in that they are both working in the same cause. 'But,' says the apostle (not 'and,' as in our version), 'each man shall receive his own reward from God, not from man, according to his labour.' There is an individuality, as well as a unity, in the work of the ministry. This is, however, not a thing to be noticed by men, but it will be recognised by the Great Master"—ELLICOTT. "**Are one**—*lit.* 'one thing'; they are practically the same. (Ch. 11. 5.) Just so in the vineyard, the man who plants is in a position neither better nor worse than the man who waters. These words, cautiously used, will cast light on John 10. 30; 17. 11, 21. **But each man**, etc., points both to the owners, and the individuality, of the servants of God. Because they stand in exactly the same relation to the Master, each will receive according to his labour. **Reward**—suggests their humble position as men paid for their work. **Labour**—not according to results, but according to the quantity and quality of his toil. **His own reward**, and **his own labour**, exactly correspond"—BEET.

9. **For we are all fellow-labourers**—"God's labourers, and fellow-labourers with each other. **Ye are God's husbandry.** This is the sum of what went before; it is a comprehensive word, taking in both a field, a garden, and a vineyard. **Ye are God's building**—this is the sum of what follows"—WESLEY.

"Throughout this paragraph it is this thought that S. Paul dwells upon—that the Church is originated and maintained, not by men, but by God. Teachers are but God's instruments; and yet, being human instruments, they have each his own responsibility, as each has his own work. From this truth that God alone is the Giver of spiritual life and that the Church is His building several inferences may be drawn:—(1) Our praise for any good we have received of a spiritual kind should be given, not solely to men, but mainly to God; (2) It is to God we must look for all further growth; (3) If we are God's husbandry and building, let us reverence God's work in ourselves; (4) For the same reason we must hope for others as for ourselves—it is the foundation of all hope to know that God has always been inclining men to righteousness and will always do so; (5) The chief inference S. Paul draws from the truth that the Church is God's building is the grave responsibility of those who labour for God in this work"—DODS.

10. **According to the grace of God given to me.** "This he premises, lest he should seem to ascribe it to himself. **Let everyone take heed how he buildeth thereon**—that all his doctrines may be consistent with the foundation"—WESLEY.

"**According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder**—rather, 'which *was* given to me,' *i.e.* when he laid the foundation. S. Paul now desires to identify himself with the teachers of the Corinthian church, so far as they were really carrying on the work which he had begun. His object is to combat the individualism which had led the Corinthian church astray. If their teachers be genuine ministers of Christ, it is but one work that they are carrying on. They are merely proceeding with the superstructure of that which the apostle had founded. Comparison of their personal claims with those of S. Paul, and still more an attitude of antagonism to him and to one another, are entirely out of place. **But let every man take heed.** A fresh subject is here introduced. We are now told of what kind the labour of a minister of Christ is to be, and what his reward. There is, there can be, but one foundation, but there are many ways of building on that foundation"—LIAS. "One might see in the words, **as a wise master-builder**, nothing more than an idea analogous to that expressed in Matt. 7. 24–27. S. Paul would then simply mean, 'I did not build on ground without laying a foundation for the building.' But the idea of prudence, or better still of ability, seems rather to relate to the *manner* in which he laboured in laying the foundation, than to the simple act itself of laying it. 'The master-builder' is not only he who draws the plan of the building—in this sense the title would revert to God—but also the man who directs its execution"—GODET.

11. **For other foundation**—"on which the whole Church, and all its doctrines, duties, and blessings may be built—**can no man lay than what is laid**—in the counsels of Divine wisdom, in the promises and prophecies of the

Old Testament, in the preaching of the apostles, S. Paul in particular. **Which is Jesus Christ**—who, in His person and offices, is the firm, immovable ROCK OF AGES, every way sufficient to bear all the weight that God Himself, or the sinner, when he believes, can lay upon Him"—WESLEY.

"Any teacher who professes to lay another foundation thereby gives up his claim to be a Christian teacher. If anyone proceeds to lay another foundation than Christ, it is not a Christian Church he is meaning to build. He who does not proceed upon the facts of Christ's life and death, he whose instruction does not presuppose Christ as its Foundation, may be useful for some purposes of life, but not as a builder of the Christian temple. And the question at present, says S. Paul, is not what other institutions you may profitably found in the world, but how this institution of the Church, already founded, is to be completed"—DODS. "The apostle preached Christ—Christ the Example, Christ the Life, Christ the Son of Man, Christ the Son of God, Christ risen, Christ the King of Glory"—ROBERTSON. "**Which is Jesus Christ.** The doctrine of His person and offices is the foundation of Christian religion, and must therefore be kept pure and entire by all means possible. Every particle of truth is precious, and not to be parted with"—TRAPP.

12. **If anyone build gold, silver, costly stones**—"three sorts of materials which will bear the fire—true and solid doctrines. **Wood, hay, stubble**—three which will not bear the fire. Such are all doctrines, ceremonies, and forms of human invention; all but the substantial, vital truths of Christianity"—WESLEY.

"**Now if any man build upon this foundation.** It must be remembered that it is not the conduct of Christians, however applicable the principles here enunciated may be to it, but the doctrine of teachers which is spoken of here. The materials mentioned are of two classes, those that will endure fire and those that will not. We may dismiss from our consideration such preaching as is dictated by vain-glory or self-interest, for the simple reason that it is not building upon Christ at all. The two kinds of preaching thus become, on the one hand, that which leads to *permanent results*, the glory of God and the real well-being of man; and, on the other, that which, though the offspring of a genuine zeal, is not according to knowledge"—LIAS. "Many ingenious attempts have been made to apply the imagery of this passage in detail to various doctrines or Christian virtues, but it seems best to regard it as broadly and in outline bringing before the reader the two great ideas of permanent and ephemeral work, and the striking contrast between them. The truth brought forward is primarily, if not exclusively, for teachers. The image is taken from what would have met the eye of a traveller in Ephesus where S. Paul now was, or in Corinth where his letter was to be first read. The stately palaces of marble and granite, with roof and column glittering with gold and silver decorations, and close by these the wretched hovels of the poor and outcast, the walls made of laths of wood, and a thatched roof above. Then arose before the apostle's vision the thought of a city being visited by a mighty conflagration, such as desolated Corinth in the time of Mummius. The mean structures of perishable wood and straw would be utterly consumed, while, as was actually the case in Corinth, the mighty palaces and temples would stand after the fire had exhausted itself. Thus, says S. Paul, it will be with the work of Christian teachers when the 'day of the Lord is revealed in fire.' The fire of that day will prove and test the quality of each work"—ELLICOTT.

13. "The time is coming when **everyone's work shall be made manifest; for the day** of the Lord, that great and final day, **shall declare it** — to all the world. **For it is revealed**—what faith beholds as so certain and so near is spoken of as already present. **By fire; yea, the fire shall try every one's work, of what sort it is.** The strict process of that day will try every man's doctrines, whether they come up to the Scripture standard or not. Here is a plain allusion to the flaming light and consuming heat of the general conflagration. But the expression, when applied to the trying of doctrines, and consuming those that are wrong, is evidently figurative; because no material fire can have such an effect on what is of a moral nature. And therefore it is added, he who builds **wood, hay,** or **stubble, shall be saved as through the fire**—or, as narrowly as a man escapes through the fire, when his house is all in flames about him. The text, then, is so far from establishing the Romish purgatory, that it utterly overthrows it. For the fire here mentioned does not exist till the day of judgment; therefore, if this be the fire of purgatory, it follows that purgatory does not exist before the day of judgment"—WESLEY.

The day of the coming of the Lord is always represented in similar language to this. (See Matt. 3. 1, 2, 3; 4. 1; 2 Thess. 1. 8; 2. 8.) We and our work must be judged by such a test. Only that which will not burn will abide the test of "fire." The work that has been well and wisely done will stand; vain, foolish, and selfish work will perish. WATSON'S note on this verse is: "And if, with all its imperfections, communion with the Church is so profitable and delightful, what shall it be when all imperfections, both in her and ourselves, are for ever done away? Our happiness greatly depends on our society; and that shall be a society all intellect, all purity, all love." In the new life, only the useful and the

blessed shall remain to us. "**It shall be revealed by fire**—rather, 'it is revealed in fire,' being that in which the judgment day shall consist, *i.e.* in the fire of God's judgment, fire being one of His many attributes. (Heb. 12. 29; Deut. 4. 24; 9. 3; Ps. 50. 3; 97. 3; Isa. 66. 15, 16; Mal. 3. 2, 3; 2 Thess. 1. 8.) As fire does, so does God in the end thoroughly search out and destroy all that is vile or refuse, all that is not thoroughly genuine and durable" —LIAS. "The apostle had declared (ver. 8) that each would be appraised and recompensed according to the nature of his work. He now points out when and how this discrimination will take place. The same figure continues. The edifice before being inhabited by the Master must pass through the proof of fire, in which the materials will come forth intact. Commentators are mostly at one in our time in applying the **day** of which the apostle speaks to the epoch of the Lord's advent"—GODET.

14. **He shall receive a reward**—"a peculiar degree of glory. Some degree even the other will receive, seeing he held the foundation; though through ignorance he built thereon what would not abide the fire"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul, with his unfailing discernment, accepts it as a very possible contingency that a Christian man may do poor work. In that case, S. Paul says, the man will be saved as by fire; his work shall be burned, but himself be scatheless. He shall be in the position of a man whose house has been burnt; the man is saved, but his property, all that he has slowly gathered round him and valued as the fruit of his labour, is gone. He may have received no bodily injury, but he is so stripped that he scarcely knows himself, and the whole thought and toil of his life seem to have gone for nothing. So shall the new life we are to pass into absolutely annihilate what is not in keeping with it, and leave only what is useful and congruous"—DODS.

15. "**He shall suffer loss**—the loss of that peculiar degree of glory"—WESLEY.

"**Yet so as by fire.** The absolute equality of all in the world to come is no part of S. Paul's system. 'One star differeth from another star in glory' (ch. 15. 41). But the history of the apostle himself is a sufficient evidence that God will not punish with the loss of His presence the man who has acted up to the highest dictates of a conscience not yet fully enlightened. The work perishes, but he who believed himself to be actively serving God when in fact he was doing nothing shall not be driven into the outer darkness. 'Sincerity does not verify doctrine, but it saves the man; his person is accepted, though his work perish'"—ROBERTSON. "Yet he will be saved 'so as by fire.' Surely the 'smell of fire' may be said to pass on him who sees all those works which he so honestly believed to be for God vanishing as worthless stubble in the searching trial which will 'purge away all the dross' of our human doings, and leave only what is of real value in God's sight"—C. B.

16. **Ye**—"all Christians—**are the temple of God** — the most noble kind of building (ver. 9)"—WESLEY.

"God is especially present in the hearts of His people, by His Holy Spirit, and indeed the hearts of holy men are temples in the truth of things, and in type and shadow they are heaven itself. For God reigns in the hearts of His servants; there is His kingdom. The power of His grace has subdued all His enemies; there is His power. They serve Him night and day, and give Him thanks and praise; that is His glory. This is the religion and worship of God in the temple. The temple itself is the heart of man"—JEREMY TAYLOR. "**Ye are the temple of God**—not God's building only (as ver. 9), but His temple. A mud wall may be made up of anything, not so the walls of a temple or palace—that must have other materials. **And the Spirit of God dwelleth in you**—next to the love of Christ indwelling in our nature, we may wonder at the love of the Holy Ghost, that will dwell in our defiled souls. The Holy Ghost will dwell in a poor, so it be a pure, house"—TRAPP.

17. **If any man destroy the temple of God**—"destroy a real Christian, by schisms or doctrines fundamentally wrong — **him shall God destroy**—he shall not be saved at all—not even as 'through the fire'"—WESLEY.

"This clause looks very like a citation from Old Testament. Temporal death was the penalty for damaging the material temple (Ex. 28. 43), and so analogously spiritual death is the result of damaging the spiritual temple" —EVANS. "The case of the individual is precisely the same as with the entire temple of God. What is addressed to the latter is also valid for the former. To injure the temple of God stands parallel with building in wood and stubble; and it refers as much externally to mistaken labours of others, as internally to the false working in and for one's self. He who errs in one respect will not fail to do so in the other"—OLSHAUSEN.

18. **Let him become a fool in this world**—"such as the world accounts so—**that he may become wise**—in God's account"—WESLEY.

"The meaning is this: 'If any individual whatever, Corinthian or other, while preaching the gospel *in your assemblies*, assumes the part of the wise man and the reputation of a profound thinker (ch. 4. 10), let him assure himself that he will not attain to true wisdom till he has passed through a crisis in which that wisdom of his with which he is puffed up will perish, and after which only he will receive the wisdom which is from above.' This crisis of death to false wisdom is what the apostle characterises by the words, **let him become a fool**"—GODET.

19. "**For** all **the** boasted **wisdom of the world is** mere **foolishness** in the sight of God,

He taketh the wise in their own craftiness—not only while they think they are acting wisely, but by their very wisdom, which itself is their snare, and the occasion of their destruction"—WESLEY.

"Reason why such wisdom is folly with God, shown from Scripture. The connection seems to be, as ALFORD, 'If God uses the craftiness of the wise as a net to catch them in, such wisdom is in His sight folly, since He turns it to their own confusion.' **For it is written**—by two passages, one from Job and the other from the Psalms. S. Paul proves the truth of his previous assertion regarding God's estimate of mere 'worldly wisdom.' It may be noticed that with the exception of the reference in Jas. 5. 11 to the 'proverbial patience' of Job, of which the writer says, 'ye have *heard*' (not read), this is the only allusion to the book of Job or to Job in the New Testament"—ELLICOTT.

20. **That they are but vain**—"empty, foolish; they and all their thoughts"—WESLEY.

This verse is taken out of Psalm 94. 11, and quoted literally according to the translation of the LXX. The three following verses contain the direction which it remains to him to give to the church itself as to its conduct towards God's true ministers. They are therefore the conclusion of the passage begun, ch. 2. 5.

21. **Therefore**—"upon the whole—**let none glory in men**—so as to divide into parties on their account. **For all things are yours**—and we in particular. We are not your lords, but rather your servants"—WESLEY.

"*To glory in a person* can only mean: to boast of one's relation to him, to take honour from belonging to him, as a servant or a disciple takes glory from the name of an illustrious master. It is an allusion to the formulas: '1 am of Paul, . . . Apollos,' etc. Far from its being believers who belong to their teachers, it is much rather these who belong to them; and not only their teachers, but **all things**. The contents of this 'all things' are detailed in the following enumeration, which has been called, not without reason, 'the inventory of the possessions of the child of God,' and in which death itself figures"—GODET.

22. **Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.** "We are all equally yours, to serve you for Christ's sake. **Or the world.** This leap from S. Peter to 'the world' greatly enlarges the thought, and argues a kind of impatience of enumerating the rest. S. Peter and everyone in the whole world, however excellent in gifts or grace or office, are also your servants for Christ's sake. **Or life, or death**—these, with all their various circumstances, are disposed as will be most for your advantage. **Or things present**—on earth. **Or things to come**—in heaven. Contend, therefore, no more about these little things; but be ye united in love as ye are in blessedness"—WESLEY.

"No one is so truly master and lord of this world as the man to whom the world is crucified in Christ; no one, other things being equal, has so true and exquisite an enjoyment of the beauties of nature and the bounties of Providence as the man who in his heart gives up all for Christ. When the soul is yielded up to God, and pervaded with His love, its chords vibrate in sweet harmony with the breathing, swelling chorus of nature, providence, and grace"—L. H. WISEMAN. "**All things are yours**—suggests to S. Paul the whole wealth of the Christian, for whom exist not only all those who have striven to unfold the significance of the Christian revelation, but all things else, whether **the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come.** As it is true of all teachers, of however commanding genius, that the Church does not exist for them that they may have a field for their genius, and followers to applaud and represent them; but they exist for the Church, their genius being used for the advancement of the spiritual life of this and that unknown and hidden soul; so is it true of all things—of life and all its laws, of death and all it leads to—that these are ordained of God to minister to the growth of His children. This was the regal attitude which S. Paul himself assumed and maintained towards all events and the whole world of created things. The same inheritance belongs to every one who has faith to take it"—DODS.

23. "**And ye are Christ's**—His property, His subjects, His members—**and Christ is God's**—as Mediator; He refers all His services to His Father's glory"—WESLEY.

"All things serve your highest good, and are bringing you on towards your eternal joy, more certainly than the things you select and buy or win and cherish as your own. You are free men, supreme over all created things, for 'ye are Christ's'; you belong to Him who rules all, and loves you as His own; and above Christ and His rule there is no adverse will that can rob you of any good, for as ye are Christ's, cherished by Him, so is Christ God's, and the supreme will that governs all, governs all in the interests of Christ"—DODS. "It is not restrictions we have here, but strong affirmations; the thought is not limited, it rises. 'All things are the Church's, because it belongs itself to Christ, and depends on Him.' It is not merely a few presumptuous people, puffed up with conceit of their own wisdom, who can say, 'And as for me, I am Christ's'; this is the privilege of the whole Church. And, as if to put the last stroke to the annihilation of all human glory, S. Paul denies it even in the person of that Lord in whom all mankind might legitimately glory. **And Christ is God's.** As the Church possesses all things because it depends on Christ, Christ possesses all things because He depends on God. (Comp. ch. 11. 3.) God in Christ, such then for man is

the one subject of glorying (ch. 1. 31)"—GODET.

CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1–7. THE TRUE ESTIMATION OF CHRIST'S MINISTERS AND THE TEST OF THEIR WORK.—1. **Let a man account us as servants of Christ.** "The original word properly signifies such servants as laboured at the oar in rowing vessels; and, accordingly, intimates the pains which every faithful minister takes in his Lord's work. O God, where are these ministers to be found? Lord, Thou knowest. **And stewards of the mysteries of God**—dispensers of the mysterious truths of the gospel"—WESLEY.

Ministers are stewards, and what a steward's office is we learn from Matt. 24. 45. They are to teach the truth of God to others, and to be qualified for so doing by their own knowledge of it, and by their personal experience of its power and blessedness. This knowledge and experience is revealed only to the spiritual. (See ch. 2. 10–16.) "**A minister of Christ**—that is, a person deputed by the command, and invested with the authority, of Christ, to administer in holy things, to preach the word, administer the sacraments, execute Church censures; being in all things an example to the flock. And the people are to account the office and work of the ministry as a Divine institution and appointment of Christ in His Church"—BURKITT.

2. **Found faithful**—to his Lord, and to his Lord's people. Maintaining his purity of motive in work, as well as his devotion, and ever remembering that he must give an account of his stewardship before the just and impartial God.

3. **Yea, I judge not myself**—"my final state is not to be determined by my own judgment"—WESLEY.

This does not mean that we should be unconcerned about, or regardless of, human opinion. Every true man must be careful to maintain his reputation by an unvarying devotion to God, and the consequent consistency of life. The apostle altogether declines to admit the right of any human tribunal to institute an inquiry into his motives, and just as definitively does he refuse to be his own judge. There is only One to whom deception is impossible. He will finally judge every man.

4. **I am not conscious to myself of anything evil; yet am I not hereby justified**—"I depend not on this, as a sufficient justification of myself in God's account. **But He that judgeth me is the Lord**—by His sentence I am to stand or fall"—WESLEY.

"**For I know nothing against myself** (R.V.). S. Paul, as in Acts 23. 1, gives the Corinthians to understand that he is not aware of any *wilful* dereliction of duty on his part. (See 2 Cor. 1. 12.) We can hardly suppose that one who was so conscious of his many infirmities (see ch. 9. 27; 15. 9; Eph. 3. 8; 1 Tim 1. 13, 15) supposed himself to be altogether free from faults. The next verse implies the contrary, and we read in an Epistle written long afterwards (Phil. 3. 13) that he did not consider himself 'already perfect,' but as pushing on towards his only ideal of perfection, the character of his Master, Jesus Christ"—LIAS. "S. Paul, a chosen vessel, but yet an earthen vessel, knew well that he had his cracks and his flaws, which God could easily find out"—TRAPP.

5. **Therefore judge nothing before the time**—"appointed for judging all men—**until the Lord come, who**, in order to pass a righteous judgment, which otherwise would be impossible, **will both bring to light the things** which are now covered with impenetrable **darkness, and manifest** the most secret springs of action, the principles and intentions of every **heart. And then shall everyone**—every faithful steward—**have praise of God**"—WESLEY.

"The metaphor of **light**, compared with 'fire' in ch. 3. 13, suggests the ease and suddenness and completeness with which the great day will make all things known; just as the daylight reveals things unknown in the night. **The hidden things** suggests how much that is needful for a correct estimate of men's conduct now lies under an impenetrable veil. **The counsels**, etc., the purposes, now hidden in men's **hearts**, which move them to activity and which will determine their reward. A solemn warning to many at Corinth. All judgments on Christian workers before **the Lord comes** are **before the right time** (same word as 'season'—see ch. 7. 5), for not till then will all the facts be known. **From God**—rising as usual from the Son, whose coming will bring to light all the facts of the case, to the Father, who is the original source of **the praise** which, through the lips of Christ, will be given *to each* faithful servant"—BEET. "Learn not to judge, for we do not know the secrets of the heart. We judge men by gifts, or by a correspondence with our own peculiarities, but God judges by fidelity"—ROBERTSON.

6. **These things**—"mentioned, ch. 1. 10, etc.—**I have by a very** obvious **figure transferred to myself, and Apollos**—and Cephas, instead of naming those particular preachers at Corinth, to whom ye are so fondly attached. **That ye may learn by us**—from what has been said concerning us, who, however eminent we are, are mere instruments in God's hand. **Not to think of** any man **above what is here written**—or above what Scripture warrants"—WESLEY.

"**Things which are written**—in the Old Testament, according to S. Paul's constant and frequent use of this phrase. These words remind the readers that a careful study of the Scriptures would have corrected these errors. An interesting coincidence with S. Paul's habit,

of referring to the Old Testament. **Not to go beyond**, etc.—not to exceed, in their estimate of themselves and others, the descriptions of human nature given in the Old Testament. Of these descriptions we have specimens in ch. 3. 19 f. **That in us you may learn**, etc.—*i.e.* by considering S. Paul's description of the position of himself and Apollos, as garden labourers, paid for their work, house-stewards, etc. **Puffed up**—become large in your own esteem. This word is a marked feature of S. Paul's description of the Corinthian Christians (vers. 18, 19; 8. 1; 13. 4; Col. 2. 18.) Its use here implies that their self-conceit was the source of their party spirit. They set themselves on the side of one man and against another, because of something in the one which seemed to flatter, and something in the other which did not flatter, their vanity"—BEET.

7. **Who maketh thee to differ**—"either in gifts or graces. **As if thou hadst not received it**—as if thou hadst it originally from thyself"—WESLEY.

All good gifts are of God—a fact which should exclude all boasting or self-satisfaction. Right views of ourselves will show that all we have of gifts or grace is not the result of personal merit, but through the boundless mercy of God. (See John 3. 27; Jas. 1. 17.) "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." "Remember, therefore, that though thou be a vessel of mercy, it is the fountain that filleth thee, and not thyself. Whenever thou gloriest in thy graces, do it but as the beggar glorieth in his alms, that ascribes all to the giver; or as the patient glorieth in his cure, that ascribeth all to God and the physician; or as a condemned rebel doth glory in a pardon, which he ascribeth to the mercy of his prince"—BAXTER.

Vers. 8-16. CONTRAST BETWEEN THE CORINTHIAN TEACHERS AND S. PAUL.—8. **Now ye are full.** "The Corinthians abounded with spiritual gifts; and so did the apostles; but the apostles, by continual want and sufferings, were kept from self-complacency. The Corinthians suffering nothing, and having plenty of all things, were pleased with and applauded themselves; and they were like children who, being raised in the world, disregard their poor parents. **Now ye are full**, says the apostle, in a beautiful gradation, **ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings**—a proverbial expression, denoting the most splendid and plentiful circumstances. **Without** any thought of **us. And I would ye did reign**—in the best sense; I would ye had attained the height of holiness. **That we might reign with you**—having no more sorrow on your account, but sharing in your happiness"—WESLEY.

"Here we have one of the sudden turns of feeling so remarkable in the apostle's style. Abruptly breaking off at the word 'boast,' he dashes off into an animated and ironical apostrophe. 'I may well say boast,' for boasting is your crying sin, but it is boasting in yourselves, not in God. All your wants, spiritual and temporal, now are satisfied; you have become rich; you are reigning like kings. But in your self-satisfaction you give not a thought to those whose labours have made you what you are. Would that it were really with you as you imagine it to be! Then we might hope for some remission of our trials, distresses, humiliations. But at present all the sorrow, suffering, shame is ours, while either in fact or in fancy you are enjoying all the good things given to Christians — immunity from suffering, quiet of conscience (Rom. 8. 1), wisdom, honour, inward satisfaction. The word translated **full** has the sense of being satiated with good things. **Without us.** Though S. Paul had admitted the Corinthians into the same blessings as he enjoyed himself, he had no share in *their* blessings. **And I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.** The apostle does not regard the persecutions and distresses he underwent as desirable for their own sake, but only as means to an end. The empire of evil is not to be destroyed without a conflict, and the sufferings endured by Christ's servants are the evidences that it is going on. But the best of those who are thus contending for the truth may lawfully wish that the conflict were over and the reign of the saints begun. Such a wish, in fact, appears to be expressed by the words, 'Thy kingdom come'"—LIAS.

8. **God hath set forth us last, as appointed to death**—"alluding to the Roman custom of bringing forth those persons last on the stage, either to fight with each other, or with wild beasts, who were devoted to death; so that, if they escaped one day, they were brought out again and again, till they were killed"—WESLEY.

"An abundant reason for the wish just expressed, viz. S. Paul's present position. **I think**—S. Paul's view of himself, in contrast to his readers' self-estimate. **Us the apostles** (see Rom. 1. 1; 2 Cor. 8. 23) seems to imply that other apostles endured hardships similar, though probably not equal, to those of S. Paul. But it does not imply that Apollos was an apostle. For S. Paul is now dealing, not with the factions, but with self-conceit generally. And this he puts to shame by the hardships of those who hold the first rank in the Church"—BEET. **A spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.** "By the angels, to whom the apostles were made a spectacle, some understand the evil angels, who may be supposed to delight in the blood of the martyrs. Others understand the good angels, to whom the faith and constancy of the apostles gave great joy. Probably both were intended. For it must have animated the apostles, in combating with their persecutors, to think that they were disappointing the

malice of evil spirits, while they were making the angels in heaven and good men on earth happy, by the faith and patience and fortitude which they were exerting in so noble a cause"—MACKNIGHT.

10. **We are fools**—"in the account of the world—**for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ.** Though ye are Christians, ye think yourselves wise; and ye have found means to make the world think you so too. **We are weak**—in presence, in infirmities, in sufferings—**but ye are strong**—in just opposite circumstances"—WESLEY.

Ye have glory, but we have dishonour (R.V.). This verse is charged with irony. Our connection with Christ, as His apostles and preachers, may make us fools; you are, on the contrary, "wise Christians; we are weak Christians, ye strong; ye are glorified, made leaders of factions and churches, we are despised"—ELLICOTT. "These words are addressed especially to the principal men of the church, but at the same time to all its members who share in the pretensions of these proud party leaders. As to *teaching*, the apostles had to face the reputation of foolishness which the gospel brings on them, while at Corinth there is found a way of preaching Christ so as to procure a name for wisdom, the reputation of refined philosophers and men of most reliable judgment. As a rabbin he might have become as eminent a savant as Hillel, as celebrated as Gamaliel; for Christ he has consented to pass as a fool. The Corinthians know better how to manage; they make the teaching even of the gospel a means of gaining celebrity for their lofty wisdom"—GODET.

11. **And are naked.** "Who can imagine a more glorious triumph of the truth than that which is gained in these circumstances; when S. Paul, with an impediment in his speech and a person rather contemptible than graceful, appeared in a mean, perhaps tattered, dress before persons of the highest distinction, and yet commanded such attention and made such deep impressions upon them"—WESLEY.

The words, **even to this present hour**, reproduce the thought of the whole passage: "As for us, up to this hour, we are little aware that the dispensation of triumph has already begun." The apostle would point out to his converts the true glory of the Christian minister. Labour and suffering for Christ's sake are the marks of the servants of God, not self-conceit and self-praise. "**We both hunger.** From the strong irony of the last verse the apostle here passes, in the pathetic and sad description which occupies vers. 11–13, to show how intensely true that last word 'despised' was, as expressing his own position, not only in time past, but at the very hour of his writing. Here still there is an implied contrast between their condition ('full, rich, kings,' of ver. 8) and that of S. Paul himself. **Are naked.** The better reading is, 'We are in need of sufficient clothing' (as 2 Cor. 11. 27). **Are buffeted**—*i.e.* are treated like slaves, and not like 'kings,' as you are. **Have no certain dwelling-place.** To be without a fixed home was a peculiar sign of want and degradation. (See Matt. 8. 20; 10. 23)"—ELLICOTT.

12. **We bless—suffer it—entreat.** "We do not return revilings, persecution, defamations; nothing but blessing"—WESLEY.

"**We bless**—speak smoothly, as in Rom. 16. 18. (See Rom 1. 25.) **We endure it**—not repelling the attack of our enemies. **We entreat**, or 'exhort' as in ch. 10: stronger than 'we bless.' 'We beg a favour from those who speak hurtfully of us, as though utterly at their mercy.' To return smooth words for rough ones; to submit to, instead of resisting, the attacks of enemies; to ask favours from, instead of spurning, those who revile us, arises usually from the absolute helplessness of men who dare not defend themselves. And S. Paul's forbearance would be thus interpreted. It was, therefore, a mark of humiliation of his position"—BEET.

13. **We are made as the filth of the world, and offscouring of all things.** "Such were those poor wretches among the heathens, who were taken from the dregs of the people, to be offered as expiatory sacrifices to the infernal gods. They were loaded with curses, affronts, and injuries, all the way they went to the altars; and when the ashes of those unhappy men were thrown into the sea, these very names were given them in the ceremony"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul does not assert that he *is* such an *expiatory sacrifice*, but that he is **like** one, because by his sorrows and sufferings many souls are brought to Christ. He represents himself as becoming the refuse of mankind, in order that by this means he may bring blessings innumerable within their reach"—LIAS. "A piece of plate may become battered and scratched, so that its beauty is hopelessly gone, but it loses not its real worth; put it into the scale, and its weight and not its fashion shall be the estimate of its preciousness; throw it into the melting-pot, and its purity will show its actual value. So with a Christian. God's unerring balance and crucible are not guided by appearances. How content may we be to be vile in the sight of men if we are accepted of the Lord"—SPURGEON. **Being defamed, we entreat.** Though Luther call me devil, saith Calvin, yet I will honour him as a servant of God.

14. **I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.** "It is with admirable prudence and sweetness the apostle adds this, to prevent any unkind construction of his words"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul has now completed his discussion of the church parties, by uncovering their source, viz. an inflated self-estimate and this

he has sought to annihilate by the example of his own self-forgetfulness. So severe is the contrast thus presented that S. Paul's courteous tact and tender heart move him to soften it. '**To put you to shame** is not my purpose, and therefore not the meaning of my words.' **Admonish** (Rom. 15. 14; Col. 1. 28)—reproof with a view to improvement. S. Paul looks upon them **as children**, even his own children, and exercises towards them the discipline of intelligent paternal love"—BEET. "The apostle no doubt spoke to them in a humiliating way; but his object was quite different from that of causing them shame; he wished to lead them with a firm hand into another way"—GODET.

15. **I have begotten you.** "This excludes not only Apollos, his successor, but also Silas and Timothy, his companions; and the relation between a spiritual father and his children brings with it an inexpressible nearness and affection"—WESLEY.

It is God who saves men from sin, and this adopting grace which makes them His *sons*, but He saves them by human instrumentality. Saul was stricken by the light from heaven, and answered by the Lord Himself; but the *man* Ananias was the medium through which the rich and abiding gifts of grace came to him. And to-day there are many of whom the Lord says to His Church, "Ministers by whom ye believed" (2 Thess. 2. 14). "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word."

16. **Be ye followers of me**—"in that spirit and behaviour which I have so largely declared"—WESLEY.

We are examples as well as teachers of holy living. The conduct and conversation must be in harmony with the preaching and the doctrine of the gospel; and when a man's conscience tells him he has honestly striven to be faithful to God, he may adopt this language with as much humility as gratitude. ROBERTSON says: "It might sound as if S. Paul were inviting them to become his followers instead of following Cephas or Apollos. But that would be to forget the whole argument. To say that, would have been to have fallen into the very error that he blamed, and to have opposed and contradicted his own depreciation of himself; to have denied every principle he had been establishing. S. Paul is not speaking of doctrine, but of life. He says that the *life* he had just described was the one for them to follow. In *this* **be ye followers of me**—he declares the life of suffering, of hardship in the cause of duty, to be higher than the life of popularity and self-indulgence."

17. **My beloved son.** "Elsewhere he styles him 'brother' (2 Cor. 1. 1); but here paternal affection takes place. **As I teach**—no less by example than precept"—WESLEY.

S. Paul's love for Timothy is evident in every allusion to him. (See Phil. 2. 19, 20, 22; 1 Thess. 3. 2; 1 Tim. 1. 23; 2 Tim. 3. 10.) Here he implies that Timothy owed his conversion to him, as also in 1 Tim. 1. 2, 18; 2 Tim. 1. 2. No man would be so likely to win the confidence of the church at Corinth, and so put an end to the existing contentions among them, as this trusted and beloved representative of the apostle, who had been their spiritual father.

18. **Now some are puffed up.** "S. Paul saw, by a Divine light, the thoughts which would arise in their hearts. **As if I would not come** — because I send Timothy"—WESLEY.

"There were those at Corinth who depreciated S. Paul's authority. Such persons persuaded themselves that they had so undermined his reputation that he would not dare to come again to Corinth, and they grew more self-asserting in consequence. But though S. Paul submitted to contempt and insult from without he demands the respect due to his office from those within. He bore the reproach of the infidel and scoffer; among his own people he acts upon the precept, 'Let no man despise thee.' Paley remarks on the undersigned coincidence between this passage and 2 Cor. 1. 15-17; 2. 1. It appears that there had been some uncertainty about the apostle's visit. It was this which had led some of his opponents to assert that he would never show his face at Corinth again"—C. B.

19. **I will know.** "He here shows his fatherly authority—**not the** big, empty, **speech of** these vain boasters, **but** how much of **the power** of God attends them"—WESLEY.

"**If the Lord will.** See Jas. 4. 13-15, who justly derides that rashness among men, in that they plan what they shall do ten years hence, when they are not certain that they shall live another hour"—CALVIN. "S. Paul contrasts **the word**, here the fine discourses, the profound deductions which called forth the plaudits of the hearers, with **the power**; by which he designates the effectual virtue of the Divine Spirit which brings back souls to themselves, makes them contrite, leads them to Christ, and begets them to a new life. S. Paul will find out whether, with this abundance of talk which makes itself heard in the assemblies (ch. 14), there is found or there is lacking the creative breath of the Spirit"—GODET.

20. **For the kingdom of God**—"real religion does **not** consist in words, **but in the power** of God ruling the heart"—WESLEY.

"Of what the apostle meant by **power**, we are scarcely fit judges. We have been too familiar with them from childhood to be able to comprehend what 'power' the apostles' words must have had upon the hearts and lives of those who heard them. We may gain some slight idea by comparing them with the best passages of the earliest Christian writers after the apostles; and still more by comparing them with the utterances of the Greek sophists and

dialecticians of the time. The kingdom of God, S. Paul would remind his hearers, *i.e.* His sovereignty over the human heart, is not simply an affair of the intellect, but of the spirit. It does not consist in the acceptance or establishment of certain propositions, but in influence over the life and conscience"—LIAS.

21. **With a rod**—"that is, with severity"—WESLEY.

"**What will ye?** I give you a choice. I am coming to you as a father in any case. But shall I come as a father comes with a rod (Isa. 11. 4), and going to inflict punishment with it; or as a father would come when no faults on the child's part need interfere with the perfect and unrestricted outflowing of his gentleness and love? His love would be no love if, without any change on their part, it led him to show no displeasure where correction was for their sake absolutely needed. This is a great and striking example of S. Paul having the 'mind of God.' He treats the Corinthians as God ever treats His children"—ELLICOTT. "The first part of the Epistle is closed. The divisions which had arisen revealed to S. Paul the deep corruption which the gospel had undergone in this church. He understood it: teachers are not changed into the heads of schools, except because the gospel has been changed into a system. To ascend, then, to the true notion of Christianity, in order to deduce from it that of the Christian ministry, and to restore the normal relation between this office and the whole Church, such was his first task. The flock once gathered under the shepherd's crook, he may with hope of success attack the particular vices which had crept into it. These first four chapters are thus the foundation of the whole Epistle"—GODET.

CHAPTER V.

SECTION III.—Vers. 1–5. DISCIPLINE. THE CASE OF THE INCESTUOUS PERSON.—1. **Fornication.** "The original word implies criminal conversation of any kind whatever. **His father's wife**—while his father was alive"—WESLEY.

These Corinthians were not a pattern of Christian morality, and they needed to be taught the most simple rudiments of decency and duty. They had been depraved heathens, and dreadful crimes lingered among them. Plain words of reproof must therefore be spoken to them.

2. "**Are ye puffed up?** Should **ye not rather have mourned** — have solemnly humbled yourselves, and at that time of solemn mourning have expelled that notorious sinner from your communion?"—WESLEY.

Sad indeed was their condition when so great a scandal could exist, and the church remain unconcerned. They had not censured the offender, when they ought to have promptly put him away from them, and have mourned for the sin and its disgrace. No church can be healthy if it is not pure. Israel may fight, but cannot conquer, so long as the deceitful Achan remains unrepentant or unpunished.

3. **I verily, as present in spirit**—"having a full (it seems a miraculous) view of the whole fact—**have already, as if I were** actually **present, judged him who hath so** scandalously **done this**"—WESLEY.

"**I verily, as absent in body.** (Comp. Col. 2. 5; 1 Thess. 2. 17.) Here we have the method of excommunication pursued in the apostolic Church. It is important to observe it narrowly: *First*, It is to be remarked that the apostle is acting not only as the president, but as the founder of the Corinthian church. *Next*, we remark that the whole church at Corinth was associated with him in the work. **When ye are gathered together, and my spirit.** Hence it came to pass that in primitive times it was usual for such acts of discipline to be carried out in the presence of the church or congregation in which the offender was accustomed to worship. *Thirdly*, It is observable that such excommunication was pronounced 'in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,' that is, with His authority and in accordance with His Divine law of purity and love, whereby, while hating the sin, He desired to convert the offender"—C. B.

4. **And my spirit**—"present with you—**with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ**—to confirm my sentence"—WESLEY.

"The tribunal is formed of the Christians of Corinth assembled in S. Paul's spiritual presence; his competency is the **name** of Jesus Christ, under whose authority the sentence is given; his ability to execute is the **power** of Jesus Christ"—GODET. "The opening words are probably the form used in all public acts of the Church as a body, and **the power of our Lord Jesus** refers to that continual presence which Christ has promised His Church, and particular power which He had delegated to the apostles to punish"—ELLICOTT. (Matt. 16. 19; 18. 19, 20; 28. 20.)

5. **To deliver such an one.** "This was the highest degree of punishment in the Christian Church; and we may observe, the passing this sentence was the act of the apostle, not of the Corinthians. **To Satan**—who was usually permitted, in such cases, to inflict pain or sickness on the offender—**for the destruction**—though slowly and gradually—**of the flesh**—unless prevented by speedy repentance"—WESLEY.

"The object of this punishment was the destruction of the flesh, and the salvation of the man"—ELLICOTT. "This surrender to the power of Satan evidently includes, but means much more, than expulsion (vers. 2, 13) from the church. A man already by his sin a captive (2 Tim. 2. 26) of the devil, is to be given up to his power in some further sense. This can only refer, as in Job 2. 6 (comp. Luke 13. 16), to the infliction of bodily injury by the

agency of Satan, and by the permission and design of God. (Comp. Acts 5. 5; 13. 11.) The grossness of the present offence called for a like terrible penalty. Such would manifest **the power of the Lord Jesus**, and the apostolic authority of S. Paul, who was **present in his spirit**. It was not immediate death; for it was designed (comp. 1 Tim. 1. 20) to lead the sufferer by repentance to final salvation. That it was a work of Satan increases its terror and marks its connection with man's sin. All sin is self-surrender (Eph. 4. 19) to the power of evil; and the surrender reaches further than the sinner thinks"—BEET.

6. **Your glorying**—"either in your gifts or prosperity, at such a time as this—**is not good**. **Know ye not that a little leaven**—one sin or one sinner—**leaveneth the whole lump**—diffuses guilt and affection through the whole congregation"—WESLEY.

Still writing of the unexpelled immoral man, the apostle again reminds them how little cause they had for self-glorification. As long as they permitted such an offender to defile the church, they were partakers of sin. Not only so, but the defilement would extend. **A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.** The ailment of the finger may fill the whole body with disease. The decay of the branch may mean death to the tree. Unreproved sin deteriorates the whole Church, as surely as it defiles the individual conscience. JOHN ANGELL JAMES said: "No one becomes vicious all at once. The way of a transgressor is like that of a stone down-hill, which, when it is once set going, moves at every revolution with accelerated speed." What is true of the individual is true of the community.

7. **Purge out therefore the old leaven**—"both of sinners and of sin—**that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened**—that is, that being unleavened ye may be a new lump, holy unto the Lord. **For our Passover is slain for us.** The Jewish Passover, about the time of which this Epistle was written (ch. 5. 11), was only a type of this. What exquisite skill both here and everywhere conducts the zeal of the inspired writer! How surprising a transition is here, and yet how perfectly natural! The apostle, speaking of the incestuous criminal, slides into his darling topic—a crucified Saviour. Who would have expected it on such an occasion? Yet, when it is thus brought in, who does not see and admire both the propriety of the subject, and the delicacy of its introduction?"—WESLEY.

"The language here is Hebraical. Before the Passover, the Jews cleared their houses of leaven, and lived for seven days on biscuit-bread, made simply of flour and water. Christ, the Paschal Lamb, being sacrificed for us, Christians are called to put away from their hearts the leaven of malice and wickedness, and be consecrated to the Lord. Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed"—SUTCLIFFE. "**Purge out therefore the old leaven.** Reference is here made to the Jewish custom of searching for leaven, which is mentioned in the Talmud, and which probably existed in the apostles' time. Because Scripture speaks of 'searching Jerusalem with candles' (Zeph. 1. 12), they used to carry out this custom of searching for leaven with great strictness, taking a candle and 'prying into every mouse-hole and cranny,' as S. Chrysostom says, so as to collect even the smallest crumb of leavened bread, which was to be placed in a box, or some place where a mouse could not get at it. This ceremony, as Lightfoot tells us (*Temple Service*, ch. 12. sec. 1), was prefaced by the prayer, 'Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, the King Everlasting, who has sanctified us by Thy commandments, and has enjoined the putting away of leaven.' The custom exists among the Jews to this day. The scrupulous care in removing the smallest particle of the bitter substance adds force to S. Paul's injunction. Not the slightest trace of bitterness and vice and wickedness was to be left among Christians, since they kept continual feast upon the flesh and blood of the Paschal Lamb, even Jesus Christ. See the discourse in S. John 6, itself delivered before a Passover. **That ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened**—'as ye are (called to be) unleavened,' *i.e.* purged free from 'vice and wickedness' (ver. 8), 'so be also in fact.' The Christian community was to be a 'new lump,' because it was placed among men as a new society—a society, the object and aim of which was to keep itself free from the defilements of the rest of the world. The word translated 'lump' signifies properly a mass of dough, from a verb signifying 'to mix, knead'"—LIAS.

8. **Therefore let us keep the feast.** "Let us feed on Him by faith. Here is a plain allusion to the Lord's Supper, which was instituted in the room of the Passover—**not with the old leaven**—of heathenism or Judaism. **Malignity** is stubbornness in evil. **Sincerity and truth** seem to be put here for the whole of true, inward religion"—WESLEY.

"**Keep the feast**—(rather, 'keep festival')—referring to the perpetual feast the Christian Church keeps on the flesh and blood of her Lord. Not '*the* feast,' as in our version, which would imply some particular festival. **Malice and wickedness**—(rather, perhaps, 'vice and wickedness'). Comp. ch. 14. 20. **Sincerity and truth.** The word here translated 'sincerity' is derived either (1) from a word signifying to revolve, as though rejecting by its rapid revolution all extraneous matter, or (2) by most etymologists as from *the rays of the sun*, which by their searching character would immediately reveal the presence of any impurity. It would therefore seem to mean transparent honesty of purpose and character"—C. B. "The exhortation of vers. 6–8 rests upon two great

truths, viz. that sin, like leaven, communicates its nature to all it touches; and that the death of Christ lays upon us an obligation to cast away all sin. Of these, the former attests itself to the conscience and experience and observation of everyone. Even the least thing which God hates, if clung to, darkens our spiritual intelligence, weakens our spiritual efforts, and pollutes our entire being. Therefore sin may justly be compared to leaven. That Christ is our Passover follows by direct inference from the fact that salvation comes through the death of the Son of God, and that God designs us to be, by union with Christ, sharers of the life of Christ, or life devoted to God"—BEET.

9. "**I wrote to you in a** former **epistle**—and doubtless both S. Paul and the other apostles wrote many things which are not extant now. **Not to converse**—familiarly; not to contract any intimacy or acquaintance with them more than is absolutely necessary" —WESLEY.

There had certainly been a correspondence between S. Paul and the church before this Epistle (ch. 7. 1); and in 2 Cor. 7. 8 he refers to a previous letter. "**I wrote to you in an epistle not to company with fornicators.** From the particular case, and the reflections it suggested, we now come to general rules of conduct on this subject. The apostle would not have his converts flee from the world, as so many did in later ages, but remain in it and leaven it. This course must bring them into contact with many ungodly men, whose evil example they must not follow, but whom they cannot altogether avoid, unless they would retire altogether from the active business of life. But if any member of the Church bring dishonour on the Christian name by such sins as those which are named, the Christian is bound to show his sense of such flagrant inconsistency and hypocrisy, by refusing even to sit down to a meal with him. It is not difficult to follow the spirit of such an exhortation now, though it may be impossible to observe its letter. We cannot help meeting men of depraved morals and irreligious lives in business or in general society; we can, nay, we *must* refrain from making such persons our associates and intimates"—LIAS.

10. "**But** I did **not** mean that you should **altogether** refrain from conversing with heathens, though they are guilty in some of these respects. **Covetous, rapacious, idolaters**—sinners against themselves, their neighbour, God. **For then ye must go out of the world** —then all civil commerce must cease. So that going out of the world, which some account a perfection, S. Paul accounts an utter absurdity" —WESLEY.

There must be no unnecessary society and intercourse with evil men. "Be ye separate." Good men must live in the wicked world but never extend their friendships and fellowships with it beyond that which the duties of life absolutely require. "We should go to evil men, as the physician enters the infected chambers of the sick; but never forget that 'evil communications corrupt good manners'; and that an undue familiarity with them is far more likely to weaken the spirituality of our own minds than to generate a holy disposition in theirs"—SIMEON.

11. **Who is named a brother**—"that is, a Christian; especially if a member of the same congregation. **Rapacious**—guilty of oppression, extortion, or any open injustice. **No, not to eat with him**—which is the lowest degree of familiarity"—WESLEY.

"The emphasis is on the words, **who is called a brother.** As S. Paul goes on to say, in ver. 12, he has not to exercise discipline on those who do not profess the faith, but when a man parades the title of Christian, exhibits this profession side by side with vice, the Church is bound to protest against this lying union, and with this view, so far depends on it, to break off all relations with such a man. This is the way to tear from him the mask with which he covers himself, to the shame of the Church and of Christ Himself"—GODET.

12. "I speak of Christians only. **For what have I to do to judge** heathens? But ye, as well as I, judge those of your own community" —WESLEY.

"The argument of the whole is, I wrote to you in my former letter not to associate with immoral persons, of course I meant with immoral *members of the Church;* this natural limitation you should have perceived, because you yourselves apply the same principle of exclusive judgment, not to the outside heathen, but to those only who are within the pale"—EVANS. "We must not stand in fear of men, though they be never so great and mighty. The censures of the Church must be administered indifferently, without respect of persons" —ATTERSOL.

13. **Them that are without God will judge.** "The passing sentence on these He hath reserved to Himself. **And ye will take away that wicked person**—this properly belongs to you"—WESLEY.

"God is Judge of the whole earth; we are to leave the heathen world in His hands. **Therefore put away.** The apostle in this passage adopts the form of pronouncing sentence on great criminals, with which the Jewish converts would be familiar. (Deut. 13. 5; 17. 7; 24. 7)"—ELLICOTT. **Take away,** etc. Almost word for word from Deut. 17. 7; 21. 21, which refer to the punishment of death for idolatry and for disobedience to parents. Thus the wicked Israelite was removed from the people. The terrible meaning of these words in the Old Testament gives great weight to them when used for the lighter sentence here enjoined; and clothes this sentence with Old Testament authority. **From among your**

selves: emphatic contrast to 'those outside,' reminding the readers that the evil to be removed was in their own midst"—BEET.

CHAPTER VI.

SECTION IV.—Vers. 1-11. LAWSUITS. HOW TO SETTLE DISPUTES IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—1. "**The unjust**—the heathens. A Christian could expect no justice from these. **The saints**—who might easily decide these smaller differences in a private and friendly manner"—WESLEY.

"The principle is here laid down which is to guide Christians in their lawsuits. Disputes about property are treated by the apostle as matters of the most trifling import. To call in the unbelievers to settle the disputes of Christian brethren was an act of audacity almost beyond the belief of the apostle (ver. 1), and in marked contrast to the feeling prevalent in the Christian Church at its first foundation. (Acts 4. 32.) It were far better for a Christian to suffer the utmost wrong than to bring such a reproach upon the name of Christ (ver. 7). The disputes of Christians were, therefore, settled by private arbitration, a custom which continued until Christianity was formally established as the religion of the Roman empire. The principle of this passage should guide us still, of regarding mutual love as of more importance than 'the things that pertain to this life,' of preferring rather to suffer wrong than to appeal to the law, unless some more important matter is at stake than our individual loss or inconvenience"—C. B.

2. **Know ye not.** "This expression occurs six times in this single chapter, and that with a peculiar force; for the Corinthians knew and gloried in it, but they did not practise. **That the saints**—after having been judged themselves—**shall judge the world**—shall be assessors with Christ in the judgment wherein He shall condemn all the wicked, as well angels as men. (Matt. 19. 28; Rev. 20. 4)"—WESLEY.

"In the great day the saints intelligently and cordially approve and endorse the sentence pronounced by Christ on the millions of earth. It may be that the final sentence cannot, according to the principles of the Divine government of the universe, be pronounced upon the lost without the concurrence of the saved—*i.e.* without a revelation of the justice of the sentence so clear as to secure the full approbation of the saved. If so, the concurrence of the saved is an essential element in the final judgment; and they may truly be said to judge both men and angels. . . . The light of eternity, which will enable us to estimate with infallible justice all actions done on earth, and to approve and endorse the sentence of Christ, already shines in the hearts of those in whom the Spirit dwells. For His presence imparts (ch. 2. 15) the wisdom of Christ. Therefore, in proportion as we are influenced by the Spirit, we are able to estimate conduct so far as the facts are known to us—*i.e.* spiritual men are, other things being equal, most fit to decide the differences of their brethren"—BEET. "The apostle here claims for all Christians the glorious prerogative which Christ had Himself promised to His immediate personal followers (Matt. 19. 28; Luke 22. 30)"—ELLICOTT.

3. **Know ye not that we shall judge angels?** "The good angels are not hereafter to be judged, but they will form a part of Christ's glorious retinue when He comes to judgment"—WORDSWORTH. We may regard this passage as a climax arising out of the apostle's intense realisation of the unity of Christ and His Church triumphant—a point which seems ever present to the mind of S. Paul when he speaks of the dignity of Christianity. In this sense, redeemed humanity will be superior to, and judges of, the spiritual world"—ELLICOTT.

4. **Them who are of no esteem in the Church** — that is, heathens, who, as such, could be in no esteem with the Christians"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul asks with bitter irony, 'Is it because your matters of dispute are so small, as belonging merely to the present life, compared with the tremendous sentence yourselves will share in pronouncing,—is it for this reason that you submit them to men on whom you look down with contempt as aliens from the kingdom of God and exposed to the condemnation of the great day, to men worthy to decide only these trifling temporal matters?"—BEET.

5. "**Is there not one among you**, who are such admirers of wisdom, that is **wise** enough to decide such causes?"—WESLEY.

"**I speak to your shame.** You are not to suppose me in earnest. I only say this to shame you for the undue value you set on the things of this life. Such matters might fitly be left to the decision of the most insignificant member of your community. But there is no necessity for that. Surely there are plenty of persons among you who are competent to settle such questions, and thus save you the scandal of carrying your disputes before the heathen, when you have pledged yourself to lead a life above such considerations"—C. B.

6. "**But brother goeth to law with brother.** It would almost seem as if it were not so. Your dragging these disputes before tribunals of the heathen would imply that it is not possible to find a Christian friend whom you can trust to settle these trivial disputes. Thus the apostle answers his question of the previous verse"—ELLICOTT. "**But brother goeth to law.** It is not a question between ecclesiastical and civil courts, but between law and equity, litigation and arbitration. . . . The remedy is not more elaborate law, nor cheaper law, nor greater facility of law, but more Christianity"—ROBERTSON. (Comp. Note on ver. 1.) "**And that before the unbelievers**—rather, 'before unbelievers,' the fact of appearing before un-

believers at all on such matters being the point to which attention is directed. Beside the scandal of such a proceeding, as exposing their internal differences to the eyes of the heathen, there were certain formularies to be gone through in the heathen law courts, such as adjurations by heathen deities, which would involve them in idolatrous practices"—WORDSWORTH. "To us, the argument of vers. 1-6 is modified by the fact that our public courts are, for the more part, presided over by excellent Christian men. But the injury inflicted upon a church by lawsuits between members, and the spirit of unscrupulous grasping in one or both parties, which lies at the root of nearly all lawsuits, are the same in all ages"—BEET.

7. "**Indeed there is a fault, that ye** quarrel with each other at all, whether ye go to law or no. **Why do ye not rather suffer wrong?** All men cannot or will not receive this saying. Many aim only at this, 'I will neither do wrong, nor suffer it.' These are honest heathens, but no Christians"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul does not say that a Christian should do nothing to secure himself against injustice. But if it must come to a lawsuit, he advises **rather** to bear the wrong. Is he alluding to the precepts of Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount? (Matt. 5. 39-42.) It seems very probable. The thought which Jesus undoubtedly meant to express in these paradoxical forms is this: Love, infinite as God, is ready, so far as itself is concerned, to bear everything. If, therefore, in practice it sets limits to this absolute patience, it is not from regard to itself, as if its endurance were at an end; but it is for the good of that very being with whom it has to do, so that it is in this case its own limit—in other words, it has no limit outside of itself"—GODET. "The world has no remedy for its miseries but the cure of its selfishness. The cross of Christ, the spirit of that Sacrifice, can alone be the regeneration of the world"—ROBERTSON. "To go to law *for revenge* we are simply forbidden, that is, to return evil for evil; and therefore all those suits which are for *vindictive sentences*, not for reparative, are directly criminal"—JEREMY TAYLOR.

8. **Nay, ye do wrong**—"openly—**and defraud**—privately. Oh, how powerfully did the mystery of iniquity already work!"—WESLEY.

"Not only are you not willing to suffer injury, but you inflict it, and you inflict it upon those with whom you are conjoined in relations as affectionate as the ties of blood. 'One is your Master upon earth, and all ye are brethren.' And this was not to be a convention or a sentiment, but a fact; witnessed to by the affectionate name 'the brethren,' by which everywhere Christians were known"—LIAS.

9. "**Idolatry** is here placed between **fornication** and **adultery**, because they generally accompanied it. **Nor the effeminate**—who live in an easy, indolent way; taking up no cross, enduring no hardship. But how is this? These good-natured, harmless people are ranked with **idolaters** and **sodomites**! We may learn hence, that we are never secure from the greatest sins, till we guard against those which are thought the least; nor, indeed, till we think no sin is little, since everyone is a step toward hell"—WESLEY.

"**Do you not know?** This conduct, like all sin, arose from ignorance. **Unrighteous**, or 'unjust,' refers specifically to ver. 8; but includes the sin of ver. 1 and all other sin. For against all sin equally this solemn warning is valid"—BEET. "The Corinthians seemed to imagine that their religious knowledge and Christian talk would suffice to open heaven to them, whatever their conduct otherwise might be. But how do they fail to understand that by falling back into sin, from which faith had rescued them, they themselves destroy the effect of their transition from heathenism to the gospel?"—GODET.

11. **And such were some of you: but ye are washed**—"from those gross abominations; nay, and **ye are** inwardly **sanctified**; not before, but in consequence of, your being **justified in the name**—that is, by the merits—**of the Lord Jesus**, through which your sins are forgiven. **And by the Spirit of our God**—by whom ye are thus **washed** and **sanctified**"—WESLEY.

No man should boast about his former sinful life, but he may sometimes profitably think of it. The "new song" is not the result of the "horrible pit and the miry clay," but of the gracious deliverance from such sad uncleanness. "**In the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.** The name of Christ stands for His power. The original has 'in the Spirit,' not by the Spirit of our God. Therefore something more is probably conveyed than a mere instrumental agency. A comparison of this passage with others in which the indwelling of the Spirit is implied, as in ver. 19 and Rom. 8. 11, teaches us that the Holy Spirit is the instrument of our sanctification and justification, by virtue of our dwelling in Him and He in us, making Christ's death to sin and His life in righteousness an accomplished fact in our hearts and lives. (See also John 3. 6)"—C. B. Calvin remarks that we have here a prohibition of polygamy.

SECTION V.—Vers. 12-20. IMPURITY.—12. **All things**—"which are lawful for you—**are lawful for me, but all things are not** always **expedient**—particularly when anything would offend my weak brother; or when it would enslave my own soul. For though **all things are lawful for me**, yet **I will not be brought under the power of any**—so as to be uneasy when I abstain from it; if so, then I am under the power of it"—WESLEY.

"The great principle of Christian liberty. **All things are lawful for me.** S. Paul now sees he must guard against abuse by adding,

But all things are not expedient. The Law and its modifications are fully explained in ch. 8. 10, 23, etc. All things are in my power. Yes, but for that very reason I will not be brought under the power of any. The reasonable use of my liberty cannot go to the length of involving my own loss of it"—GODET. I am free from the Law; I will not on that account become the slave of indulgence. As CARLYLE puts it, "Enjoying things which are pleasant—that is not the evil; it is the reducing of our moral self to slavery by them that is. Let a man assert withal that he is king over his habitudes; that he could and would shake them off on cause shown: this is an excellent law." "Christ lays down the general rule (John 16. 13), the apostles apply it to particular emergencies"—STANLEY. "This verse is a good guide of conduct in matters not expressly forbidden. By experience and observation, guided by the Spirit of wisdom and love, we must discover the effect of various actions upon our own inner life, and through us on those influenced by our example, and act accordingly. For no intelligent man will do a thing without considering its results, merely because it is lawful. A beautiful development of this principle is found in ch. 10. 23–33; 8. 9–13; Rom. 14. 13–21"—BEET.

13. "As if he had said, I speak this chiefly with regard to meats (and would to God all Christians would consider it!), particularly with regard to those offered to idols, and those forbidden in the Mosaic Law. These, I grant, are all indifferent, and have their use, though it is only for a time; then meats, and the organs which receive them, will together moulder into dust. But the case is quite otherwise with fornication. This is not indifferent, but at all times evil. **For the body is for the Lord**—designed only for His service. **And the Lord**, in an important sense, **for the body**—being the Saviour of this, as well as of the soul; in proof of which God hath already raised Him from the dead"—WESLEY.

Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats. This is a matter of comparatively trifling importance. Meat is a necessity for our present undeveloped life; in the world where hunger and thirst will be no more, it will no longer be so. And therefore, both it, and the organs formed to digest it, will be no longer wanted. **Now the body is not for fornication.** S. Paul is led, by the importance he attaches to this point, to treat it first. The abominable licentiousness of heathen cities in general, and of Corinth in particular (see Dean Stanley's Note on ver. 12), had led to a general conviction that the body *was* for fornication. S. Paul contradicts this, and most emphatically proclaims that what was always permitted among heathens, and even in some cases enjoined as a religious rite, was distinctly in itself *an unlawful act*, not excusable on the plea of necessity, which he had admitted in the case of meats, nor, like them, a question of "nicely calculated less or more," but contrary to the laws laid down by God for man, and calculated to deprive men of the blessings of the resurrection. **But for the Lord**—*i.e.* Jesus Christ. The body is not formed to serve a purely material end, but is the instrument of the Spirit, and its end the glory of God, through Christ. **And the Lord for the body.** Because from our point of view Christ came that we might serve and honour Him in our bodies. This sentence answers to **meats for the belly, and the belly for meats**, above.

14. **And will also raise up us.** Unlike the belly, whose functions shall cease, the body, through its Lord, is destined to an enduring life. We are taught in Rom. 8. 11, in ch. 15, and by that much neglected article in the Creed, "The Resurrection of the Body," that Christ came to save, sanctify, and raise again, not our souls only, but our bodies. **By His own power.** Our version has rendered definite here what in the original is indefinite. It is impossible to say for certain whether the word 'His' refers to the Father or to Christ; but the analogy of John 5. 21, 25, 28; 11. 25, and especially 2 Cor. 4. 14, would lead us to the conclusion that Christ is here meant. But see Eph. 1. 19, 20. There seems to be a distinction implied in the Greek of this verse between the raising of Christ, who saw no corruption, and the raising us from our state of corruption and almost annihilation, through the power of Christ.

15. "**Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?** This solemn truth, that by our calling as Christians we are so closely united to Christ as to be 'members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones' (Eph. 5. 30), is employed here to remind us of the restrictions placed upon our Christian liberty. Our body is Christ's—nay, it is, in a sense, 'a part of Christ Himself.' It may not be used in violation of the laws imposed upon it from the beginning by God. Nor may it be used to the detriment of others, who equally, with ourselves, belong to Christ. And the sin here reproved leads to all kinds of misery and wretchedness, and that because (ver. 18) *it is* a violation of the eternal law of God impressed upon the human body"—C. B.

16. "A truth which the readers ought to **know**, justifying the foregoing words"—BEET.

17. **But he that is joined to the Lord**—"by faith—**is one spirit with Him**—and shall he make himself one flesh with an harlot?"—WESLEY.

"Union with the Lord—personal union—is the precious secret and deep foundation of all our fellowship. **He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.** The spirit common to Him and to His people makes them partakers of Christ, and of all His interests; even as Christ becomes a partaker with us and all that is ours. The

Christian is no longer his own; he has come out of himself; he has a new life, breathes in a new world, the sun and the air and the nourishment and the life and end of which is the Lord. He is a man still, but a man in Christ"—POPE. "Christianity interferes indirectly, not directly, with existing institutions"—ROBERTSON.

18. **Flee fornication**—"all unlawful commerce with women, with speed, with abhorrence, with all your might. **Every sin that a man** commits against his neighbour terminates upon an object out of himself, and does not so immediately pollute his body, though it does his soul. **But he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body**—pollutes, dishonours, and degrades it to a level with brute beasts"—WESLEY.

"That is, every other sinful act which affects the body approaches it from without and affects particular members. But this sin takes the body itself as a whole and makes it an instrument of sin. For it is a violation of the fundamental law impressed upon man from the beginning, whereby it is decreed that a man shall cleave to his wife, and to her alone, and they twain shall be, or rather, *become* one flesh. (Gen. 2. 24.) This view is confirmed by the fact that the word here translated sinneth, means 'to go astray,' 'to miss the mark'; so that the words **sinneth against his own body** imply the running counter to the objects for which the body is created. If this be the correct interpretation of the passage, the practice of polygamy is here condemned. (Rom. 1. 24)"—C. B.

19. "And even your body is not, strictly speaking, your own—even this **is the temple of the Holy Ghost**—dedicated to Him, and inhabited by Him. What the apostle calls elsewhere 'the temple of God' (ch. 3. 16, 17), and 'the temple of the living God' (2 Cor. 6. 16), he here styles **the temple of the Holy Ghost**; plainly showing that the Holy Ghost is the living God"—WESLEY.

"Nothing can be more effectual than the thought of such an inhabitation, as being the result of our Christian calling, to restrain us from the sin here mentioned. **Ye are not your own.** (Ch. 7. 22; Rom. 6. 18, 22; John 8. 36; also Rom. 14. 8.) The Scriptures frequently remind us that we have passed from slavery to sin into slavery to Christ, the latter slavery, however, being the true freedom of man, enabling him to fulfil the law of his being"—LIAS. "God is especially present in the hearts of His people, by His Holy Spirit; and, indeed, the hearts of holy men are temples in the truth of things, and, in type and shadow, they are heaven itself. For God reigns in the hearts of His servants; there is His kingdom. The power of grace has subdued all His enemies; there is His power"—JEREMY TAYLOR.

20. **Glorify God with your body and your spirit**—"yield your bodies and all their members, as well as your souls and all their faculties, as instruments of righteousness to God. Devote and employ all ye have, and all ye are, entirely, unreservedly, and for ever, to His glory"—WESLEY.

In the R.V. the words "and in your spirit, which are God's," are omitted. "He that made you, and has fed you as His children, has every claim of grateful obedience. Nay, more; the Redeemer who ransomed your life with His own requires that you should henceforth be the temples of the living God. What grace is this to sinners of the Gentiles, that they should now be as holy as they had been polluted and profane! This is the only way in which those trophies of mercy can **glorify God in body and** mind"—SUTCLIFFE. "**Ye are** (*lit.* 'were') **bought with a price**—the 'one sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction made for the sins of the whole world' by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ. (Comp. Acts 20. 28; 1 Pet. 1. 19; 2 Pet. 2. 1; Rev. 5. 9, etc.) **And in your spirit, which are God's.** These words are not found in many of the best MSS. and versions, and they somewhat weaken the force of the argument, which is intended to assert the dignity of the body. They were perhaps inserted by some who, missing the point of the apostle's argument, thought that the worship of the spirit was unduly passed over"—C. B. "It appears from this teaching that contempt of the body goes side by side with abuse of the body, while respect for the body will always be the best means of ruling it. And so the whole of Scripture, from the first page of Genesis to the last of Revelation, pays homage to the dignity of the human body"—GODET.

CHAPTER VII.

SECTION VI. — Vers. 1–40. CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY.—1. **It is good for a man**—"who is master of himself—**not to touch a woman**—that is, not to marry. So great and many are the advantages of a single life"—WESLEY.

"The newly-converted Corinthians had evidently found themselves in a difficulty concerning marriage. The Jews, in general, set a high value upon it; while the best of the heathen philosophers were inclined to depreciate it, and certain sayings of our Lord (see Matt. 19. 5-12) seemed to support their view. The apostle's advice may be thus summarised: that though the unmarried were, from their freedom from all entangling ties, most at liberty to serve God in any way that He might put before them, and though in the present season of temptation and persecution (vers. 26, 28) the unmarried would be spared much trial and anguish which would fall heavily upon married persons, yet that it was the duty of those who, in an unmarried state, were in danger of offending against that solemn

law of Christian purity which he had just laid down, to 'marry, and so keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body'"—C. B.

2. "**Yet**, when it is needful, **in order to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife. His own**—for Christianity allows no polygamy"—WESLEY.

But, because of fornication (R.V.). Meyer explains that we must not suppose we have here the whole of the apostle's view of marriage, but simply that which connects itself with the question that has been asked him. To understand the doctrine of marriage, as generally delivered in the Christian Scriptures, we must compare John 2; Eph. 5. 23-30; 1 Tim. 5. 14; Heb. 13. 4; 1 Pet. 3. 1-7. "These are questions of *casuistry*, which depend upon the particular *case*, from which word the term casuistry is derived"—ROBERTSON.

3. "**Let** not married persons fancy that there is any perfection in living with each other as if they were unmarried. **The debt**—this ancient reading seems far more natural than the common one"—WESLEY.

"**Due benevolence** (R.V. 'Her due'). The emphatic repetition, **and in like manner also**, gives to husband and wife exactly equal marriage rights, which the other is bound **to pay.** This equal right is made very prominent by the repetitions of vers. 2-4"—BEET. "In this verse the apostle answers the scruples of those who already were married and who doubted whether they should continue so"—ELLICOTT.

4. **The wife: the husband.** "Let no one forget this, on pretence of greater purity"—WESLEY.

"We here are reminded of the valuable principle, that in everything connected with the duties of married life, each should consult the comfort, well-being, and happiness of the other before their own, and should be especially careful that they do not, by any selfishness on their part, 'cause their brother to offend'"—LIAS. "This verse justifies the direction given in the preceding. By the conjugal bond, each spouse acquires a right over the person of the other. Consequently each alienates a portion of personal independence"—GODET.

5. **Unless it be by consent for a time**—"that on those special and solemn occasions ye may entirely give yourselves up to the exercises of devotion. **Lest**—if ye should long remain separate—**Satan tempt you**—to unclean thoughts, if not actions too"—WESLEY.

"In this verse there is reproduced the directions given in ver. 3, but in a negative form. **Defraud not**—to exclude expressly the contrary opinion, and at the same time to *limit* this prohibition, nevertheless under certain conditions fitted to remove the danger of restriction. The interruption of the conjugal relations authorised by the apostle may take place on three conditions—(1) mutual consent, (2) temporary duration, (3) the aim of securing spiritual meditation"—GODET. "**Have leisure for prayer**—suggests the excellent custom of occasionally setting apart a period of some days for special devotional exercises. During such periods, for unremitting attention to the spiritual matters, separation may *perhaps* be desirable"—BEET.

6. **But I say this**—"concerning your separating for a time and coming together again. Perhaps he refers also to ver. 2"—WESLEY.

"As this passage is given in our English version, it might seem as if the apostle implied that he had no actual command, but only a permission to write this, which is not at all his meaning. What he does say is, that the foregoing instructions are not to be considered as absolute commands from him, but as general permissive instruction, to be applied by each individual according to circumstances. It has been much discussed as to what part of the previous passage the word 'this' refers. It is perhaps best to take it as referring to the leading thought of the whole passage, which is that marriage is allowable, expressed especially in ver. 2"—ELLICOTT.

7. **For I would that all men were herein even as I.** "I would that all believers who are now unmarried would remain 'eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.' S. Paul, having tasted the sweetness of this liberty, wished others to enjoy it as well as himself. **But everyone hath his proper gift from God**—according to our Lord's declaration, 'All men cannot receive this saying, save they,' the happy few, 'to whom it is given' (Matt. 19. 11)"—WESLEY.

"These words do not mean that the apostle wished that everyone was unmarried, but that everyone had the same grace of continence which he himself was endowed with, so that they might, without risk of sin, remain unmarried (see ver. 26). Yet, he adds, there are many gifts, and God has given to each man his own gift, so that, though you may not have the particular gift of continence which I have, you have some other. One has one kind of gift; another has another kind"—ELLICOTT. "**Like myself**—endowed with complete self-control. This would make these counsels needless. **But each one**, etc.—a modest softening down of the apparent assumption, in ver. 7*a*, of superior piety. 'Gift of grace,' as in ch. 1. 7; Rom. 1. 11; 12. 4. S. Paul remembers that his own self-control was the gift to him of God's undeserved favour; that **each** believer has a gift, *i.e.* some kind of spiritual excellence wrought in him by God; that in some the favour of God shows itself **in this way**, *i.e.* by giving self-control, in others in some other gift, perhaps equally valuable. Therefore S. Paul's possession of this one gift is no proof of superiority on the whole. (Comp. Rom. 12. 3-6.) This principle ought to control all our comparisons of ourselves with others"—BEET.

8. **It is good for them if they remain even as I.** "That S. Paul was then single is certain; and from Acts 7. 58, compared with the following parts of the history, it seems probable that he always was so. It does not appear that this declaration, any more than ver. 1, hath any reference at all to a state of persecution"—WESLEY.

"After expressing a wish that all men had the self-control which by God's grace he has, and prompted by this mention of himself, S. Paul now says a word to those who, like himself, are **unmarried**, *i.e.* without wives, including (comp. ver. 11) widowers. **And the widows**—included in 'the unmarried,' but added because of them (comp. ver. 40), these words apply specially. (Comp. 'and Peter,' Mark 16. 7.) **It is good**, etc.—restates the principle of ver. 1. **Remain as I also am**—continue unmarried, in contrast to **let them marry.** The words **if they remain** imply that S. Paul refers here to his outward position, not as in ver. 7, to his inner self-control. And this proves that he had no wife when he wrote; but gives no hint whether he once had"—BEET.

10. **Not I**—"only. **But the Lord**—Christ; by His express command (Matt. v. 32)"—WESLEY.

"A distinction has sometimes been drawn with reference to this verse, and other parts of this chapter, between that which the apostle speaks by inspiration, and what he speaks as a man uninspired. The distinction, however, is an altogether false one, and beside the question. The real distinction is not between inspired and uninspired, but between a *decision* in matters of Christian duty, and *advice* in matters of Christian prudence"—ROBERTSON. "No question here of apostolic inspiration. Nothing is clearer than that S. Paul wrote in general under inspiration; he declares this, as far as a man may do so about himself, in ver. 40. There were times indeed when he was pre-eminently inspired; when his spirit swelled and teemed with superabounding revelations, *not all* of which his pen was permitted to transcribe. In this verse he simply cited the weightier testimony of the Divine Master; for he knew by the living voice of tradition what command Christ had given concerning divorce (Matt. 19. 3–9; Mark 10. 2–12)"—EVANS.

11. **But if she depart**—"contrary to this express prohibition. **And let not the husband put away his wife**—except for the cause of adultery"—WESLEY.

"*Lit.* 'be separated.' There were great facilities for divorce, both under the law of Greece and Rome, in S. Paul's day, but the facilities were greater for the husband than for the wife. At Athens the husband could dismiss his wife at will. So, in Roman law, the husband had originally the full disposal of the wife's person and liberty, but this harsh regulation was resented by the wives, and in the days of the empire the wife also obtained the power of divorce. The Jewish law of divorce was also very loose. (See Matt. 5. 31, 32; Deut. 24. 1)"—Smith's *Dictionary*.

12, 13. **To the rest**—"who are married to unbelievers—**speak I**—by revelation from God, though our Lord hath not left any commandment concerning it. **Let him not put her away.** The Jews, indeed, were obliged of old to put away their idolatrous wives (Ezra 10. 3); but their case was quite different. They were absolutely forbidden to marry idolatrous women; but the persons here spoken of were married while they were both in a state of heathenism"—WESLEY.

"**Not the Lord** implies that Matt. 19. 6 does not apply to them. The intimate connection of heathenism with the details of social life made the position of Christians married to heathens so peculiar that it could not be dealt with on the ground of words spoken by Christ to those only who were worshippers of the true God. Therefore, having no command of Christ to quote, S. Paul himself speaks. (Comp. ver. 25.) **Has a wife, an unbeliever**—whom he has already married, before or since his conversion. To marry such is, in ver. 39, expressly forbidden. **Agrees to live with him** implies that both husband and wife are willing"—BEET. "When the Jews returned from Babylon, Ezra the priest obliged them to dismiss their idolatrous wives, as polluters of their blood, and as dangerous to their religion (Ezra 9. 10). This was difficult to do, and it occasioned great anguish of mind. But the Jews could then marry other wives, instead of those they had dismissed, and what then could the converted Gentiles do in such a case? One great part of the mystery of godliness was, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with the believing Jews of the grace of life, and equally participate in all their privileges. But in the Jewish case, as well as in the Christian, marrying with unbelievers is forbidden by a permanent law of the Church. The Christian widow, as in ver. 39, cannot marry, except in the Lord, or to one regenerate and born again. (Rom. 8. 1; 16. 17)"—SUTCLIFFE.

14. "**For the unbelieving husband hath**, in many instances, **been sanctified by the wife. Else your children** would have been brought up heathens; whereas **now they are** Christians. As if he had said, 'Ye see the proof of it before your eyes'"—WESLEY.

"From this verse, Neander, Meyer, Stanley, and others, have inferred that infant baptism was not usual when it was written, on the ground that, if the children of believers had been baptized, the difference between them and the unbaptized husband would bar all argument from one to the other. Whether or not the children were baptized, and whether they were infants or adults, they had an indisputable claim to the care of a Christian parent. Therefore, to give them such care, could in no

case defile. Consequently, baptism had no bearing at all on the case. And this is sufficient reason for S. Paul's silence about it, even though the rite had been administered to some of the children"—BEET.

15. **A brother or a sister**—"a Christian man or woman—**is not enslaved**—is at full liberty—**in such cases: but God hath called us to peace**—to live peaceably with them, if it be possible"—WESLEY.

"**Let him separate himself** refers probably to simple separation, as opposed to 'live with him' (ver. 12); but doubtless includes divorce. 'If the unbeliever wishes to go, do not prevent him.' To be obliged to force oneself on a reluctant heathen husband or wife would be a **bondage** inconsistent with Christian liberty. **Moreover, in peace,** etc.—additional reason for letting him go. The gospel came proclaiming 'peace' (Eph. 2. 14, 17), in contrast to the bondage, and therefore confusion, which would follow an attempt to force oneself on an unbeliever. The peacefulness of Christianity forbids this"—BEET.

16. "The very power of *saving* belongs to this relationship of marriage. And, on the other hand, there is no earthly relationship which has so much power to wreck and ruin the soul"—ROBERTSON.

17. "**But as God hath distributed** the various stations of life, and various relations, **to everyone,** let him take care to discharge his duty therein. The gospel disannuls none of these. **And thus I ordain in all the churches**—as a point of the highest concern"—WESLEY.

"A general and universal principle, viz., 'Be not eager to change,' which limits the foregoing counsel. **As the Lord** Christ, the Ruler of the Church and the world, who divides among men the various circumstances, and **has** thus allotted **to each one** his position. But this allotment does not include positions of sin. These are always self-chosen"—BEET. "The believer is never to cause or promote a separation, for he is to be guided by the great principle that we are to continue to walk in those social and political relations by which we were bound when God called us. Christianity does not destroy them, but purifies and exalts them, and thus makes them more binding on us than before. According as the Lord has divided to each man his position in life, and as God has called each man, so in that condition let him walk as a Christian"—ELLICOTT. "It is not externals that make a Christian; and if God's grace has found a man in unlikely circumstances, that is the best evidence he can have that he will find opportunity of serving God in those circumstances, if there be no sin in them. It throws great light on the relation which we as Christians hold to the institutions of our country, and generally to outward things, when we understand that Christianity does not begin by making external changes, but begins within and gradually finds its way outwards, modifying and rectifying all it meets"—DODS.

19. **Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing**—"will neither promote nor obstruct our salvation. The one point is, **keeping the commandments of God**—'faith working by love'"—WESLEY.

Often those who regard some ceremony as unimportant magnify the very disregard of it into a necessary virtue. The apostle carefully guards against that by expressing the nothingness of both circumcision and uncircumcision. (Rom. 2. 25; Gal. 5. 6; 6. 15.) The teaching here is, practically, "To obey is better than sacrifice."

20. **In the calling**—"the outward state—**wherein he is**—when God calls him. Let him not seek to change this without a clear direction from Providence"—WESLEY.

This is an emphatic repetition of the principle on which the previous practical instruction is based. **Calling** must not here be regarded in the modern sense of profession or condition in life; it is nowhere so used in the New Testament, but always signifies God's calling of us. (See Rom. 11. 29; Eph. 1. 18.) Continue to be Christians of the kind which God's call to Christianity made you. If you were not circumcised—and so God's call into the Christian Church made you a circumcised Christian — continue so; don't do anything which would seem to imply that some other change, in addition to your 'call,' was necessary to complete your admission to the Church"—ELLICOTT.

21. **Care not for it**—"do not anxiously seek liberty. **But if thou canst be free, use it rather** — embrace the opportunity"—WESLEY.

Here in this domain is the extreme case which can be conceived. Few situations could appear so incompatible with Christian holiness, dignity, and freedom as that of a slave. But a multitude of evidences proves that Christianity had quite specially found access to persons of this class. But, abnormal as this position may appear, it will not remain beyond the victorious influence of the gospel. The spiritual elevation which faith communicates places the believer above even this contrast: slaves, free. There is something heroic in the word of the apostle, **care not for it.** "Do not let this position weigh either on thy conscience or on thy heart."

22. **Is the Lord's freeman**—"is free in this respect. The Greek word implies one that was a slave, but now is free. **Is the bondman of Christ**—not free in this respect; not at liberty to do his own will"—WESLEY.

"In the light of this verse all human distinctions vanish. We are all servants, doing what seems good, not to ourselves but to our Lord. We are all free; for we accept with joy, and with the full consent of all that is noblest within us, the position in His house-

hold which our Maste has allotted to each"—BEET.

23. **Ye are bought with a price** — "ye belong to God; therefore, where it can be avoided, **do not become the bondslaves of men**—which may expose you to many temptations"—WESLEY.

"Christ died that we may be His servants, and His only. Therefore, the blood shed on Calvary, which has made us free, forbids us to bow to the yoke of bondage"—BEET. With a great price—even the blood of Christ—they have been purchased by Him as freedmen; therefore do not become slaves of men—do not yield to their views by seeking to change the condition of your calling.

24. **Therein abide with God**—"doing all things as unto God, and as in His immediate presence. They who thus 'abide with God' preserve an holy indifference with regard to outward things"—WESLEY.

"This is the principle. Christianity was not to interfere with existing relationships; Christian men were to remain in those relationships in which they were when called, and in them to develop the inward spirituality of the Christian life. We should say, 'All our existing institutions are those under which God has placed us, under which we are to mould our lives according to His will.' It is our duty to vitalise our forms, to throw into them a holier, deeper meaning"—ROBERTSON. "By these words, abiding **in that state**, and that **before** God, S. Paul reminds his readers of the moral act which has the power of sanctifying and ennobling every external position: the eye fixed on God, *walking* in His presence. This is what preserves the believer from the temptations arising from the situation in which he is; this is what raises the humblest duties you can impose on him to the supreme dignity of acts of worship. In fact, this principle has been of incalculable importance in the development of the Church. It is by means of it that Christianity has been able to become a moral power at once sufficiently firm and sufficiently elastic to adapt itself to all human situations, personal, domestic, national, and social"—GODET.

Vers. 25–38. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE MARRIAGE OF VIRGINS. — 25. **Now concerning virgins**—"of either sex—**I have no commandment from the Lord**—by a particular revelation. Nor was it necessary he should; for the apostles wrote nothing which was not divinely inspired; but with this difference—sometimes they had a particular revelation and a special commandment; at other times they wrote from the Divine light which abode with them, the standing treasure of the Spirit of God. And this, also, was not their private opinion, but a Divine rule of faith and practice. **As one** whom God hath made **faithful** in my apostolic office; who therefore faithfully deliver what I receive from Him"—WESLEY.

"I have no infallible direction, coming from the Lord, to give you. But through the grace shown to me, I find myself in a position to give you a good advice. (Comp. ver. 40.) Hence it follows that S. Paul does not give the counsel immediately to be mentioned in virtue of his apostolic authority, but as a simple Christian"—GODET. "**Virgins**—*i.e.* 'unmarried women.' S. Paul now returns to the question of marriage. But before he enters upon the question of the marriage of virgins he treats, according to his usual rule, of the general principle of which theirs is a particular case. The time is short, and he would have all as free from care as possible"—C. B. "The contrast here is not between S. Paul inspired by the Lord and S. Paul not inspired, but, as in ver. 12, between S. Paul quoting the words of Christ and S. Paul himself instructing as an inspired apostle"—ELLICOTT.

26, 27. **This is good for the present distress**—"while any church is under persecution—**for a man to continue as he is**—whether married or unmarried. S. Paul does not here urge 'the present distress' as a reason for celibacy, any more than for marriage; but for a man's not seeking to alter his state, whatever it be, but making the best of it"—WESLEY.

"The construction of this verse proposed by DE WETTE is: 'I think therefore that this (the state of virginity) is good on account of the present difficulties, seeing that in itself it is good for man so to be.' The idea is this: 'If, in general, celibacy is a state good for man (man or woman), now is the time for applying this principle, especially in regard to virgins, on account of the difficulties of the present time'"—GODET. It is most important to remember how much stress S. Paul lays upon this point as the ground of his preference for celibacy. As the reason for the preference has ceased to exist, so the advice, so far as it springs from that cause, is no longer of binding obligation. (See vers. 29–31.)

28. **Such will have trouble in the flesh**—"many outward troubles. **But I spare you**—I speak as little and as tenderly as possible"—WESLEY.

"What the **affliction** is, S. Paul leaves us to infer. And this is not difficult. A man with wife and family presents more points of attack in days of persecution, and is therefore more exposed to troubles, and even bodily privation, than the unmarried man. Hence the 'anxiety' of ver. 32. **Am sparing you**—from this bodily privation, by advising you to remain unmarried. An appeal appropriate to men over whom (ch. 3. 1–3) the bodily life had great sway. And doubtless S. Paul wished to save them, not merely from bodily privation, but from the peril of apostasy to which such privation would expose them"—BEET. "In all that precedes, S. Paul has not yet gone to the root of the matter. What is of importance is not, marry-

ing or not marrying, but a habit of soul in keeping with the situation indicated above. And as in vers. 17-24, he had generalised the question, so as better to justify his counsel to remain in their present state, so in vers. 29-31 he explains, while applying it to various analogous cases, his true view in regard to celibacy and marriage in present circumstances" —GODET.

29. **But this I say, brethren**—"with great confidence — **the time** of our abode here **is short.** It plainly follows, **that even they who have wives** be as serious, zealous, active, dead to the world, as devoted to God, as holy in all manner of conversation, **as if they had none;** by so easy a transition does the apostle slide from everything else to the one thing needful, and, forgetting whatever is temporal, is swallowed up in eternity"—WESLEY.

"The conclusion of the whole matter. The time is short, the world is passing away. In whatever condition a man is, let him live in a constant state of readiness to abandon it at the bidding of God. Let him keep his soul unfettered by the ties, the enjoyments, and above all, the cares of this life. **The time is short** —not time in the general sense. The word here signifies a definite space of time. The word translated 'short' is rather 'shortened' -- 'compressed'" — ROBERTSON. "Living many years in one"—STANLEY. "**Time is short**—in relation to opportunities; *lit.* these words mean, 'the opportunity is compressed, narrowed'—that is, every season has its own opportunity, which never comes back. A chance once gone is lost for ever. The autumn sun shines as brightly as that of spring, but the seed of spring cannot be sown in autumn. The work of boyhood cannot be done in manhood. Let but a man possess his soul with this idea of time, and then unworldliness will be the native atmosphere he breathes"—ROBERTSON.

30. "**And they that weep, as if they wept not**—'though sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.' **They that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not**—tempering their joy with godly fear. **They that buy, as if they possessed not**—knowing themselves to be only stewards, not proprietors"—WESLEY.

"Here is depicted the spiritual detachment in its application to the various situations of life. As nothing in this world has more than a waiting character, the afflicted believer will not be swayed by his pains; he will say to himself, It is no more worth the trouble. The man who is visited by joy will not be intoxicated by it; he will say to himself, It is but for a moment"—GODET. "Look round this beautiful world of God's; ocean dimpled into myriad smiles; the sky a trembling, quivering mass of blue, thrilling heart with ecstasy; every tint, every form, replete with beauty. God says, 'Be glad.' Do not force young, happy hearts to an unnatural solemnity, as if to be happy were a crime. Let us hear their loud, merry, ringing laugh, even if sterner hearts can be glad no longer; to see innocent mirth and joy does the heart good. But now, observe, everlasting considerations are to come in, not to sadden joy but to calm it. We are to be calm, cheerful, self-possessed, to sit loose to all these sources of enjoyment, masters of ourselves" — ROBERTSON. EDWARDS says: "Excess is prevented, not by the diminution of the joy or of the grief, but by the harmony of both. Joy and grief becoming more profound harmonise in a sadness full of joy and a joy full of sadness."

31. "**And they that use this world, as not abusing it**—not seeking happiness in it, but in God: using every thing therein only in such a manner and degree as most tends to the knowledge and love of God. **For the** whole scheme and **fashion of this world**—this marrying, weeping, rejoicing, and all the rest, not only will pass, but now **passeth away**—is this moment flying off like a shadow"—WESLEY.

"A solemn warning to all who lay up wealth. **The world**—the whole realm of things around us. (See ch. 1. 20.) **Using to the full**—eagerly using up all opportunities of gain or pleasure, as though these were the end of life"—BEET. "We are to despise nothing, as if the being transient or physical were a reason for contempt. We are to treasure all things—only we are to measure their value by their relation to our higher nature"—BEECHER. "All the danger is when the world gets into the heart. The water is useful for the sailing of the ship; all the danger is when the water gets into the ship; so the fear is when the world gets into the heart. 'Thou shalt not covet'"—WATSON. "This poor fleeting world deserves not that we should build our hopes and joys upon it as though they could last us long. We must treat it as a treacherous soil, and build but lightly on it, and we shall be wise. Queen Elizabeth once said to a courtier, 'They pass best over the world who trip over it quickly; for it is but a bog; if we stop, we sink'"—SPURGEON. "**The fashion of this world passeth away**—the forms in which human life is now moulded, the kind of business we are now engaged in, the pleasures we enjoy, even the relationships we hold to one another pass away. There are no doubt relationships which time cannot dissolve, affections so pure and clinging that if the future does not renew them, it loses a large part of its charm for us. But whatever is temporary in our relation to the present world it is foolish so to set our heart on, that death may seem to end all our joy and all our usefulness. It is the thought of our great future which alone gives us sufficient courage and wisdom to deal with present things intensely and in earnest. The very intensity of our interests and affections reminds us that we cannot root ourselves in this present life, but need a larger room"—DODS.

32. "**Now I would have you**—for this flying moment—**without carefulness**—without any encumbrance of our thought. **The unmarried man**—if he understand and use the advantage he enjoys—**careth only for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord**"—WESLEY.

But I would have you to be free from cares (R.V.). The apostle returns to the subject immediately under consideration, and shows here what he has been saying bears upon it. This element of anxious care must be borne in mind in considering the desirability or otherwise of marriage. The whole force of the passage is, that married persons have, in the fulfilment of their obligations to each other, an additional interest and concern from which the unmarried are free. It must ever be distinctly borne in mind that this advice was given solely under the impression that the end of all earthly things was impending, and that the great trial and desolation was beginning to darken over the world.

33. "**But the married careth for the things of the world**—and it is his duty so to do, so far as becomes a Christian. **How he may please his wife**—and provide all things needful for her and his family"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul throws no blame on marriage; it is a fact which he states to justify the greater *difficulty* a married man experiences in realising in this state entire fidelity to the Lord. The unmarried man has only one question to put to himself—how shall I act to please the Lord? The married man is obliged to take into account another will than that of the Lord and his own, a will which he should consult and which must be gained for his plans"—GODET.

34. **There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin**—"whether the Church be under persecution or not. **The unmarried woman**—if she know and use her privilege—**careth only for the things of the Lord**—all her time, care, and thoughts centre in this, how **she may be holy both in body and spirit.** This is the standing advantage of a single life, in all ages and nations. But who makes a suitable use of it?"—WESLEY.

35. **Not that I may cast a snare upon you**—"who are not able to receive this saying. **But for your profit**—who are able. **That ye may** resolutely and perseveringly **wait upon the Lord.** The word translated 'wait' signifies 'sitting close' by a person, in a 'good' posture to hear. So Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. (Luke 10. 39.) **Without distraction**—without having the mind drawn any way from its centre, from its close attention to God, by any person or thing or care or encumbrance whatsoever"—WESLEY.

"The figure of *throwing the net over them* contains this idea: 'I do not claim to make slaves of you, to hamper your liberty by forcing you to live to my taste, and according to my personal sympathies; but this is what I have in view.' And he then expounds the ideal of Christian celibacy in the elevated and pure light in which he contemplates it—that is to say, as a state of supreme comeliness through the consecration of body and spirit to the Lord. Natural innocence raised to heavenly saintship through union with Christ—such, in the eyes of the apostle, is the incomparable adornment of the virgin"—GODET.

36. "**But if any** parent **think he** should otherwise **act indecently**—unbecoming his character—**towards his virgin** daughter, **if she be above age** (or of full age), **and need so require** (ver. 9), **let them marry**—her suitor and she"—WESLEY.

"Here the writer turns to the duty of parents, and there is a further explanation to such that the previous expressions are not binding commandments, but apostolic advice. If the case arises that a parent thinks he would be acting unfairly towards his unmarried daughter (*i.e.* exposing her to temptation) by withholding his permission for her marriage, he ought to do as he feels inclined—*i.e.* let the lover and his daughter marry. **Let him do what he will.** This sentence does not—as it may at first sight in the English appear to do—imply that he may consent or not, and whichever course he adopts he does right. It is implied in the earlier part of the sentence, that he thinks he ought to give his consent, and therefore that is what he wishes to do. Let him do that which he so wills, says S. Paul, and he need not in doing so fear that he does wrong"—SHORE.

37. **Having no necessity**—"where there is no such need—**but having power over his own will**—which would incline him to desire the increase of his family, and the strengthening it by new relations"—WESLEY.

Having no necessity. This might be the case either (1) if the maiden be not specially desirous for the married life, or (2) if her hand be not sought in marriage, or (3) if, when sought, she be unwilling to accept the proposal. The language of the apostle embraces all three suppositions. **But hath power over his own will.** The legitimate authority of the parent is great, but he has no right to treat his children as mere chattels. He can only be said to have "power over his own will" when he can act without selfishly thwarting the reasonable wishes of those whom God has committed to his care. **And hath so decreed in his heart.** "If in other lighter actions nothing is permitted to children without the authority of their parents, much less it is desirable that freedom should be given them in contracting matrimony"—CALVIN.

38. **Doeth better**—"if there be no necessity"—WESLEY.

"This passage clearly shows how S. Paul has not been contrasting right and wrong, but comparative degrees of what is expedient"—SHORE.

39. **Only in the Lord**—"that is, only let Christians marry Christians; a standing direction, and one of the utmost importance"—WESLEY.

It is supremely necessary that the precepts and principles of religion should enter into all the relationships of life, but never more so than in those of marriage. SUTCLIFFE says: "The injunction to the widow to marry **only in the Lord** applies with equal force to young people, and to all pious parents in the disposal of their children. Shall lands or riches or family connections be preferred to piety? What then must the Church think of the religion of those who act against the commandment, and how are such marriages likely to operate on children?"

40. **I also**—as well as any of you—**have the Spirit of God**—teaching me all things. "This does not imply any doubt; but the strongest certainty of it, together with a reproof of them for calling it in question. Whoever, therefore, would conclude from hence that S. Paul was not certain he had the Spirit of Christ neither understands the true import of the words, nor considers how expressly he lays claim to the Spirit, both in this Epistle (ch. 2. 16; 14. 37) and the other (ch. 13. 3). Indeed, it may be doubted whether the word here and elsewhere translated **think** does not always imply the fullest and strongest assurance. (See ch. 10. 12)"—WESLEY.

"This is no expression of doubt as to whether he had the Spirit of God, but an assurance of his confidence that he, as well as other teachers (who perhaps boast more about it) had the Spirit of God to guide him in cases where no direct command had been given by Christ"—SHORE. "By the word **happier** the apostle sums up the two reasons, the one general, the other particular, whereby from ver. 25 he had justified his preference given to celibacy for the Christian virgin. There is, therefore, no question of a superior holiness in this world, or a more glorious position in the next, attributed to this state"—GODET. "**Happier**—because unmarried and so standing aloof from domestic trials that will become sharper as the advent draws nearer, she will be in a better position for devout preparation to meet her Lord. **Happier, according to my judgment**—which you may not value much. '**Yet**' (another corrective) '**I think that I** too, as well as Apollos and other teachers, **have the Spirit of God.**' A truly modest way of saying, 'Under the guidance, if not of a special revelation at least of general inspiration, I have been stating my own views'"—EVANS.

CHAPTER VIII.

SECTION VII.—Chaps. 8–10. THE USE OF MEATS OFFERED TO IDOLS, AND PARTICIPATION IN THE SACRIFICIAL MEATS.—1. "**Now concerning** the next question you proposed. **All of us have knowledge**—a gentle reproof of their self-conceit. **Knowledge** without love always **puffeth up. Love** alone **edifies**—builds us up in holiness"—WESLEY.

"**Charity** (R.V. 'Love'). The sudden and matter-of-fact transition to this subject without any reason given, and in a form similar to ch. 7. 1, suggests that it was mentioned in the letter to S. Paul. He deals with it by first laying down, as usual, a great general principle, viz. that love is better than knowledge (vers. 1–3), and then looks at the matter in the light (vers. 4–6) of knowledge and (vers. 7–13) of love. Love, by its own nature, prompts us to use our powers for the good of others, and especially for their highest good"—BEET. "**Love** alone can produce in him who knows, and through him, in his brethren, serious moral progress. Love alone draws from God the real knowledge of Divine things, and teaches him who receives it to adapt it to the wants of his brethren"—GODET.

2. **If any man think he knoweth any thing**—"aright, unless so far as he is taught by God—**he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know**—seeing there is no true knowledge without Divine love"—WESLEY.

"There must be a moral as well as a merely intellectual element in knowledge, if it is to be true knowledge. Without love to guide us in its use it is not an operative knowledge, and so does not fulfil the true end of knowledge"—SHORE.

3. **He is known**—"that is, approved—**by Him.** (Ps. 1. 6)"—WESLEY.

This explains the nature of the love which edifies. Love to God, and therefore love to man, builds up the whole Christian communion. "The knowledge of God presupposes the being known of Him; the soul will not vivify with life from above until God has drawn nigh"—OLSHAUSEN.

4. **We know that an idol is nothing**—"a mere nominal God, having no divinity, virtue, or power"—WESLEY.

"It is nothing in itself but a piece of wood or metal; and it really represents nothing, for we know that there is 'no God but one'"—SHORE. "**Idol**—not here a mere image, but, by an inevitable transition of thought, the deity worshipped in the image. S. Paul says that Zeus, Apollo, etc., have no existence. If you search everywhere **in the world**, you will find no reality corresponding to the images"—BEET.

5. **For though there be that are called gods**—"by the heathens, both celestial (as they style them), terrestrial, and infernal deities"—WESLEY.

So-called gods—"conceptions to which the name 'god' is given. The fancy of the Greeks peopled with deities the **heaven**, visible and invisible, and the mountains, wood, and rivers of the earth. In the thought and lips and life of the heathen, the **gods many and lords**

many were and are a terrible reality"—BEET.

6. **Yet to us**—"Christians, **there is but one God.** This is exclusive, not of the **one Lord** as if He were an inferior deity, but only of the idols to which the 'one God' is opposed. **From whom are all things**—by creation, providence, and grace. **And we for Him**—the end of all we are, have, and do. **And one Lord**—equally the object of Divine worship. **By whom are all things**—created, sustained, and governed. **And we by Him**—have access to the Father, and all spiritual blessings"—WESLEY.

"For us Christians there exists but one God the Father, from whom alone every created thing has come, and for (not 'in') whom alone we exist; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things are created (John 1. 3), and we Christians created spiritually by Him. All creation is **of** the Father through the Son. All creation is **for** the Father and likewise **for** the Son. (See Col. 1. 16.) The words **we by Him** must not be regarded as a repetition of part of the thought of the previous sentence; but as the words **by whom are all things** express the fact of physical creation, so the words **we by Him** attribute our spiritual re-creation as Christians to the same source. (See Gal. 6. 15; Eph. 2. 10.) This sixth verse then sweeps away completely any pantheistic conception which might have been thought to be in the previous words. Even granting, for argument sake, that such gods or lords do exist, we have one God, one Lord"—ELLICOTT.

7. **Some eat, with consciousness of the idol**—"that is, fancying it is something, and that it makes the meat unlawful to be eaten. **And their conscience, being weak**—not rightly informed—**is defiled**—contracts guilt by doing it"—WESLEY.

"**Knowledge** or enlightenment in moral truth was not *universal*. **Conscience** (see Rom. 2. 15) **being weak**: the inward faculty which contemplates the secrets of man's own heart not having mental and spiritual strength to grasp the truth that an idol is but an empty name. Consequently in his heart of hearts he is conscious of **defilement**, *i.e.* of that which lessens his respect for himself, and which he would hide from others. By speaking of this as something actually going on, S. Paul makes it more easy for us to realise and contemplate the process of defilement"—BEET. **Conscience** is a man's inward knowledge of his relation to God. It is an inborn faculty. Chrysostom calls it a *natural* or *constitutional* faculty, of *knowing with* one's own self, with the responsible self—knowing what or about what? A certain Divine law written in the heart. If the man act upon the early impulses in direction of what is lawful and right, these acts grow into a habit; this innate faculty is called, that which it is, "a good conscience" (Acts 23. 1), or "pure" (1 Tim. 3. 9), or "void of offence" (Acts 24. 16). If a man resist or repress the first promptings, and do what he suspects or believes to be wrong, his conscience is in precisely corresponding degrees spotted, sullied, **defiled** (as here, ver. 9).

8. **But meat commendeth us not to God**—"neither by eating, nor refraining from it; eating and not eating are in themselves things merely different"—WESLEY. (See 2 Cor. 4. 14; Col. 1. 22, 28.)

It is not Christ's creature, doomed to perish, but *Christ Himself* that shall present us to God. The use of meats, like that of all outward things (Col. 2. 22), is a matter of absolute insignificance in itself. The question of real importance is, What effect will our conduct have on others?

9. "**To them that are weak**—uninformed in the truth, or unsettled as to their knowledge of it"—BENSON. "**This liberty of yours**—rather 'right.' Under ordinary circumstances we have a right to act upon our rational convictions. But this right has its limits (see ch. 6. 12, and note). We are bound to respect the scruples of the conscientious though perhaps unenlightened man. In this particular case there are those who conscientiously regard an idol as having a real existence, and anything offered in sacrifice to it as its property, and therefore as unfit to be partaken of by Christians. The perceptions of such persons may be far from clear, but their motives are pure and worthy of respect. We may be wiser than they; but we must be careful that we do not by our wisdom betray them into sin. **Become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.** What reality is there in your religion if you look at men struggling in darkness, and are content to congratulate yourselves that you are in the light? Slaves—idolaters—superstitious—alas! is that all that we have to say?"—ROBERTSON.

10. **For if anyone see thee who hast knowledge**—"whom he believes to have more knowledge than himself, and who really has this knowledge, that *an idol is nothing*—**sitting down** to an entertainment **in an idol-temple.** The heathens frequently made entertainments in their temples, on what had been sacrificed to their idols. **Will not the conscience of him that is weak**—scrupulous—**be encouraged**—by thy example—**to eat**—though with a doubting conscience?"—WESLEY.

"It suffices to call to mind that the more advanced believer should, by his superior knowledge, have edified the other by enlightening his conscience, and emancipating him from his false scruples, whereas by his imprudence he leads him to trample upon his conscience, and thus substitutes false edification for the true: he enlightens and strengthens him to his loss! Fine edification! It may appear surprising that S. Paul here lets the conduct of the strong Christian pass without calling his attention to the evil which he may do himself by

taking part in such a banquet in such a place. But the apostle never wanders from his subject. His subject here is the self-denial imposed by love to our neighbour. He will afterwards (ch. 10. 15-21) treat the other side of the question, that concerning the danger to which the strong believer exposes himself"—GODET.

11. **And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?**—"and for whom thou wilt not lose a meal's meat, so far from dying for him! We see, Christ died even for them that perish"—WESLEY.

For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died (R.V.). The apostle is thinking of the immediate effect: "He is from that moment in the way of perdition." An unfaithfulness, however small it may appear, separates the believer from his Lord; by interposing between the branch and the stock, it interrupts the communication of life which ought to take place from one to the other. From that moment spiritual death commences; and if this state continues and becomes aggravated, as is inevitable in such a case, eternal perdition is the end of it. (Comp. Rom. 14. 15.) Every word of this verse has a force of its own. **Cause to perish**—what success! A **weak brother**—what magnanimity! Through **knowledge**, which ought to have been used for his advancement—what fidelity in the grace received! A **brother** over whom thou shouldest have watched as over the apple of thine eye—what love! A man for love of whom **Christ** gave Himself to die—what gratitude!

12. **Ye sin against Christ**—"whose members they are"—WESLEY.

And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ (R.V.). (Comp. Matt. 25. 40, 45.) For the reason of this comp. John 17 throughout, as also such passages as Rom. 12. 5; Eph. 1. 23; 3. 17; 4. 15, 16; Col. 2. 19; and ch. 10. 17; 12. 27, of this Epistle, where the indwelling of Christ in the individual believer is taught. It is this sin against **Christ** which S. Paul more especially emphasises as the gravest of all.

13. **If meat**—"of any kind. Who will follow this example? What preacher or private Christian will abstain from anything lawful in itself, when it offends a weak brother?"—WESLEY.

(See Matt. 18. 6; Mark 9. 42; Luke 17. 1, 2.) "This abridgment of their liberty is a duty more especially incumbent on all who are possessed of influence"—ROBERTSON. "S. Paul in his ardour for the conversion of souls was ready, not only to abstain from meats offered to idols, but from meat altogether, rather than be a stumblingblock in another's way"—ESTIUS. "It is not enough that we avoid what is sinful ourselves; Christian love will teach us even to abridge ourselves of our liberty in lawful things for others' good"—COKE. "S Paul's law is that liberty must be tempered by love; that the individual must consider the society of which he forms a part; and that, after his own conscience is satisfied regarding the legitimacy of certain actions, he must further consider how the conscience of his neighbour will be affected if he uses his liberty and does these actions. He must endeavour to keep step with the Christian community of which he forms a part, and must beware of giving offence to less enlightened persons by his freer conduct. He must consider, not only whether he himself can do this or that with a good conscience, but also how the conscience of those who know what he does will be affected by it"—DODS. HOLSTEN well sums up the idea of this chapter thus: "The strong sought the solution of the question from the standpoint of knowledge and its rights; the apostle finds it from the standpoint of love and its obligations." And GODET adds: "The last words of this chapter evidently form the transition to the following passage, in which S. Paul continues to present to the Corinthians his own example, by reminding them of the great and constant voluntary sacrifice with which he accompanies the exercise of his apostleship. To the contingent sacrifice of ver. 13 he adds, as a still more convincing example, the sacrifice which he has already made, and which he renews daily, his renunciation of all recompence from the churches founded by him."

CHAPTER IX.

Vers. 1-14. S. PAUL'S DEFENCE OF HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.—1. **Am I not free? am I not an apostle**—"that is, have not I the liberty of a common Christian—yea, that of an apostle? He vindicates his apostleship (vers. 1-3), his apostolical liberty (vers. 4-19). **Have I not seen Jesus Christ?** Without this he could not have been one of those first grand witnesses. **Are not ye my work in the Lord**—a full evidence that God has sent me? And yet some, it seems, objected to his being an apostle, because he had not asserted his privilege in demanding and receiving such maintenance from the churches as was due to that office"—WESLEY.

"In ch. 8, S. Paul has been exhorting the Corinthians to sacrifice their own personal predilections for the benefit of others. In ver. 13 he declares himself to be ready to act upon this principle to the uttermost. But some may say, 'Fine doctrine this, but does the apostle practise what he preaches?'"—ROBERTSON. He is about to give proof of his sincerity by referring to his sacrifice of self for the good of others, when he anticipates the reply, You have no power to do otherwise; you are not an apostle at all; and he replies to each of these statements, by asking of each of them, Is it really then true? The argument is

summarised by Bishop WORDSWORTH thus: "Am I not free? am I not an apostle? am I not *your* apostle?" "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one"—LUTHER.

2. **Ye are the seal of my apostleship**—"who have received not only faith by my mouth, but all the gifts of the Spirit by my hands"—WESLEY.

"*Others* may doubt my claims; *you* cannot. The church at Corinth, being evidently God's work, was a conspicuous and Divine attestation of S. Paul's often-repeated claim that by the immediate voice of Christ he had been called to be an apostle. For no impostor or fanatic could produce the abiding and blessed results which had followed S. Paul's preaching"—BEET. **"For the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.** If any church had less right than another to question his apostolic authority, it was the church of Corinth, which he had founded (ch. 4. 15), and on which so many spiritual gifts had been poured forth (ch. 1. 5, 7; ch. 14). The Corinthians at least needed no other proof of the genuineness of his mission. 'If anyone wishes to know whether I am an apostle, I will show him yourselves; among whom are manifest and indubitable signs and proofs of my apostolate: first the faith of Christ, which you have received at my preaching; then many and various gifts of the Holy Ghost' (ESTIUS). For the word 'seal' see John 3. 33; 6. 27; Rom. 4. 11. A seal is used as the attestation of the genuineness of any document. Thus the existence of the Corinthian church was the attestation of the genuineness of S. Paul's apostolic authority"—C. B.

3. **My answer to them who examine me**—"concerning my apostleship—**is this**—which I have now given"—WESLEY.

"Both the words 'answer' and 'examine' are in the Greek the technical terms for a legal defence and examination before a tribunal"—ELLICOTT.

4. **Have we not power**—"I and my fellow-labourers—**to eat and to drink**—at the expense of those among whom we labour"—WESLEY.

"After proving his apostleship, S. Paul now begins to prove (vers. 4–14) his claim to be supported by the church. He thus introduces the specific matter of ch. 9. **Eat and drink**—at the cost of the church. For God to give S. Paul a work which so occupied him that he could not earn (2 Cor. 11. 8) sufficient food, and yet to forbid him to be supported by his converts, would be practically to forbid him to 'eat and drink.' (Contrast Luke 10. 7)"—BEET.

5. **Have we not power to lead about with us a sister, a wife**—"and to demand sustenance for her also—**as well as the other apostles**—who, therefore, it is plain, did this—**and Peter?** Hence we learn (1) that S. Peter continued to live with his wife after he became an apostle; (2) That he had no rights as an apostle which were not common to S. Paul"—WESLEY.

"The ordinary interpretation of this passage is that S. Paul here asserts his right, if he pleased, to take with him a wife who was a member of the Christian body, and to have her maintained at the expense of the community. The word **sister**, like the words 'brother,' 'brethren,' is equivalent to 'a member of the Christian Church' (Rom. 16. 1; Jas. 2. 15; 2 John 13 (perhaps), and ch. 7. 15 of this Epistle). The privilege was claimed by the other apostles with a view, as Stanley suggests, of obtaining access to the women, who in the East usually dwelt apart. **The brethren of the Lord.** These have been regarded (1) as the children of Joseph and Mary, (2) the children of Joseph by a former wife, (3) as the kinsmen of our Lord, the word 'brother' having been used in Hebrew to denote any near relation. (See Gen. 13. 8; 29. 12; Lev. 10. 4.) The question has been hotly debated. (1) or (2) seem more natural; but in support of (3) we find from Scripture and ecclesiastical history that the names of our Lord's brethren, James and Joses and Simon and Judas, were also the names of the sons of Alphæus, who were our Lord's cousins. (See Matt. 13. 55; 27. 56; Luke 24. 10; John 19. 25. Also Matt. 10. 3; Mark 3. 18; Luke 6. 16; and Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* III. 11, 32. See Professor Lightfoot on the Epistle to the Galatians. Also Professor Plumptre on the Epistle of James)"—C. B.

6. **To forbear working**—"with our hands"—WESLEY.

For Barnabas, see Acts 4. 36; 11. 22, 25, 29; 12. 1, 2, 50; 14. 12; 15. 2, 12, 37; Gal. 2. 1, 9, 13.

7. **"What soldier ever serveth at his own charges?** (R.V.). S. Paul's imagery from nature and country life are on the practical rather than the poetic side; whereas his images from military, political, and social life have the vivid reality which we should expect from one whose life was spent chiefly in towns"—ELLICOTT.

8. **Do I speak as a man**—"barely on the authority of human reason? Does not God also say, in effect, the same thing? **The ox that treadeth out the corn.** This was the custom in Judea, and many Eastern nations. In several of them it is retained still. And at this day, horses tread out the corn in some parts of Germany"—WESLEY.

"God had commanded the Jews (Deut. 25. 4), that when harvest came, the ox, while treading the corn which it had contributed to produce by the painful labour of plowing, should not be muzzled, and thereby prevented from enjoying, conjointly with man, the fruit of its toil. Among the heathen no scruple was felt about acting differently, and hence God expressly forbids this practice to His people. God's object in acting thus was evidently to cultivate in the

hearts of His people feelings of justice and equity. This moral object appears not only from the prohibition in itself, but also from all the other injunctions which accompany it in chaps. 24 and 25 of Deuteronomy; the command to restore to the poor man his garment, taken as a pledge, immediately after sunset (Deut. 24. 10–13), to pay to the poor labourer his wages on the same evening (vers. 14, 15), not to put the child to death with the guilty father (vers. 16–18), always to leave, when gathering the harvest, a gleaning for widows and strangers, etc. By calling on the Israelites to exercise gentleness and gratitude, even towards a poor animal, it is clear that God desired to inculcate on them, with stronger reason, the same way of acting towards the human workman whose help they engaged in their labour. It was the duties of *moral beings* to one another, that God wished to impress by this precept (ver. 9)"—GODET.

9. **Doth God**—"in this direction—**take care for oxen**—only? Hath He not a further meaning? And so undoubtedly He hath in all the other Mosaic laws of this kind"—WESLEY.

"The pointed and emphatic mention of the Law of Moses would give the words great weight with Jewish opponents. On a space of hard ground called a threshing-floor the oxen were driven to and fro over the corn collected there, and thus the separation of the grain from the husk was accomplished. **Doth God take care for oxen?** The good which such a provision as the Law achieved for the oxen was nothing compared to the good which it accomplished for man. God would teach us men humanity"—ELLICOTT.

10. **He who ploweth ought to plow in hope**—"of reaping. This seems to be a proverbial expression. **And he that thresheth in hope** ought not to be disappointed, ought to eat the fruit of his labours. And so ought they who labour in God's husbandry"—WESLEY.

And he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking (R.V.). "**For our sakes, no doubt, this is written.** Not to oblige us to obey those laws, but to teach us to exercise humanity and equity towards those we employ or deal with. This precept, concerning oxen, being introduced in the Law, immediately after precepts enjoining justice and mercy in punishments, was certainly intended to impress the Israelites with a sense of the obligations of justice and humanity towards rational creatures, as the apostle here affirms"—BENSON. "This passage expresses the sanction given by God in the legal provision previously mentioned to the Divine principle which unites earthly labour and reward; and the argument, of course, is that this principle applies to the higher work of a spiritual nature; and this application is brought out clearly in the next verse"—ELLICOTT.

11. **Is it a great matter if we shall reap as much of your carnal things**—"as is needful for our sustenance? Do you give us things of greater value than those you receive from us?"—WESLEY.

"The word preached by S. Paul at Corinth was a seed (Luke 8. 11) from which his hearers had reaped a spiritual harvest. Was it then a great recompense if he received from them things needful for the body, which were a far less valuable product of their bodily labour? **Sow: reap**—keeping up the metaphor of ver. 10, and specially appropriate for results corresponding to the organic laws of bodily and spiritual life. (Comp. 2 Cor. 9. 6; Gal. 5. 22)"—BEET.

12. **If others**—"whether true or false apostles—**partake of this power**—have a right to be maintained. **Do not we rather**—on account of our having laboured so much more? **Lest we should give any hindrance to the gospel**—by giving an occasion of cavil or reproach"—WESLEY.

You do recognise this principle in regard to other teachers, and they actually partake of this right to be supported by you; we, your first teachers, have a stronger right. S. Paul had been literally their "planter" (ch. 3. 6). **But suffer all things**—*i.e.* we endure all kinds of hard work and privation rather than use a power which I have demonstrated we possess, and which others actually avail themselves of, lest our doing so might, in a way, hinder the progress of Christ's gospel by giving enemies any even apparent reason for attributing our zeal to unworthy motives.

13. "**Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things.** The Jewish priests are maintained by the sacrifices of the worshippers. (See Lev. 6. 17; Num. 5. 8–10, and especially 18. 8–20; so also Deut. 10. 9, 18. 1.) This was an argument of which, in dealing with Jews, it would not have been well to lose sight. Whether an apostle or not, S. Paul was at least occupied with sacred things, and so had a claim to live, or rather *eat*, the literal translation (see *margin*, 'feed') by means of the work he was doing. **Partakers with the altar.** The sacrifices were apportioned out according to rule. Part was consumed on the altar, part was given to the priest, part was consumed by the worshipper"—C. B. "The first part of this verse refers to the general principle that the priests who were engaged in the Temple service were supported from the various offerings which were brought there, and the second clause more definitely alludes to the particular fact that, when a sacrifice was offered on the altar, the sacrificing priests, as well as the altar, had a share of the animal"—ELLICOTT.

14. "**Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel** (R.V.). **In this way also**—not only adds to the ordinances of Moses an ordinance of Christ, but strengthens the authority of each by showing that they embody the same prin-

ciple. **The Lord**—Master of His Church—**ordained** (in Mark 10. 9 f.; Luke 10. 7)—another mark of agreement of our Gospels with the words of Christ as reported to S. Paul. (Comp. 7. 10.) **Live from the gospel**—obtain by preaching it the things needful for bodily life"—BEET.

15. **It were better for me to die than**—"to give occasion to them that seek occasion against me (2 Cor. 11. 12)"—WESLEY.

"Here again we come upon the sound judgment and honest heart that are never biassed by his own personal circumstances, or insist that what is fit for him is fit for everyone. How apt are self-denying men to spoil their self-denial by dropping a sneer at the weaker souls that cannot follow their heroic example. Not so S. Paul. He first fights the battle of the weak for them, and then disclaims all participation in the spoils"—DODS.

17. **Willingly.** "He seems to mean, without receiving anything. S. Paul here speaks in a manner peculiar to himself. Another might have preached willingly, and yet have received a maintenance from the Corinthians. But if he had received anything from them, he would have termed it preaching unwillingly. And so, in the next verse, another might have used that power without abusing it. But his own using it at all, he would have termed abusing it. **A dispensation is intrusted to me**—therefore I dare not refrain"—WESLEY.

(See R.V.) We may read: "For if by choice I make a business of this, like other teachers, what then? I have a recompense like them. God rewards volunteers in His own cause; if, however, not of choice—if not on the wing of *I will*, but on the spur of *I must;* if in the shade of overhanging necessity, I am doing this evangel work—what then? A stewardship I hold in trust; an administrator am I in the household of God, and as such strictly accountable. You may fairly ask, if I have no sure and certain hope of recompense in the future, as other apostles have, who cheerfully obeyed an ordinary call from their Master, and if I do not choose to accept such maintenance in the present as they do, what then is that recompense of mine?" He seems to answer (as in ver. 19), "It is this increased opportunity: free access to men of all classes and races and opinions, the probability of my gaining and saving more than if by using my privilege I should narrow my sphere of influence." M. HENRY notes: "It is the glory of a minister to prefer the success of his ministry to his interests, and deny himself that he may serve Christ, and save souls. It is what God will approve and commend, what a man may value himself for and take comfort in, though he cannot make a merit of it before God."

18. **What then is my reward**—"that circumstance in my conduct for which I expect a peculiar reward from my great Master? **That I abuse not**—make not an unseasonable use of **my power** which I have **in** preaching **the gospel**"—WESLEY.

"We have here a feeling of exquisite delicacy, and, if one may so speak, of transcendent modesty, which is far from being always understood. S. Paul wishes at any price to pass from the servile state to that of a freeman acting from gratitude. There is, perhaps, no passage in the apostle's letters where there are more admirably revealed at once the nobility, delicacy, profound humility, dignity, and legitimate pride of his Christian character. Serving Christ cannot give him matter of joy except in so far as he has the consciousness of doing so in a condition of freedom"—GODET. **'What is my reward then?**—*lit.* 'wages.' Either (1) as in our person, the preaching the gospel without charge, and the consciousness of having served God faithfully thus obtained; or (2), as some would interpret, suspending the construction until the end of ver. 19, the satisfaction of having made more converts than anyone else. But this involves (1) a harsh construction, and (2) a motive which appears foreign to the Christian character. For though S. Paul in ch. 15. 10 says, 'I laboured more abundantly than they all,' it is in no spirit of vain-glorious boasting. The translation 'reward' somewhat obscures the meaning. Christ had said, 'The labourer is worthy of his *hire*,' or *wages*. S. Paul refers to this in ver. 17. In this verse he asks what his wages are, and replies that they are the preaching the gospel without charge. **Without charge.** This was S. Paul's usual ground of boasting. We find it in his earliest Epistle (1 Thess. 2. 9; comp. 2 Thess. 3. 8). It formed part of his appeal to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20. 33, 34), and in the fervid defence of himself which we find in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians it occupies a prominent place. (See 2 Cor. 11. 7-12)"—C. B.

19. **I made myself the servant of all**—"I acted with as self-denying a regard to their interest, and as much caution not to offend them, as if I had been literally their servant or slave. Where is the preacher of the gospel who treads in the same steps?"—WESLEY.

"He asserts his liberty. **Though I be free from all men.** He was freeborn, a citizen of Rome. He was in bondage to none, nor depended upon any for his subsistence; yet he made himself a servant to all, that he might gain the more. He carried it as a servant; he laboured for their good as a servant; he was careful to please as a servant his Master. He acted in many cases as if he had no privileges; and this that he might make the more converts to Christianity. He made himself a servant, that they might be made free"—M. HENRY. "The reward S. Paul chose was that he should have none—none in the ordinary sense, but really the deepest and most abiding of all; the satisfaction of knowing that, having freely received he had freely given, and had lifted

the gospel into a region quite undimmed by the suspicion of self-seeking or any mists of worldliness"—DODS.

20. **To the Jews I became as a Jew**—"conforming myself in all things to their manner of thinking and living, as far as I could, with innocence. **To them that are under the Law**—who apprehend themselves to be still bound by the Mosaic Law—**as under the Law**—observing it myself, while I am among them. Not that he declared this to be necessary, or refused to converse with those who did not observe it. This was the very thing which he condemned in S. Peter. (Gal. 2. 14)"—WESLEY.

"In declining pecuniary remuneration, S. Paul was acting on his general principle of making himself the servant of all, and of living entirely and exclusively for the good of others. His independence of all men was assumed and maintained for the very purpose of making himself the more effectually the servant of all. To the few and to those under the Law he became as a few, observing the seventh day, circumcising Timothy, abstaining from blood, accommodating himself to all their scruples. To those who had been brought up in Greece, he also conformed himself, freely entering into their innocent customs, calling no meats unclean; appealing, not to the Law of Moses, but to conscience, to common sense, to their own poets—a course which none but a man of wide sympathy and charity, clear intellect, and thorough integrity can adopt"—DODS. "He would transgress no laws of Christ to please or humour any man, but he would accommodate himself to all men where he might do it lawfully to gain some"—M. HENRY.

21. **To them that are without the Law**—"the heathens—**as without the Law**—neglecting its ceremonies. **Being not without the Law to God**—but as much as ever under its moral precepts. **Under the Law to Christ**—and in this sense all Christians will be under the Law for ever"—WESLEY.

"The parenthesis explains in what sense only S. Paul was 'without' the Law, so as to prevent the possibility of this statement being used as a justification of lawlessness. As being one with Christ, he was indeed under the Law of God as revealed in the person, work, and teaching of the Lord. (See Gal. 6. 2)"—ELLICOTT. "Let us beware of identifying religion with a rigid conformity in outward things, and not with an inward spirit of love and goodness. Human nature is an infinitely various thing, and often there is the truest regard for what is holy and Divine disguised under a violent departure from all ordinary ways of manifesting reverence and piety. Put yourself in the place of the inquiring, perplexed, embittered soul, find out the good that is in it, patiently accommodate yourself to its ways so far as you legitimately may, and you will be rewarded by 'gaining some'"—DODS.

22. **I became as weak**—"as if I had been scrupulous too. **I became all things to all men**—accommodating myself to all, so far as I could consistent with truth and sincerity"—WESLEY.

"This was a course which none but a man of wide sympathy and charity, clear intellect, and thorough integrity could adopt. S. Paul was no mere latitudinarian. While accommodating himself to the practice of those around him in all matters of mere outward observance, and which did not touch the essentials of morality and faith, he at the same time held very definite opinions of the chief articles of the Christian creed"—DODS.

23. "He here assigns his reasons for his conduct: **This I do for the gospel's sake**, *i.e.* for the honour of Christ, whose the gospel is, and for the salvation of souls, for which it was designed; and that he and they might communicate in the privileges of it, or partake together of them. A heart warmed with zeal for God, and breathing after the salvation of men, will not plead and insist upon rights and privileges in bar to this design. They manifestly abuse their power in the gospel who employ it not to edification but destruction, and therefore breathe nothing of its spirit"—M. HENRY.

24. **Know ye not that**—"in those famous games which are kept at the isthmus, near your city— **they who run in the** foot **race all run**, though **but one receiveth the prize**—how much greater encouragement have you to run; since ye may all receive the prize of your high calling"—WESLEY.

"In endeavouring to warn Christians against resting in a mere profession of faith in Christ, he cites two great classes of instances which prove that there is often ultimate failure even where there has been considerable promise of success. First, he cites their own world-renowned Isthmian games, in which contests, as they all well knew, not everyone who entered for the prize was successful. **All run, but one receiveth the prize.** S. Paul does not mean that salvation goes by competition; but he means that as in a race not all who run run so as to obtain the prize for which they run, so in Christian life not all who enter it put out sufficient energy to bring them to a happy issue. The mere fact of recognising that the prize is worth winning and even entering for it is not enough"—DODS. STANLEY says of the place in which men struggled for the prizes here spoken of: "It was not a mere resort for public amusement, but an almost sacred edifice, under the tutelage of the patron deity of the Ionian tribes, and surrounded by the most solemn recollection of Greece; its white marble seats rising like a temple in the glassy slope, where its outlines may still be traced, under the shadow of the huge Corinthian citadel, which guards the entrance to the Peloponnesus, and overlooking

the blue waters of the Saronic Gulf, with Athens glittering in the distance." "The apostle, to divert the Corinthians from disputations, sets before them the warm affections and excitements of the heathen in their public games and sports. Christians have also a race to run, and a brighter crown to win, a crown that fadeth not away. Let us then fairly keep our course, and fight lawfully; for heaven is worthy of a race, and the crown demands a fight. And in a little while, when the blaze of life is over, we shall be found wiser than our neighbours who look only at the things of the present world"—SUTCLIFFE.

25. **And everyone that** there **contendeth is temperate in all things**—"to an almost incredible degree: using the most rigorous self-denial in food, sleep, and every other sensual indulgence. **A corruptible crown**—a garland of leaves, which must soon wither. The moderns only have discovered that it is 'legal' to do all this and more for an eternal crown than they did for a corruptible"—WESLEY.

"Better, **Everyone that enters into the contest.** The Greek word is identical with the English 'agonise.' Hence the use in devotional works of the phrase 'to agonise in prayer,' etc. Such a man fulfils not only some, but all the necessary preliminary conditions. He indulges self in no way"—ELLICOTT. "**Temperate in all things.** The temperance maintained by the athlete must be outdone by the Christian if he is to be successful. There are many things in which men who have no thought of the incorruptible prize may engage, but from which the Christian must refrain. All that lowers the tone and slackens the energies must be abandoned. If the Christian indulges in the pleasures of life as freely as other men, if he is unconscious of any severity of self-restraint, if he denies himself nothing which others enjoy—he proves that he has no higher aim than they—and of course wins no higher prize. The temperance here enjoined, and which the Christian practises, not because it is enjoined but because a higher aim truly cherished compels him to practise it, is a habitual sober-mindedness and detachment from what is worldly in the world. It is that temper of spirit and that sustained attitude towards life which enables a man to rule his own desires, to endure hardness, and find pleasure in so doing. No spasmodic, occasional efforts and partial abstinences will ever bring a man victorious to the goal. Temperance to be effectual must be complete, and also continuous. Beware, then, of giving place to the world or the flesh at any point. Measure the invitations of life by their fitness or unfitness to develop within you true spiritual energy"—DODS.

26. **I so run, not as uncertainly**—"I look straight to the goal; I run straight toward it. I cast away every weight, regard not any that stand by. **I fight, not as one that beateth the air.** This is a proverbial expression for a man's missing his blow, and spending his strength, not on his enemy, but on empty air"—WESLEY.

"**I then**—who am an exemplar—**do so run, not as** one who runs with **unsteady aim**—like some of you, with a roving side-glance at an idol's temple"—CHRYSOSTOM. "**So fight I.** The Christian career is not merely a race, but a conflict, and a conflict not only with others but with oneself. S. Paul had to contend with the fleshly lusts of the body, the love especially of ease, the indisposition to hardship and toil so natural to humanity. (See Rom. 7. 23; and for the life of pain and endurance to which he had enslaved himself, ch. 4 of this Epistle, vers. 9-13, and 2 Cor. 11. 23-28.) **Not as one that beateth the air**—that is, not as one who struck out at random, but as one who delivered his blows with effect"—C. B. "He who keeps within the limits prescribed, and keeps on in his race, will never miss his crown"—M. HENRY.

27. **But I keep under my body**—"by all kinds of self-denial. **And bring it into subjection**—to my spirit and to God. The words are strongly figurative, and signify the mortification of the 'body of sin,' by an allusion to the natural bodies of those who were bruised or subdued in combat. **Lest by any means after having preached** — the Greek word means, 'after having discharged the office of an herald' (still carrying on the allusion), whose office it was to proclaim the conditions, and to display the prizes—**I myself should become a reprobate** — disapproved by the Judge, and so falling short of the prize. This single text may give us a just notion of the scriptural doctrine of election and reprobation; and clearly shows us, that particular persons are not in Holy Writ represented as elected absolutely and unconditionally to eternal death; but that believers in general are elected to enjoy the Christian privileges on earth; which if they abuse, those very elect persons will become reprobate. S. Paul was certainly an elect person, if ever there was one; and yet he declares it was possible he himself might 'become a reprobate.' Nay, he actually would have become such, if he had not thus kept his body under, even though he had been so long an elect person, a Christian, and an apostle"—WESLEY.

"**But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage** (R.V.). Every man's body is his enemy when, instead of being his servant, it becomes his master. The proper function of the body is to serve the will, to bring the inner man into contact with the outer world, and enable him to influence it. When the body mutinies and refuses to obey the will, when it usurps authority and compels the man to do its bidding, it becomes his most dangerous enemy. When S. Paul's body presumed to dictate to his spirit, and demanded comforts

and indulgences, and shrank from hardship, he beat it down. The word he uses is an exceptionally strong one—'I keep under'; it is a technical term of the games, and means to strike full in the face. It was the word used of the most damaging blow one boxer could give to another. This unmerciful, overpowering blow S. Paul dealt to his body, resisting its assaults and making it helpless to tempt him. He thus brought it into subjection, made it his slave, as the winner in some of the games had a right to carry the vanquished far into slavery. With the boxer in the games it was grim earnest. He did not need anyone to tell him that his life depended on his ability to defend himself against his trained antagonist. Every faculty must be on the alert. No dreamer has here a chance. What we need is something of the same sense of reality—that it is a life-and-death contest we are engaged in, and that he that treats sin as a weak or pretended antagonist will shortly be dragged a mangled disgrace out of the arena"—DODS.

Let no man think that he has prayed heartily against sin who does not use his utmost diligence to undermine and weaken his inclination to that sin. To water an ill plant every day, and to pray against the power of it would be preposterous. S. Paul complained of "a body of death," and "a thorn in the flesh," and he prayed heartily against it. But was that all? No; he also **kept under his body, and brought it into subjection**, being well assured that unless the soul keeps under the body the body will quickly get above the soul. If you would destroy a well-entrenched enemy, cut off his provisions; and if you starve him in his strongholds, you conquer him as effectually as if you beat him in the field.

CHAPTER X.

SECTION VIII.—Vers. 1-33. THE EXAMPLE OF ISRAEL A WARNING TO CHRISTIANS.—The apostle returns from the digression of ch. 9 to the subject of idol-service. He reminds the Corinthians what befell their fathers in the wilderness. They **all** came out of Egypt. They **all** underwent baptism unto Moses, and **all** ate the same spiritual food. Yet, not responding to God's "purpose of grace," the greater part of them fell by some evil lustfulness. Beware, O Corinthians, of a similar fall! Take warning, and take courage.

1. **Now**—"that ye may not become reprobates, consider how highly favoured your fathers were, who were God's elect and peculiar people, and nevertheless were rejected by Him. **They were all under the cloud**—that eminent token of God's gracious presence, which screened them from the heat of the sun by day, and gave them light by night. **And all passed through the sea**—God opening a way through the midst of the waters"—WESLEY.

"**I would not that ye should be ignorant**—a characteristic expression of S. Paul. (Comp. ch. 12. 1 and Rom. 1. 13; 11. 25; 2 Cor. 1. 8; 1 Thess. 4. 13.) **All our fathers.** The emphasis on 'all' here—it is repeated five times—serves to point out the moral that though all, without exception, received the privileges, the greater number were very far from using them aright. The lesson is still more closely driven home in vers. 11, 12. The Israelites were as much the people of God as we, yet most of them fell. Why should we think, then, that we have less need for watchfulness than they? Some have thought that the expression 'our fathers' implies that S. Paul was here speaking to Jews only. But this is not necessary. (See Rom. 4. 16; 9. 5)"—C. B. "From the expression, **our fathers**, Meyer has concluded that S. Paul is speaking as a Jew, and in the name of the Jewish Christians. But by the address **brethren**, he has just comprehended the whole Church in one and the same body. He therefore sees in the Christian Church the outgrowth of the ancient Israelitish community"—GODET.

2. **And were all**, as it were, **baptized unto Moses**—"initiated into the religion which he taught them—**in the cloud and in the sea**—perhaps sprinkled here and there with drops of water from the sea or the cloud, to which baptism might be the more evidently signified"—WESLEY.

"Baptism is the solemn profession of our Christianity; and the passing through the Red Sea was the Israelites' profession of discipleship to Moses; then they passed the Rubicon, the die was cast, and thenceforward there was no return for them. One solemn step had severed them for ever from Egypt; and the cloud guidance which then began kept the memory of this act before them by a constant witness in all their journeyings. So far, then, this is equivalent to baptism, which is discipleship; a sacrament or oath of obedience, the force of which is kept up and recalled by an outward sign"—ROBERTSON. "Moses was God's representative under the Law, and so they were baptized unto him in their voluntarily joining with that 'Church' of God which marched beneath the shadow of the cloud, and passed through the waters of the sea, as Christians are baptized into Jesus Christ,—He being (in a higher sense both in kind and in degree) God's Representative in the new dispensation. The **cloud** and the **sea** refer to the cloud that overshadowed the Israelites (Ex. 13. 21, and see Num. 14. 14) and the passage through the Red Sea (Ex. 14. 32; Num. 35. 8)"—ELLICOTT.

3. "**And all ate the same manna**, termed **spiritual meat**, as it was typical (1) of Christ and His spiritual benefits, (2) of the sacred bread which we eat at His table"—WESLEY.

"**Spiritual meat.** The manna (Ex. 16. 13) was not natural food, for it was not produced in the natural way, but it was supplied by the

Spirit and power of God. Bread from earth would be natural bread, but this was bread from heaven. (John 6. 31.) Our Lord (John 6. 50) had already made the Christian Church familiar with the 'true bread,' of which that food had been the typical forecast"—ELLICOTT. The sacraments of the Old Testament are made by S. Paul to foreshadow the substance of two sacraments in the New, of two and no more.

4. **And all drank the same spiritual drink**—"typical of Christ, and of that cup which we drink. **For they drank out of the spiritual** or mysterious **rock**, the wonderful streams of **which followed them** in their several journeyings, for many years, through the wilderness. **And that rock was** a manifest type of **Christ**—the ROCK OF ETERNITY, from whom His people derive those streams of blessing which follow them through all this wilderness"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul's point is, that in the wilderness the food and drink of the Israelites were 'spiritual,' or, as we should more naturally say, sacramental; that is to say, their sustenance continually spoke to them of God's nearness, and reminded them that they were His people. And as Christ Himself, when He lifted the bread at the Last Supper, said, 'This is My body,' so does S. Paul use analogous language and say, **that rock was Christ**—an expression which gives us considerable insight into the significance of the Israelitish types of Christ, and helps to rid our minds of some erroneous impressions we are apt to cherish regarding them. The manna and the water from the rock were given to sustain the Israelites and carry them towards their Promised Land, but they were so given as to quicken faith in God. They were types of Christ, serving for Israel in the wilderness the purpose which Christ serves for us, enabling them to believe in a heavenly Father who cared for them, and accomplishing the same spiritual union with the unseen God which Christ accomplishes for us"—DODS. "**And that rock was Christ.** Christ was the true source of all their nourishment, and He went with them whithersoever they went. He, the Angel of the Covenant (Ex. 23. 20, 21, 23; 32. 34; Josh. 5. 13), was their guide and their support. (Comp. John 4. 10, 14; 7. 37, 38. For the term Rock, as applied to God, see Deut. 32. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31, 37; Ps. 18. 1, and many other passages in the Psalms too numerous to quote.) We can hardly dismiss this passage without quoting BENGEL's remark, 'Had there been more than two sacraments, S. Paul would have pointed out some spiritual resemblances to them'"—C. B.

5. **Yet**—"although they had so many tokens of the Divine presence—**they were overthrown**—with the most terrible marks of His displeasure"—WESLEY.

God had the most gracious design for them all, viz. that they should enter the Promised Land. He nourished and guided them in the desert, and showed them His unceasing care, but the intended good was frustrated by their murmurings and other sins. GODET says: "What a spectacle is that which is called up by the apostle before the eyes of the self-satisfied Corinthians: all those bodies, sated with miraculous food and drink, strewing the soil of the desert." And Ellicott explains the verse to introduce the point from which the apostle seeks to draw the great lesson of self-distrust.

6. **Now these things were our examples**—"showing what we are to expect if, enjoying the like benefits, we commit the like sins. The benefits are set down in the same order as by Moses in Exodus; the sins and punishments in a different order—evil desire first, as being the foundation of all; next, idolatry (vers. 7, 14); then fornication, which usually accompanied it (ver. 8); the tempting and murmuring against God, in the following verses. **As they desired**—flesh, in contempt of manna"—WESLEY.

"God would have men learn from such history to follow the tracks of obedience and mercies, and to avoid the footprints of rebellion and judgments"—EVANS. "**These things**—this rejection, this curse after such blessings. **Examples for us**—strictly, 'examples of us,' that is to say, of what will happen to ourselves if we follow their example. By **evil things** are to be understood the enjoyments which God does not grant, either because they are evil in themselves, or because, perfectly legitimate as they are, God requires them to be sacrificed in the service of love, or for the sake of watchfulness. These 'examples' are four in number—two refer to pleasures which God refuses (vers. 7, 8), two to the feelings of irritation and rebellion excited by this refusal (vers. 8, 9)"—GODET.

7. **Neither be ye idolaters**—"and so, 'neither murmur ye' (ver. 10). The other cautions are given in the first person, but these in the second. And with what exquisite propriety does he vary the person! It would have been improper to say, neither let *us* be idolaters; for he was himself in no danger of idolatry, nor probably of murmuring against Christ, or the Divine providence. **To play**—that is, to dance, in honour of their idol"—WESLEY.

"The **neither** connects this proposition closely with the preceding; we pass from lust to the acts in which it seeks satisfaction. The example quoted in the worship of the golden calf, and of the profane feast which followed it (Ex. 32). **To play**, is specially used of dancing"—GODET. "The idolatry and eating and drinking and committing fornication all refer to kinds of sin which the Corinthians were liable to commit if they did not keep themselves perfectly distinct from the heathen. (See ch. 6. 12)"—ELLICOTT. "**Neither** become ye **idolaters**, as the Israelites did, when they

sat down at the idol-feast of the golden calf in Horeb. Beware, O Corinthians, even to partake of idol-meats is an implication in idol-service"—EVANS.

8. **And fell in one day three and twenty thousand** — "beside the princes who were afterwards hanged, and those whom the judges slew; so that there died in all four and twenty thousand"—WESLEY.

In Num. 25. 9, we find twenty-four thousand. The actual number would, no doubt, be between the two, so that both here and in the Book of Numbers only round numbers are given. "Our apostle saith not definitely three and twenty thousand perished, but three and twenty thousand at the least"—LIGHTFOOT.

9. **Neither let us tempt Christ**—"by our unbelief. S. Paul enumerates five benefits (vers. 1-4), of which the fourth and fifth were closely connected together; and five sins, the fourth and fifth of which were likewise closely connected. In speaking of the fifth benefit, he expressly mentions Christ; and, in speaking of the fourth sin, he shows it was committed against Christ. **As some of them tempted** Him. This sin of the people was peculiarly against Christ; for when they had so long drank of that rock, yet they murmured for want of water"—WESLEY.

"The real meaning of the passage is evident. The Israelites had, by their longing after the things left behind in Egypt, tried God so that God had asserted Himself in visiting them with punishment; and so Christians must be on their guard, with such a warning before them, not to tempt their Lord by hankering after those worldly and physical pleasures from which He by His death has delivered them. (See Num. 21)"—SHORE. "*Application:* be ye not also discontented, but accept the Christian's position of a pure and sober life, nor look back with longing upon what you have renounced for ever, those pleasures of Corinth which are as the flesh-pots of Egypt" —EVANS.

10. **The destroyer**—"the destroying angel" —WESLEY.

S. Paul attributes the death of the people to the destroyer, *i.e.* God's messenger sent to destroy—while in Numbers they are said to have perished by the plague. Every pestilence that swept over nations to purify them was a messenger from God. Thus, in Ps. 78. 50, God is said to give their life over to the pestilence, which, in Ex. 12. 23, is spoken of as the destroyer.

11. **On whom the ends of the ages are come.** "The expression has great force. All things meet together, and come to a crisis, under the last, the gospel dispensation; both benefits and dangers, punishments and rewards. It remains, that Christ come as an Avenger and Judge. And even these 'ends' include various periods, succeeding each other" —WESLEY.

"**They were written** for the **admonition** of Christians who had entered into the obligations of the new dispensation. For this purpose they were recorded; by this act of God they were made types in the highest sense; and could not become types in the sense of mere figurative illustrations, which would have been contingent upon this rhetorical use being made of them by some subsequent writer"—WATSON. "This verse is the summary of all the foregoing examples. The apostle does not mean that these facts did not really happen, as has been insinuated, but that they had a bearing beyond their immediate signification. The Scripture compilation of the facts of sacred history has the same end as the history itself" —GODET.

12. "The common translations runs: **Let him that thinketh he standeth**; but the word translated 'thinketh' most certainly strengthens, rather than weakens, the sense" —WESLEY.

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. "A warning against the over-confidence too common among the Corinthians. (See ch. 1 throughout; ch. 3. 18; 4. 8.) It is not sufficient to have been admitted into the Christian covenant; we need watchfulness, in order to use our privileges aright. (Comp. Rom. 11. 20)"—C. B. "In this life we are never beyond the reach of temptation. And these temptations, to which all of us are exposed, are real; they do sufficiently test character and show what it actually is. 'Heedlessness,' taking things for granted, failure to sift matters thoroughly out, an indolent unwillingness to probe our spiritual condition to the quick—this is what has betrayed multitudes of Christians. Whoever takes it for granted that things are well with him, whoever **thinketh he standeth**—he is the man who has special and urgent need to **take heed lest he fall**"—DODS.

13. **Common to man**—"or, as the Greek word imports, proportioned to human strength. **God is faithful**—in giving the help which He hath promised. **And He will with the temptation** — provide for your deliverance" — WESLEY.

"A consolation, as the last verse was a warning. These words were intended to meet an objection that it was impossible to walk warily enough—impossible to adjust aright the boundaries of our own freedom and our brother's need. Every temptation as it comes, S. Paul says, will have the way of escape provided from it by God. All that a Christian has to do is to live in humble dependence upon Him, neither perplexed in the present nor anxious for the future. (Comp. 2 Pet. 2. 9)" — LIAS. "Encouragement after warning. **Temptation**—whatever, painful or pleasant, tends to lead us to sin, and thus tests our loyalty to Christ. (Comp. Matt. 4. 1-10.) **Human** — within the limits of the spiritual

powers God has given to men. We can conceive higher intelligences to be attacked by severer temptations. **Faithful** (ch. 1. 9)—to what has been (ver. 13*a*) in the past, S. Paul adds, what 'will' be in the future. **Will not let**—for each temptation attacks us under His eye and restraint"—BEET.

14. **Flee from idolatry**—"and from all approaches to it"—WESLEY.

Idolatry is a deadly sin, and so also is whatever tends to promote it. **Flee** from it. Do not be trying how *near* you can get to this (or to any other sin), but rather how *far* you can get **from** it.

16. **The cup which we bless**—"by setting it apart to a sacred use, and solemnly invoking the blessing of God upon it—**is it not the communion of the blood of Christ** — the means of our partaking of those invaluable benefits, which are the purchase of 'the blood of Christ'? **The communion of the body of Christ**—the means of our partaking of those benefits which were purchased by 'the body of Christ'—offered for us"—WESLEY.

"We have here the first reason against taking part in an idol-feast. We communicate together in the body and blood of Christ, and we are thereby debarred from communion with any beings alien to Him; a communion into which, by the analogy of all sacrificial rites, we enter with the beings to whom such sacrifices are offered. (See ver. 20.) The term **cup of blessing** is a Hebraism for the cup over which a blessing is to be pronounced, whose characteristic it is to be blessed. It was the name given to the cup over which thanks were given at the Passover"—LIGHTFOOT. "Communion with the body and blood of Christ is established and asserted in this partaking of the bread and of the cup"—ELLICOTT. The words spoken over the cup evidently set forth the goodness of God; as in Luke 1. 64; 2. 28. Hence they were equivalent to "thanksgiving." (Comp. 14. 16; 1 Sam. 9. 13; Matt. 14. 19; Luke 9. 16, with John 6. 11; Mark 8. 6, with ver. 7; Matt 26. 26, with ver. 27.) So CHRYSOSTOM: "A cup of blessing He called it; since, holding it in our hands, in this way we sing praise to Him." Our first thought as we behold the symbols of the death of Christ is gratitude to God. Hence the term "Eucharist," *i.e.* thanksgiving. And the cup which recalls the death of Christ is made here (comp. Mark 8. 7; Luke 9. 16) the object or matter of our blessing. The gratitude evoked by sight of the cup is made very prominent by the addition **which we bless.**

17. "**For**—it is this communion which makes us all one—**we being many are** yet, as it were, but different parts of **one** and the same broken **bread**, which we receive to unite us in **one body**"—WESLEY.

"What does S. Paul wish to prove by appealing here to the analogy of the Holy Supper? He wishes to demonstrate, by the salutary influence which the communion exercises over the believer's heart, that demons exercise a pernicious one over him who takes part in the heathen sacrificial feasts. The Holy Supper is not, therefore, according to the apostle's view, a simple act of profession and thanksgiving on the believer's part. It is, at the same time, a real partaking of the grace purchased by Christ, and which He communicates to the devout soul of the communicant"—GODET. "As one loaf is made up of many grains, and one body is composed of many members, so the Church of Christ is joined together of many faithful ones, united in the bonds of charity"—AUGUSTINE. "So Chrysostom and Theodoret, and our English bishops Andrews and Hall"—C. B. (Comp. ch. 12. 12; Gal. 3. 28; Eph. 4. 4; Col. 3. 15.)

18. **Consider Israel after the flesh.** "Christians are the spiritual 'Israel of God.' **Are not they who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?** Is not this an act of communion with that God to whom they are offered? And is not the case the same with those who eat of the sacrifices which have been offered to idols?"—WESLEY.

"**Behold Israel after the flesh**—second reason (see ver. 16). As the Christian sacrificial feasts, so are those of the Jews. **Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?**—'in a strict and peculiar sense—the altar having part of the animal, the partaker another part'"—ALFORD. "The word here translated **partakers** is not the same as in the last verse. It is, like the word translated '*communion*,' and implies that the altar and the worshipper share together in the victim. BENGEL remarks that 'he to whom anything is offered, the things which are offered, the altar on which they are offered,' and he might have added those who offer them, 'have communion with each other.' If, therefore, any one knowingly partake of an idol-sacrifice, *as such* (it would seem that some went so far as to contend that Christians might do so), he makes himself responsible for the worship of the idol, and all the evils with which that worship is connected"—C. B. "The Levitical sacrifices were outward acts for maintaining membership in the commonwealth of Israel in the sphere of the *flesh*, *i.e.* natural and earthly life consecrated to God"—DELITZSCH.

19. **What say I then?** "Do I in saying this allow **that an idol is anything** Divine? I aver, on the contrary, **that what the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils.** Such in reality are the gods of the heathens; and with such only can you hold communion in those sacrifices"—WESLEY.

It might have been argued from the preceding verse that the apostle admitted the heathen offerings, and the idols to which they were offered, to be as real as were the offerings and being to whom the altar was erected by

Israel, whereas in ch. 8. 4 he had asserted the contrary.

20. "**Fellowship with devils.** The words of the apostle do not imply the idea that every false god worshipped by the heathen corresponds to a particular demon; they signify merely that heathen religions emanate from those malignant spirits, and that consequently the man who takes part in such worship puts himself under their influence. 'How was it possible,' says HEINRICI, 'to sit at such a feast, to be sprinkled with the holy water, to obey the prescription of sacred silence, to take part in the joy of the hymns and dances which filled the interval between the sacrifice and the banquet, and finally to be given up to the joy of the feast which crowned the festive day to the glory of the false god, without acting as a worshipper of the heathen divinity?' **Now I would not.** This authoritative form is accounted for by the solicitude of love. A father cannot allow his children to deliver themselves into bad hands"—GODET.

21. **Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils**—"ye cannot have communion with both"—WESLEY.

It is morally impossible for you to drink the cup that brings into communion with the Lord, *i.e.* Christ, and to drink the cup that brings into fellowship with demons. BEET says: "Christ claims our sole allegiance, and will tolerate no rival. Therefore, to indulge in the pleasures offered by idolatry is to forego the salvation which comes through the shed blood of Christ, which is solemnly set forth in the Christian feast, and makes the sacramental cup to be a cup of praise to God."

22. **Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy**—"by thus caressing His rivals? **Are we stronger than He**—are we able to resist or to bear His wrath?"—WESLEY.

Dreadful alternative! Are we just doing what Israel did of old in the desert, embittering the Lord to jealousy? (See Deut. 32. 21.) Are we stronger than He? Nay, but shall call forth the jealous and terrible anger of our Master, Christ.

23. Supposing this were **lawful** in itself, yet it is not **expedient**, it is not edifying to my neighbour"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul repeats here the great principle of Christian liberty. 'All things are lawful for me' (see ch. 6. 12), but insists, as before, that its application must be limited by a regard (1) to the effect which each action has upon ourselves, and (2) its influence on the Church at large. 'Does this act tend to my own spiritual profit? Does it tend to build up others?' should be the practical rules of Christian life"—ELLICOTT.

24. "**His own only, but another's welfare** also"—WESLEY.

"**Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth**—rather, 'the profit of his neighbour.' (Comp. Rom. 15. 1-3; Phil. 2. 4.) The conclusion is moral, not positive. No rule is laid down about eating or not eating any kind of food as a matter of importance in itself. With such things the gospel has no concern. What S. Paul does prescribe relates to the effect of our conduct upon others. (See Rom. 14 throughout.) It will thus happen in our case, as in that of the apostle, that what may be quite wrong under one set of circumstances may be quite right in another, as in Gal. 2. 3 and Acts 16. 1"—C. B.

25. "The apostle now applies this principle to the point in question. **Asking no questions**—whether it has been sacrificed or not"—WESLEY.

"A Christian might, without knowing it, eat an idol-sacrifice either (ver. 27) in the house of a heathen, or, as ver. 25 implies, by purchase in the market. S. Paul bids his readers not trouble themselves about this possibility. Whatever evil there is about any created material comes from its associations. But the fear which S. Paul here declares to be needless rests upon a belief that meat offered to idols is in itself defiling"—BEET.

26. "**For** God, who is the Creator, Proprietor, and Disposer of the earth and all that is therein, hath given the produce of it to the children of men, to be used without scruple"—WESLEY.

All food that earth brings forth or nourishes is God's gift, and therefore good. It was merely when regarded as an actual sacrifice that any meat could be considered that "of devils." This great truth, recognised in the Old Testament as well as in the New, is the reason of the previous statement that conscience need not come into the matter at all.

27. "There is much delicacy in the **and ye be disposed. . . .** S. Paul does not forbid acceptance of the invitation; for family bonds ought to be respected; they may even become, in the case of the believer, a means of advancing God's kingdom. But, while speaking as he does, and expressly referring the decision to the Christian's conscience, he yet makes him feel the need of reflection; for many dangers might accompany such invitations to heathen houses, even in a private dwelling, where the meal was always accompanied with certain religious ceremonies"—GODET.

28. **For his sake that showed thee, and for conscience sake**—"that is, for the sake of his weak conscience, lest it should be wounded"—WESLEY.

ELLICOTT says this verse teaches a lesson in controversy: "Don't conceal your conscientious convictions, but don't express them in language unnecessarily painful to your opponent."

29. **Conscience I say, not thy own**—"I speak of his conscience, not thine. **For why is my liberty judged by another's conscience?**—another's conscience is not the standard of mine, nor is another's persuasion the measure of my liberty"—WESLEY.

"This and the following verse are a little obscure, but the sense appears to be that no man has a right to interfere with the liberty enjoyed by another, save so far as *his own* conduct and conscientious convictions are likely to be affected thereby. In fact, the apostle's words in vers. 28, 29, 30, may be thus paraphrased: 'For conscience sake. Not that *you* are to feel conscience-stricken, as though you had yourself been doing something wrong, and given your neighbours a right to blame you. No man has any such right. You were doing no harm. You had a perfect right to eat what was set before you with gratitude to God for what He had given. No, it is not of your own, but of your neighbour's conscience that I was speaking. To him you would be doing harm incalculable, if you allowed him to suppose that there was no sin in worshipping idols'"—C. B.

30. **If I by grace am a partaker**—"if I thankfully use the common blessings of God"—WESLEY.

"Such a question might be asked by some who object to the restriction on their liberty which the advice just given implies. To the querulous objector the apostle gives no definitely limited reply. He lays down in the following verses the great principles which should guide all Christian life, and by which therefore every detail of it should be regulated"—ELLICOTT.

31. **Therefore**—"to close the present point with a general rule, applicable not only in this, but in all cases—**whatsoever ye do**—in all things whatsoever, whether of a religious or civil nature, in all the common, as well as sacred, actions of life, keep the glory of God in view, and steadily pursue in all this one end of your being, the planting or advancing the vital knowledge and love of God, first in your own soul, then in all mankind"—WESLEY.

"**Therefore**—an inference of the general from the particular—**or whatever ye do.** Surely this is not only a correct but also a happy rendering. **Whether therefore ye eat, or drink**—the glory of God, *that* is to be the end of all your actions. In themselves, eating and drinking are things indifferent, but there are circumstances in which they may be matters of the highest importance"—C. B. **To the glory of God**—using His gifts aright, consulting the true welfare of others, now eating, now not eating, according to the social context. All Christian conduct redounds to His glory. GODET says: "In questions which are not in themselves questions of good or evil, and which may remain undecided for the Christian conscience, the believer ought to ask himself, not, What will be most agreeable to me, or what best suit my interest? but, What will contribute most to promote God's glory and the salvation of my brethren? The question for the Christian is, therefore, translated into this: What will best make my brethren understand the love and holiness of my heavenly Father?"

32. **Give no offence**—"if, and as far as, it is possible"—WESLEY.

Lit. **Behave without offence given to . . .** *i.e.* "so as to place no moral *obstacle* before. **Give none offence**—a practical test of whether any course of conduct is to the glory of God. If it cause any human being to offend, then it is not to God's glory. Heretofore S. Paul had spoken only of the edification of the Christian Church, and the avoidance of any offence to a Christian brother"—SHORE.

33. **Even as I**—"as much as lieth in me—**please all men**"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul's own example, as in ch. 8. 13, supporting his advice. This example received irresistible force in ch. 9, which expounded and justified the principle which found expression in ch. 8. 13. He wishes to save them; and in view of so worthy and so serious an object, he gives up all thought of personal advantage, and seeks only their good"—BEET.

CHAPTER XI.

SECTION IX.—Vers. 3-16. THE DEMEANOUR OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.—"At this point of the Epistle, S. Paul passes from the topics regarding which the Corinthians had requested him to inform them, to make some remarks on the manner in which, as he had heard, they were conducting their meetings for public worship. The next four chapters are occupied with instructions as to what constitutes seemliness and propriety in such meetings"—DODS.

1. **As I am of Christ**—"Christ is the highest Exemplar. Christ alone is the perfect Model; each believer is a model to his brethren, only in so far as he is a copy in relation to Christ. What S. Paul here asks of the church is, that it allows itself to be guided by the spirit of self-denial which animates himself, as he is guided by the spirit of self-sacrifice which was the soul of Christ's life"—GODET.

2. **I praise you**—"the greater part of you"—WESLEY.

"Large principles, when taken up by ardent and enthusiastic minds, without the modifications learnt by experience, are almost sure to run into extravagance, and hence the spirit of law is by degrees reduced to rules, and guarded by customs"—ROBERTSON.

3. **I would have you know.** "He does not seem to have given them any order before concerning this. **The head of every man**—particularly every believer—**is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.** Christ, as He is Mediator, acts in all things subordinately to His Father. But we can no more infer that they are not of the same Divine nature, because God is said to be 'the Head of Christ,' than that man and woman are not of the same human nature, because the man is said to be **the head of the woman**"—WESLEY.

"The movement of the Corinthian women towards independence, on the ground that all

are one in Christ Jesus, S. Paul meets by reminding them that personal equality is perfectly consistent with social subordination. It was quite true, as S. Paul himself had taught them, that, so far as their connection with Christ went, there was no distinction of sex. To the woman, as to the man, the offer of salvation was made directly. There is but one Christ for all, rich and poor, high and low, male and female; and all are received by Him on the same footing, no distinction being made. While then, in things civil and social, the husband represents the wife, he cannot do so in matters of religion. Here each person must act for himself or herself. And the woman must not confound these two spheres in which she moves, or argue that, because she is independent of her husband in the greater, she must also be independent of him in the less. Equality in the one sphere is not inconsistent with subordination in the other"—DODS. "**The head.** In the idea of this word *dominion* is especially expressed. As in the human organisation the exercise of dominion over all the members proceeds from the head; so in the family, from man; in the Church, from Christ; in the universe, from God"—OLSHAUSEN. "**The head of the woman is the man.** (Comp. Eph. 5. 23.) It appears that the Christian women at Corinth claimed for themselves equality with the male sex, to which the doctrine of Christian freedom and the removal of the distinction of sex in Christ (Gal 3. 28) gave occasion. Christianity had indisputably done much for the emancipation of women, who in the East and among the Ionic Greeks (it was otherwise among the Dorians and the Romans) were in a position of unworthy dependence. But this was done in a quiet, not an over-hasty manner. In Corinth, on the contrary, they had apparently taken up the matter in a fashion somewhat too animated. The women overstepped due bounds by coming forward to pray and prophesy in the assemblies with uncovered head"—DE WETTE.

4. **Every man praying or prophesying**—"speaking by the immediate power of God—**with his head**—and face—**covered**—either with a veil or with long hair—**dishonoureth his head.** S. Paul seems to mean, as in these Eastern nations veiling the head is a badge of subjection, so a man who prays or prophesies with a veil on his head reflects a dishonour on Christ, whose representative he is"—WESLEY.

"Before he warns women not to seek to escape, even in the matter of dress, from the subordinate position of their sex, S. Paul reminds them that order and subordination are a law of the kingdom of God; that the husband is himself under the direction of Christ; and that even within the Divine Trinity the Son is, in accordance with the law of His being, obedient to the Father. **Prophesy** (see ch. 12. 10). **Puts to shame**, etc.—proved in ver. 7*a*. He forsakes his place of honour in the race, which a correct instinct has ever marked by a distinction of dress; and thus does himself dishonour. And this dishonour is visible and conspicuous in his treatment of **his** own **head**"—BEET. "It was the custom of the Jews that they prayed not, unless first their head were veiled, and that for this reason—that by this rite they might show themselves reverent and ashamed before God, and unworthy with an open face to behold Him"—LIGHTFOOT.

5. **But every woman**—"who, under an immediate impulse of the Spirit (for then only was a woman suffered *to speak in the church*), prays or prophesies without a veil on her face, as it were disclaims subjection, and reflects dishonour on man, her head. **For it is the same**, in effect, as if she cut her hair short, and wore it in the distinguishing form of the men. In those ages men wore their hair exceeding short, as appears from the ancient statues and pictures"—WESLEY.

"**With her head uncovered**—*i.e.* without the *peplum* or shawl, which (see art. in Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities* and Dean Stanley's Note) used ordinarily as a covering for the body, was on public occasions thrown over the head also. In Oriental countries, however, the women wore and still wear a veil. **Dishonoureth her head.** As the man honours his head by proclaiming his liberty, so the woman by acknowledging her subjection"—CALVIN. (Comp. Num. 5. 18.) "**For that is even all one as if she were shaven**—*i.e.* she might just as well be shaven, as appear in the public assemblies with her face entirely uncovered"—C. B.

6. **Therefore if a woman is not covered**—"if she will throw off the badge of subjection, let her appear with her hair cut like a man's. **But if it be shameful for a woman to** appear thus in public, especially in a religious assembly, let her, for the same reason, keep on her veil"—WESLEY.

"It is as if the apostle said, If a woman insists on her right to pray and speak in an assembly with uncovered head, let her carry out this principle to its logical result; let her insist on her right to have her hair cut short, so as to show her equality with man—and what would be thought of her then!"—ELLICOTT. "**A shameful thing.** What is the ground of this sense of shame? A universal and correct sentiment that the distinction of sex ought to be seen very conspicuously in a person's dress"—BEET.

7. **A man indeed ought not to veil his head**, because he is **the image of God**—"in the dominion he bears over the creation, representing the supreme dominion of God, which is his glory. **But the woman is** only matter of **glory** to the man, who has a becoming dominion over her. Therefore, she ought not to appear, but with her head veiled, as a tacit acknowledgment of it"—WESLEY.

"A man shows his manliness by a true

reverence for all women, by a clear recognition of the high service appointed to them by God, and by a tender sympathy with them in all the various endurance their nature and their position demand"—DODS. "A woman's influence embraces the whole of life. A wife, a mother—two magical words, comprising the sweetest sources of man's felicity! Theirs is the reign of beauty, of love, of reason, always a reign. A man takes counsel with his wife; he obeys his mother; he obeys her long after she has ceased to live, and the ideas he has received from her become principles even stronger than his passions"—LANDELS.

8. **The man is not**—"in the first production of nature"—WESLEY.

"The spiritual equality of man and wife does not upset this relationship, and therefore an attempt to destroy the outward expression of it is to be condemned, as it would soon lead to an obliteration of the fact itself"—ELLICOTT.

10. **"For this cause also a woman ought to be veiled in the public assemblies, because of the angels**—who attend there, and before whom they should be careful not to do anything indecent or irregular"—WESLEY.

"**Because of the angels.** This passage has also been explained in various ways. It is best on the whole to regard it as an intimation that the angels, though invisible, were fellow-worshippers with men in the Christian assemblies, and were therefore 'spectators of the indecency,' and liable to be offended thereat. 'When, therefore, the woman usurps the symbol of dominion, against what is right and lawful, she makes her shameful conduct conspicuous' in the eyes of the messengers of God: thus CALVIN. ERASMUS paraphrases it well: 'If a woman has arrived at that pitch of shamelessness that she does not fear the eyes of men, let her at least cover her head on account of the angels, who are present at your assemblies'"—C. B.

11. **Nevertheless in the Lord Jesus, there is neither male nor female**—"neither is excluded; neither is preferred before the other in His kingdom"—WESLEY.

MEYER says: "S. Paul's teaching from ver. 7 onward might possibly be misinterpreted by the men so as to lead them to underrate their own position." This certainly was not his intention. GODET explains: "The subordination of the wife to her husband is tempered in Christ by the oneness of spiritual life which they both draw from the Lord. The one is not without the other, and that evidently as believers; there is community of prayer between them, the constant exchange of spiritual aid and active co-operation."

12. "**And as the woman was** at first taken out **of the man, so also the man is** now, in the ordinary course of nature, **by the woman; but all things are of God**—the man, the woman, and their dependence on each other"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul here proves his previous statement, from the original bodily relation of the sexes. He assumes that with this the spiritual life must accord. (Comp. ver. 3.) It may, therefore, be quoted in proof of the relations of the sexes in the spiritual life. **And** the differences noted are not so great as might appear. For man and woman and all else have alike sprung **from God.** Thus, as in ver. 3, S. Paul concludes his argument in the presence of the Supreme"—BEET.

13. **Judge of yourselves**—"for what need of more arguments in so plain a case?—**Is it decent for a woman to pray to God**—the Most High, with that bold and undaunted air which she must have, when, contrary to universal custom, she appears in public with her head **uncovered?**"—WESLEY.

"Our version follows Tyndale here, and is equivalent in our modern language to, **Is it proper? Is it becoming?** 'It is impossible,' remarks ROBERTSON, 'to decide how much of our public morality and private purity is owing to the spirit which refuses to overstep the smallest bound of ordinary decorum.' And, again, 'Whatever contradicts feelings which are universally received,' that is, 'in questions of morality, propriety, and decency,' 'is questionable, to say the least'"—C. B. "**Judge of yourselves!** These words appeal to the instinct of truth which ought to exist in his readers themselves. For the very reason that she is speaking **to God**, she ought in this sacred act to veil her figure from the eyes of men"—GODET.

14. **For a man to have long hair**—"carefully adjusted, is such a mark of effeminacy as **is a disgrace to him**"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul is speaking of the natural sense of what is fitting in those whom he addressed. In early times the Greeks and the Romans wore long hair, and the Gauls and Germans did so in S. Paul's own time. So Homer continually speaks of the 'long-haired Greeks.' S. Chrysostom remarks that those who addicted themselves to philosophy in his day wore their hair long. But this was mere affectation. The general verdict of society has been that appealed to by the apostle. This instinctive consciousness of propriety on this point had been established by custom, and had become nature"—MEYER.

15. **Given her**—"originally, before the arts of dress were in being"—WESLEY.

"**It is a glory to her.** The true glory of every creature of God is to fulfil the law of its being. Whatever helps woman to discharge the duties of modesty and submissiveness assigned to her by God is a glory to her"—LIAS.

16. "**We have no such custom** here, **nor any** of the other **churches of God.** The several churches that were in the apostles' time had different customs in things that were not essential; and that under one and the same

apostle, as circumstances, in different places, made it convenient. And in all things merely indifferent the custom of each place was of sufficient weight to determine prudent and peaceable men. Yet even this cannot overrule a scrupulous conscience, which really doubts whether the thing be indifferent or no. But those who are referred to here by the apostle were contentious, not conscientious persons"—WESLEY.

"This warning suggests that, from a boasted love of strife, some defended the women who rejected the head-dress. To such S. Paul says that in loving strife they stand alone among the churches"—BEET. "The argument and the appeal to their own good sense having been completed, the apostle now adds that if, after all, some one continues to argue the matter captiously, and is not satisfied with the reason given, the answer to such an one must be simply, We, the apostles and the churches of God, have no such customs as that women should pray and teach with uncovered head"—ELLICOTT. The disorder which S. Paul has just described and combated was a small matter in comparison with that to which he now passes. The style of his language, too, becomes more severe. He begins by applying to the assemblies for worship what he said about the prevailing discussions at Corinth, in the first four chapters (vers. 17-19).

SECTION X.—Vers. 17-34. COUNSEL RESPECTING THE LORD'S SUPPER.—17. S. Paul declares that his praise of the Corinthians for their general fidelity to the ecclesiastical institutions he had transmitted to them does not extend to the matter of which he is going to speak. In commendation or in blame he shows equal fidelity.

18. **In the church**—"in the public assembly. **I hear there are schisms among you; and I partly believe it**—that is, I believe it of some of you. It is plain that by 'schisms' is not meant any separation from the church, but uncharitable divisions in it; for the Corinthians continued to be one church; and, notwithstanding all their strife and contention, there was no separation of any one party from the rest, with regard to external communion. And it is in the same sense that the word is used, ch. 1. 10; 12. 25, which are the only places in the New Testament, besides this, where church schisms are mentioned. Therefore, the indulging any temper contrary to this tender care of each other is the true scriptural schism. This is, therefore, a quite different thing from that orderly separation from corrupt churches which later ages have stigmatised as schisms, and have made a pretence for the vilest cruelties, oppressions, and murders, that have troubled the Christian world. Both heresies and schisms are here mentioned in very near the same sense, unless by schisms be meant, rather, those inward animosities which occasion heresies — that is, outward divisions or parties: so that whilst one said, 'I am of Paul,' another 'I am of Apollos,' this implied both schisms and heresy. So wonderfully have later ages distorted the words *heresy* and *schism* from their scriptural meaning. *Heresy* is not, in all the Bible, taken for 'an error in fundamentals,' or in anything else; nor *schism* for any separation made from the outward communion of others. Therefore, both heresy and schism, in the modern sense of the words, are sins that the Scripture knows nothing of; but were invented merely to deprive mankind of the benefit of private judgment and liberty of conscience"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul censures two kinds of evil attaching to their assemblies, deterioration in the Agapé or love-feasts, and misapplication of the gifts of the Spirit. He describes his **belief to a certain point** as applying only to a charitably supposed minority of disorderlies. The word **divisions** in this text does not mean **schisms**, as in the *margin* of the A.V. It should be remembered that this Epistle says nothing of separation into sects, but speaks of partitions into schools, as Pauline, Apolloite, etc.; it describes an arrogant party spirit tending indeed to a breach of outward unity, but not yet sundering the bond"—EVANS. "**In some part**, suggests S. Paul's hope that, though he cannot doubt that the report is true in the main, it may be exaggerated. Notice the courtesy, mingled with seriousness, of these words"—BEET.

19. **There must be heresies**—"divisions—**among you**—in the ordinary course of things; and God permits them, that it may appear who among you are, and who are not, upright of heart"—WESLEY.

Must denotes a *necessity* growing out of the Divine order and government. But this necessity is no excuse for those who create divisions; for it rests upon their foreseen and inexcusable selfishness. (Comp. Rom. 16. 17; Matt. 18. 7; Luke 17. 1.) **May be made manifest.** The sense is in full; there must needs be self-assertions and headstrong opinions as well as divisions, as a means of testing, in order that the approved may come to view amongst you, and the genuine be sifted from the spurious, the true metal from the base alloy, the gold from the ore.

20. **Therefore**—"that is, in consequence of those schisms—**it is not eating the Lord's Supper**—that solemn memorial of His death, but quite another thing"—WESLEY.

"The first Christians had all things in common; this custom ceasing, as it did in the time of the apostles, there came into its room a sort of offshoot or efflux of it. For though the wealthy no longer deposited their goods in a common fund, nevertheless, on stated days, they kept an open table for the Agapé. After divine service and the communion of the mysteries, the rich and the poor

together feasted in kindly fellowship"—CHRYSOSTOM.

21. "**For in eating**—what ye call the Lord's Supper, instead of all partaking of one bread, each person brings his own supper, and eats it without staying for the rest. And hereby the poor, who cannot provide for themselves, have nothing; while the rich eat and drink to the full: just as the heathens use to do at the feasts on their sacrifices"—WESLEY.

"It is not merely that the conduct of the Corinthian Christians was inconsistent with taking part in the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, but that it was in no sense a supper of Christ's institution of which they partook. 'The question arose,' says Dean STANLEY, 'whether the majesty, the tenderness, the awe of the feast should be lost in a senseless orgy'"—C. B.

22. "**Have ye not houses to eat and drink** your common meals **in? or do ye despise the church of God**—of which the poor are both the larger and the better part. Do ye act thus in designed contempt of them?"—WESLEY.

"One feels in the lively succession of these accumulated questions the indignant emotion which fills the apostle as he calls up the scene before him. The **for** refers to an idea which is understood: It ought not so to be, *for* have you not . . .? S. Paul points out three principal sins in this conduct—*first*, the feast itself so celebrated, the Agapé, with the Holy Supper terminating it, is not a meal taken for support; it is a religious rite expressly instituted, and that for a religious purpose. The *second* rebuke refers to the want of respect to an assembly like the church; the *third* to the offence in particular given to a portion of its members, the poor who are humiliated"—GODET.

23. **I received**—"by an immediate revelation"—WESLEY.

"*Lit.* **For I received of the Lord.** Reason why S. Paul could not praise the Corinthians—their conduct was a gross profanation of a rite which had been so solemnly instituted by Christ"—C. B. "**The same night in which He was betrayed.** These words imply that the history of the betrayal was familiar, and they also solemnly and touchingly remind the Corinthians of the strange contrast between the events of that night, and the scenes in which they indulge now on the same night that they partake of that Supper" ELLICOTT.

24. **This is My body, which is broken for you**—"that is, this broken bread is the sign of My body, which is even now to be pierced and wounded for your iniquities. Take then, and eat of, this bread, in an humble, thankful, obedientiial remembrance of My dying love; of the extremity of My sufferings on your behalf, of the blessings I have thereby procured for you, and of the obligations to love and duty which I have by all this laid upon you"—WESLEY.

"What is the relation between this bread and the body of Jesus? The simplest explanation is this: Jesus takes the bread which is before Him, and, presenting it to His disciples, He gives it to them as the **symbol** of His body which is about to be given up to them on the cross, and to become the means of their salvation. The words, **This do in remembrance of Me**, are only found in S. Luke's account of the institution; they are wanting in Matthew and Mark. But these words are of great importance, for it is really on them alone that the idea of the Holy Supper, as a permanent rite, is based. Without them this act might be regarded as having been done by Jesus once for all. Evidently the apostles did not so understand it, for from the first they introduced the regular celebration of the Sacrament. (Acts 2. 42.) We do not the less on that account maintain the importance of S. Paul's independence, and of the originality of his narrative"—GODET.

25. **After supper.** "Therefore ye ought not to confound this with a common meal. **Do this in remembrance of Me.** The ancient sacrifices were in remembrance of sin: this sacrifice, once offered, is still represented in remembrance of the remission of sins"—WESLEY.

"**In remembrance of Me.** Some might say, We need no memorial of the Redeemer's sacrifice; it is graven on our hearts, as on the rocks, for ever. The Son of Man knew our nature far too well to trust to such a pledge, even if it could have been given. He knew that the remembrance of it would fade without perpetual repetition, and without an appeal to the senses; therefore by touch, by taste, by sight, we are reminded in the Sacrament that Christianity is not a thing of mere feeling, but a real historical actuality. It sets forth Jesus Christ evidently crucified among us. Let us draw something practical from this. Memory depends on two things—on repetition, and on the impression being a sensible one, that is, one of which the senses take cognisance. Does any man wish to forget God? Does any man wish to live in sin without being disturbed by the painful thought of judgment? We can tell him how he may ensure that—for a time at least. Let him attempt to be wiser than his Maker; let him say, I can read my Bible at home, and worship God in the open beauties of nature, as well as in a church; let him give up private prayer, and never attend the Lord's table, giving up all that is symbolical in religion. Let him do this, and we will ensure him most terrible success; for *so* judgment to come will be to him only a hypothesis, and God's own existence merely a *perhaps*"—ROBERTSON. "We are saved by remembering Christ, and by assimilating the spirit of His life and death. When He said, **Do this in**

remembrance of Me, He meant that His people to all time should remember that He had given Himself wholly to them and for them"—DODS.

26. **Ye show forth the Lord's death**—"ye proclaim, as it were, and openly avow it to God, and to all the world—**till He come**—in glory"—WESLEY.

If Meyer be right in supposing that the word here used is never employed except in the sense of *oral proclamation* (see ch. 2. 1; 9. 14, of this Epistle; and Phil. 1. 16, 18; Col. 1. 28, are examples of its use by S. Paul), we have here strong grounds for affirming that the *words of institution* formed part of the form of celebrating the Sacrament, even in apostolic times. The word occurs ten times in the Acts of the Apostles, always in the sense of "proclaim." "**The Lord's death**—since this Sacrament was instituted as a memorial of Christ's death upon the cross. **Till He come.** As long as the Christian Church shall last, this Sacrament will continue to be celebrated for the object for which it was instituted. However widely divided on other points, Christians have agreed in carrying out this prediction for more than eighteen hundred years"—C. B. "S. Paul regarded the Lord's Supper as a rite to be often celebrated, and that in all future time, until the Lord Himself should come to judge the world. The perpetual obligation of this ordinance cannot, therefore, be reasonably disputed"—WATSON.

27. **Whosoever shall eat this bread unworthily**—"that is, in an unworthy, irreverent manner, without regarding either Him that appointed it, or the design of its appointment—**shall be guilty of** profaning that which represents **the body and blood of the Lord**"—WESLEY.

"**Unworthily**, 'not merely,' says ESTIUS, 'with a mind distracted by worldly thoughts, though that is not to be commended, but in an irreverent spirit,' in a frame of mind unsuitable to so solemn an act; without faith in, or a thankful remembrance of, the great mystery therein commemorated; and, above all, in a spirit which regarded what is essentially *the Supper of the Lord* as a supper of one's own, and therefore as one at which it was lawful to be selfish or intemperate, or both. **Shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord**—either (1) shall be punishable for 'crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame' (Heb. 6. 6), 'as though thou thyself didst shed the blood' (THEOPHYLACT); or (2) for committing an offence against the body and blood of Christ, since 'the participation presupposes a moral condition which must be in keeping with this most sacred commemoration; but if the condition of the communicant be of an opposite kind, then the holy body and blood, into communion with which we enter through such participation, can only be abused and profaned"—MEYER.

28. **But let a man examine himself**—"whether he know the nature and the design of the institution, and whether it be his own desire and purpose thoroughly to comply therewith"—WESLEY.

The emphasis is on **examine**—the metaphor from metal-testing; let him approve himself, sifting what is refuse from what is sterling, the carnal from the spiritual. **And so**—after such examination—**let him eat.** Remember graces are to be purified, as well as sins purged out. Let us see that we so come to Him, that we do not put Him to receive sins as well as sinners. For though Christ is willing to make us part of His body, yet He will not unite Himself to sin. WATERLAND says: "There can be no just bar to frequency of communion but the want of preparation, which is only such a bar as men may themselves remove if they please; and therefore it concerns them highly to take off the impediment as soon as possible, and not to trust to vain hopes of alleviating one fault by another . . . . The danger of misperforming any religious duty is an argument for fear and caution, but no excuse for neglect; God insists upon the doing of it, and the doing of it well also . . . . A man may say that he comes not to the table because he is not prepared, and so far he assigns a good reason; but if he should be further asked why he is not prepared when he may, then he can only make some trifling, insufficient excuse, or remain speechless."

29. "**For he that eateth and drinketh** so **unworthily** as those Corinthians did, **eateth and drinketh judgment to himself**—temporal judgments of various kinds (ver. 30)—**not distinguishing** the sacred tokens of **the Lord's body** — from his common food"—WESLEY.

"The positive counsel S. Paul gives regarding suitable preparation for participation in this Sacrament is very simple. He would have every man answer the plain question, Do you discern the Lord's body in the Sacrament? He who clearly understands that this is no common meal, but the outward symbol, by means of which God offers to us Jesus Christ, is not likely to desecrate the Sacrament. 'This is My body,' says the Lord, meaning that this bread will ever remind the communicant that his Lord freely gave His own body for the life of the world. And whoever accepts the bread and the wine, because they remind him of this, and bring him into a renewed attitude of faith, is a worthy communicant"—DODS.

30. **For this cause**—"which they had not observed—**many sleep**—in death"—WESLEY.

"In the apostolic Church, the power of God manifested itself before men's eyes both in works of mercy and in punishment. (Comp. Acts 5. 5; 13. 11, with which this verse is a coincidence.) The severity of the punishment proves how great was the sin. Whether, before receiving this letter, the Corinthian Christians

knew the spiritual cause of this sickness and death, cannot now be determined"—BEET.

31. **If we would judge ourselves**—"as to our knowledge, and the design with which we approach the Lord's table—**we should not be** thus **judged**—that is, punished by God"—WESLEY.

"A comment on the facts of ver. 30. These penalties may be avoided; and are inflicted in mercy. **Judged**—the sentence which they who (ver. 29) eat and drink without recognising the body bring upon themselves, and which was followed in some cases by the penalties of ver. 30"—BEET.

32. "**When we are** thus **judged**, it is with this merciful design, **that we may not be finally condemned with the world**"—WESLEY.

The final judgment of the world, to which careless Christians are in danger of being relegated. (See chaps. 6 and 9.) **The world** here is not the Divine order of things as established by God's ordinance (as in ch. 3. 22; John 1. 10), but as thrown into disorder by man's sin. (See John 19. 17; 15. 18; 1 John 2. 15, 16.)

33, 34. **The rest**—"the other circumstances relating to the Lord's Supper"—WESLEY.

"The conclusion of the whole subject. Every one is to **wait** till a fair and orderly distribution of the food has been made; and each is to remember that this is not an ordinary meal for the purpose of satisfying hunger, but the solemn commemoration of the Lord's death. A meal for the purpose of satisfying hunger had best be taken at home, to avoid the profanation which the apostle has condemned"—C. B.

CHAPTER XII.

SECTION XI. — Chaps. 12–14. SPIRITUAL GIFTS—THEIR ORIGIN AND CHARACTER.—"We have often to remind ourselves that this Epistle was addressed to a church in a state of faction. One cause of rivalry was the merits of their respective teachers; another was the endowments of various kinds given to the members of the church"—ROBERTSON. "This and the next two chapters are concerned with the great outpouring of spiritual energy which followed the preaching of the gospel. S. Paul deals with it in his usual manner. He characteristically lays down broad principles in this and the next chapter before he proceeds to the details of ch. 14. He is specially solicitous to do so here because of the danger so often experienced in the church (see ch. 14. 32), of the belief that a condition of great spiritual exaltation absolved men from the necessity of consulting their reason. The apostle teaches that spiritual gifts are no less to be restrained in their exercise by considerations of decency, of order, of what is due to others, than gifts of a more ordinary kind. Therefore he takes occasion to show (vers. 1–11) that *all* gifts proceed from one source, and that miraculous powers are no more gifts of the Spirit than some others not supposed to be miraculous, and then (vers. 12–30) that neither he who possesses them has any right to despise him who does not, nor he who does not possess them to envy him who does, since 'each has his own proper gift of God.' He goes on further (ch. 13) to point out the 'more excellent way' of love, and finally, in ch. 14, proceeds to lay down the regulations necessary for the preservation of order in the Christian assemblies"—C. B. GODET says: "We have here one of the richest and most interesting parts of the Epistle. These chapters are to us like a revelation of the power of that spiritual movement which went forth from Pentecost, and of the wonderful spiritual effervescence which at the outset signalised the new creation due to the power of the gospel."

1. **Now concerning spiritual gifts.** "The abundance of these in the churches of Greece strongly refuted the ideal learning of the Greek philosophers. But the Corinthians did not use them wisely, which occasioned S. Paul's writing concerning them. He describes—(1) the unity of the body (vers. 1–27); (2) the variety of members and offices (vers. 27–30); (3) the way of exercising gifts rightly, namely, by love (ver. 31; ch. 13); and adds (4) a comparison of several gifts with each other, in the fourteenth chapter"—WESLEY.

"**Spiritual gifts** — or 'spiritual things' (Rom. 1. 11; 15. 27; ch. 2. 13; 9. 11; 10. 3 f.; 14. 1)—things pertaining to, *i.e.* bestowed by, the Spirit of God (ver. 31)"—BEET. "The expression, **I would not have you ignorant**, alludes to the mysterious side of the subject, and to its complete novelty to men recently converted"—GODET. "The Corinthians had received many **gifts** of the Holy Ghost, but they had not used them wisely, which occasioned the apostle's writing concerning them"—BENSON.

2. **Ye were heathens**—"therefore, whatever gifts ye have received, it is from the free grace of God. **Carried away** — by a blind credulity—**after dumb idols**—the blind to the dumb; idols of wood and stone, unable to speak themselves, and much more to open your mouths, as God has done. **As ye were led**—by the subtlety of your priests"—WESLEY.

"In your former heathen state you had no experience whatever similar to that which you now have in the church. The dumb idols, to the worship of which you let yourselves be carried, did not communicate powers similar to those which the Spirit now communicates to you. Consequently, novices as you are in this domain, you need a guiding thread to prevent you from going astray. This is why I instruct you"—GODET. "**Led, led away**—graphic picture of the unreasoning action and the bondage of idolaters. While frequenting the temples, and following the processions,

of heathenism they were really surrendering themselves to the guidance of an unseen power operating upon them as circumstances or events may determine. Men are idolaters usually not by their own choice, but by circumstances. In Eph. 2. 2 f., we have a similar contrast of past and present"—BEET.

3. **Therefore** — "since the heathen idols cannot speak themselves, much less give spiritual gifts to others, these must necessarily be among Christians only. **As no one speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed** — that is, as none who does this (which all the Jews and heathens did) **speaketh by the Spirit of God**—is actuated by that Spirit, so as to speak with tongues, heal diseases, or cast out devils. **So no one can say, Jesus is the Lord**—none can receive Him as such; for, in the Scripture language, to say or to believe implies an experimental assurance — **but by the Holy Ghost.** The sum is, None have the Holy Spirit but Christians: all Christians have this Spirit"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul here lays down a broad general principle respecting spiritual inspiration. **No man can say**, etc. This made the broad separation between the Christian Church and the Gentile world. This, the great bond of Christians, S. Paul tells us, is far above all distinctions as to the degree of spiritual gifts or inspiration"—ROBERTSON. "**Wherefore**—the connection of thought is as follows. When you were heathen you were carried hither and thither by the pretended utterances of your gods, and believed whatever they might tell you. But now you must no longer be the sport of circumstances. There are certain fundamental principles by which you may try the utterances of those who would teach you. (Comp. an extremely similar passage in 1 John 4. 1–3.) This caution was very necessary in the infant Church"—LIAS. "To own the lordship of Jesus was the test of a man's Christianity. Did he acknowledge as supreme that Person who had lived and died under the name of Jesus? Did he employ his spiritual gifts for the furtherance of His kingdom, and as one who was really endeavouring to serve this unseen Master?—Then no hesitation need be shown in admitting his claim to be animated by the Spirit of God. In other words, S. Paul wishes them to understand that, after all, the only sure test of a man's Christianity is his actual submission to Christ. As to the gifts themselves, they should be no cause of discord, for they have everything in common; they have their source in God; they are for Christ's service; they are forms of the same Spirit"—DODS. (See ver. 4.)

4. **There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit**—"divers streams, but all from one fountain. This verse speaks of the Holy Ghost, the next of Christ, the sixth of God the Father. The apostle treats of the Spirit, ver. 7, etc.; of Christ, ver. 12, etc.; of God, ver. 28, etc."—WESLEY.

"Our Christianity is a fact far above our special and particular endowments. Not that in which we differ from other Christians, but that in which we differ from the world lying in wickedness; in *that* consists our distinction in the sight of God. In ver. 13 he appeals to the sacraments: Does baptism teach of a difference between Christians? does it not rather teach that all the baptized are baptized into one body? There are varieties, differences—yes, says the apostle, but they are all of the selfsame Spirit"—ROBERTSON. "Christian influence is not an external appliance that clips all men after one pattern, as trees in an avenue are clipped into one shape; but it is an inward and vital power, which causes each to grow according to his own individuality, one with the rugged irregularity of the oak, another with the orderly richness of the plane. At one in their allegiance to Christ, bound into one body by common affections, beliefs and hopes, and aiming at the advancement of one cause, Christians are yet as different as other men in faculty, in temperament, in attainment"—DODS.

5. **Administrations** — "offices — **but the same Lord** appoints them all"—WESLEY.

Administrations — rather, as *margin*, "ministries," *i.e.* services rendered to Christ and His members by His disciples.

6. **Operations** — "effects produced. This word is of a larger extent than either of the former. **But it is the same God who worketh all** these effects **in all** persons concerned"—WESLEY.

The apostle here is speaking of *active* power, not latent as in ch. 1. 8. The influences to which he now refers are actually at work, and producing results, in obedience to an impulse received from Him. (Comp. Rom. 7. 5 and Matt. 14. 2.) GODET adds: "After this general survey of the Divine unity which controls the three great forms of activity and their manifold varieties the apostle comes to the one which is most important for him to regulate in the given circumstances, viz. gifts. And before showing how rich in number they are, he reminds them of the common principle which produces them, and points to the common end which unites them — the common advantage (ver. 7). Then he states them in all their variety, each time repeating the one principle from which they proceed (vers. 8–12)."

7. **The manifestation**—"the gift whereby the Spirit manifests itself—**is given to each**—for the profit of the whole body"—WESLEY.

Each receives an aptitude from the Spirit, but not for himself; what each possesses is intended for the good of all. **To profit withal** —God's object is ever the well-being of man. If man is to become one spirit with God (ch. 6. 17), his object must be the same. Each has a capacity for usefulness, a gift of the

Spirit, and this is given to him for the general good.

8. **The word of wisdom**—"a power of understanding and explaining the manifold wisdom of God in the grand scheme of gospel salvation. **The word of knowledge**—perhaps an extraordinary ability to understand and explain the Old Testament types and prophecies"—WESLEY.

"List of gifts, in support of ver. 7, making very prominent that all come from the One Spirit. The list is broken up, by a slight verbal change, into three series: intellectual gifts, **wisdom** and **knowledge** (ver. 8); gifts conspicuously miraculous, under the heading of 'faith' (vers. 9, 10*a*); gifts connected with 'tongues' (ver. 10*b*). 'Wisdom' and 'knowledge' found together in Rom. 11. 33; Col. 2. 3; Eccles. 1. 16, 18; 2. 21, 26; 9. 10. 'Knowledge' is mere acquaintance with things past, present, or future. 'Wisdom' is, from the Christian point of view, such a direct grasp of underlying principles and eternal realities as enables a man to choose the right goal and the best path of life"—BEET.

9. "**Faith** may here mean an extraordinary trust in God under the most difficult or dangerous circumstances. **The gift of healing** need not be wholly confined to the healing disease with a word or a touch. It may exert itself also, though in a lower degree, where natural remedies are applied; and it may often be this, not superior skill, which makes some physicians more successful than others. And thus it may be with regard to other gifts likewise. As, after the golden shields were lost, the king of Judah put brazen in their place, so, after the pure gifts were lost, the power of God exerts itself in a more covert manner, under human studies and helps; and that the more plentifully, according as there is the more room given for it"—WESLEY.

"**Faith**—'belief,' not of the gospel (for this is, to all Christians, the one source of all Christian life and usefulness, Rom. 12. 3), but of some special revelation not given to all"—BEET. "**Faith**—not the rudimentary principle which was the essential condition of all Christian life, but that higher realisation of things Divine which enables a man to remove mountains (Matt. 17. 20; ch. 13. 2). Faith is the root of Christian life, not one of its fruits. **The gifts of healing**—as in S. Mark 16. 18; Acts 3. 7, 8; 5. 15, 16; 9. 34; 19. 11, 12; Jas. 5. 14, 15. **The gifts of healing** are closely connected with faith thus understood, for they have as their basis confidence in the power of God applied to disease. Here there is not only a confident prayer; there is a command given in the consciousness of complete harmony with the will of God, such as the 'Rise and walk' of S. Peter (Acts 3. 6)"—GODET.

10. **The working of other miracles. Prophecy**—"foretelling things to come. **The discerning**—whether men be of an upright spirit or no; whether they have natural or supernatural gifts for offices in the church; and whether they who profess to speak by inspiration speak from a Divine, a natural, or a diabolical spirit"—WESLEY.

"**Prophecy** does not proceed from a resolution or reflection of the prophet's own, but from a power independent of him, which masters his mind and makes him speak in order to act on others"—HOFMANN. "**Prophecy** is a miracle in the form of speech. It proceeds from a revelation regarding the present state, course, and future of the kingdom of God. In transmitting this revelation to the Church, the prophet endeavours to stimulate it and to raise it to the height of his theme. It is in the spiritual domain an effect analogous to that which is produced on the sick man by the 'Rise and walk' pronounced by him who has the gift of healing"—GODET. **Discerning of spirits**—*i.e.* the power to distinguish between the workings of the Holy Spirit and of evil and misleading spirits. (See 1 Tim. 4. 1; 1 John 4. 1.)

11. **As He willeth**—"the Greek word does not so much imply arbitrary pleasure, as a determination founded on wise counsel"—WESLEY.

"That **one**—in opposition to the plurality of believers—**the same**—in opposition to the diversity of gifts. By the words, **as He will**, the apostle does not ascribe to the Spirit a capricious and fantastic mode of procedure. The good pleasure of God is never exercised except in perfect harmony with all the perfections of His character, His wisdom, goodness, righteousness. The words, **to every man as He will**, are undoubtedly intended to sweep away, from the more gifted of the Corinthians, every feeling of self-merit, and from the less favoured every tendency to discontentment"—GODET.

12. **So is Christ**—"that is, the body of Christ, the Church"—WESLEY.

The multiplicity of gifts, harmonised in the unity of the Giver, is illustrated by the human organism of **one body in many members, and many members in one body.** This illustration is immediately transferred from the natural organism of the human body to the spiritual organism of the Church, here designated by the title of its Head, **the CHRIST.**

13. "**For by** that **one Spirit**, which we received in baptism, **we are all united in one body. Whether Jews or Gentiles**—who are at the greatest distance from each other by nature. **Whether slaves or freemen**—who are at the greatest distance by law and custom. **We have all drank of one Spirit**—in that cup, received by faith, we all imbibed **one Spirit**, who first inspired, and still preserves the life of God in our souls"—WESLEY.

"A most blessed fellowship. To the man who experiences its safety and joy, the Holy

Spirit becomes an abiding possession, guaranteed by the Christian covenant (see John 3. 3–5, as above, and 4. 14; 7. 38, 39; 14. 16, 17; 15. 26; 16. 7; and comp. Matt. 3. 11) so long as he himself is willing to be bound by the terms of that covenant. This change of relation to God, involving as it does a change of habits, dispositions, tempers—*nature*, in fact, is called in Scripture the *new birth*"—C. B. "**For**—here follows an illustrative proof of the former statement — the human body is composed of many members, and so also is the spiritual body of Christ, which is His Church" —ELLICOTT. "This verse does not imply that S. Paul's readers received the Spirit in the moment of their baptism. (Comp. Acts 10. 44–48.) He simply links together, as necessarily connected in all ordinary cases, the outward rite and the spiritual element which alone can give it reality"—BEET. "**Into one body.** Does baptism teach of a difference between Christians? Does it not rather teach that all the baptized are baptized into one body?"—ROBERTSON.

14. **For the body is not one member, but many**—the same leading idea is kept in view—the diversity of functions, offices, gifts, but the unity of the body. No more complete or apposite illustration could be given. The body is *one thing*, animated by *one soul*, belonging to *one being*, yet with an infinity of various parts, each contributing by their action to the fulfilment of *one and the same purpose*, the life and usefulness of the man.

15. "**The foot** is elegantly introduced as speaking of **the hand**; **the ear**, **of the eye**; each, of a part that has some resemblance to it. So among men each is apt to compare himself with those whose gifts some way resemble his own, rather than with those who are at a distance, either above or beneath him. **Is it therefore not of the body?** Is the inference good? Perhaps 'the foot' may represent private Christians; 'the hand,' officers in the Church; 'the eye,' teachers; 'the ear,' hearers"—WESLEY.

"The object of this exposition (vers. 15–26) is manifest. The Corinthians were disposed to exaggerate the value of certain gifts, which, from their extraordinary character, were fitted to strike the senses, in particular of the gift of speaking in tongues. From this prejudice there followed two evils. On the one hand, those who did not possess such gifts kept aloof, discontented and discouraged, and the Church was deprived of their services, which might have been very needful; on the other, those who possessed the gifts took pleasure in displaying them in the assemblies, so as to prevent the less brilliant guests from filling the place which should have been reserved for them. It is to these two defects that the apostle successively applies the figure of the part played by the members of the human body; to the former, in the passage, vers. 15-17; to the latter, in the passage, vers. 18–26. Though the application of the figures to spiritual gifts is transparent, it is nevertheless true that everything the apostle says has already literal verity in relation to the members of the human body. The **foot** and the **ear** speak here as less conspicuous and favoured members than the **hand** and the **eye**, which represent the most highly valued gift"—GODET.

16. **The ear**—"a less noble part. **The eye** —the most noble"—WESLEY.

17. **If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?** "Observe here the difference between the Christian doctrine of unity and equality, and the world's idea of levelling all to one standard. The intention of God with respect to the body is not that the rude hand should have the delicacy of the eye, or the foot have the power of the brain"—ROBERTSON. "To desire such an equality as this," says CALVIN, "would produce a confusion which would bring about immediate ruin." The duty of each is to do his work in the place in which God has set him, with a proper consideration for the rights and the needs of his brother Christians who occupy other positions in the world. "If each man," continues ROBERTSON, "had the spirit of self-surrender, the spirit of the cross, it would not matter to himself whether he were doing the work of the mainspring or of one of the inferior parts."

18. **As it hath pleased Him**—"with the most exquisite wisdom and goodness"—WESLEY.

Lit. "as He willed." All our talents, our gifts and graces, are of God, and we may use them for His glory. It is our duty to so employ everything which He has given to us. He who tries to make the best of all his gifts need not repine because he does not possess what he may consider greater qualifications for Christian work. We do not serve a "hard master."

19. "This expresses once more the idea of ver. 17: 'If God had acted otherwise, what would have become of the body?' Instead of this admirable organism, we should have a being endowed with a single sense, as is found, for example, in the lowest grade of animalism" —GODET.

20. **But one body**—"and it is a necessary consequence of this unity, that the several members need one another"—WESLEY.

"Here, no doubt, the illustration is drawn out in this particular direction to rebuke those who being themselves possessed of what were considered important spiritual gifts despised the gifts which the Spirit had bestowed upon others"—ELLICOTT.

21. **Nor the head**—"the highest part of all —**to the foot**—the very lowest"—WESLEY.

All members of the body, high and low, weak and strong, are all absolutely necessary to one another, and that for the furtherance of

the individual and of the common weal. The proper use of the organs which direct, and those which execute, is ensured by their combination.

22. **The members which appear to be weaker** — "being of a more delicate and tender structure; perhaps the brains and bowels, or the veins, arteries, and other minute channels of the body"—WESLEY.

The more feeble parts of the body, those which are most delicate, are by no means the least valuable. The eye or the brain, for instance, are more necessary to the well-being of the body than other stronger organs. GODET says: "Hence it follows that the gifts and offices which have a modest appearance **are necessary**, no less than the others, to the prosperity of the whole."

23. "**We surround with more abundant honour**—by so carefully covering them. **More abundant comeliness**—by the help of dress" —WESLEY.

"The general argument of this and the following verse is that the weakest parts of the body are as necessary to the body as the strongest; and those parts which are considered less seemly are more abundantly cared for by being carefully covered with clothes, as distinguished from the face and hands, which are uncovered" — ELLICOTT. "The meanest trades are those with which we can least dispense. A nation may exist without an astronomer or philosopher, but the day-labourer is essential to the existence of man"—ROBERTSON.

24. **Giving more abundant honour to that which lacked**—"as being cared for and served by the noblest parts"—WESLEY.

God has made every member to have an interest in the comely and honourable appearance of all the others. Love on their part thus becomes a matter of rightly understood self-interest.

25. **No schism.** "The existence of differences of gifts in the church had been used by the Corinthians to cause schisms, exalting some gifts and depreciating others, when this very variety in the church ought, as was the intention of variety in the human body, to create a mutual dependence, which would promote unity" — ELLICOTT. "**But the members should have the same care one for another.** All wars, insurrections, conflicts between class and class, arise from forgetfulness of the fact that the interests of all mankind are identical. Nor can this forgetfulness be charged upon one nation or one class of society. The spirit and the law of the life of Christ is to be that of every member of the Church, and the law of the life of Christ is that of sympathy. How little, during the eighteen hundred years, have the hearts of men been got to beat together! Nor can we say that this is the fault of the capitalists and the masters only. It is the fault of the servants and dependants also" — ROBERTSON.

26. **And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.** This is a matter of the most ordinary experience in the human body. A pain in any portion, even the most remote from the seats of life, affects the whole. A glance at history will show us that it is the same with the body politic. Whatever is physically, morally, or spiritually injurious to any one portion of society, or of the Church of Christ, is sure in the long run to produce injury, moral and spiritual deterioration, to the rest. Or, **one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.** S. CHRYSOSTOM eloquently remarks here: "Is the head crowned? All the man is glorified? Do the lips speak? The eyes also laugh and rejoice." This part of the verse is as true as the former. Whatever tends to exalt the character and purify the aims of any one class in society is sure, in a greater or less degree, to affect every other. If the one thought is calculated to alarm us by calling our attention to the infinite mischief which may be wrought by one act of thoughtlessness or selfishness, it is an immense encouragement to be reminded by the other that no work for good, undertaken from unselfish motives and carried out in an unselfish spirit, can possibly be without effect. On this verse CHRYSOSTOM says: "As when by chance a thorn is planted in the heel, all the body manifests a fellow-feeling."

27. "**Now ye**—Corinthians—**are the body and members of Christ** — part of them, I mean, not the whole body"—WESLEY.

"We here return to the proposition of vers. 12, 13, rendered more definite and intelligible by what has since been said. The apostle now says (1) that collectively Christians are the body of Christ, individually they are His members; (2) that of these members each has its several office (ver. 28); and (3) that none of these offices is common to the whole Christian body, but each belongs only to those to whom it has been assigned (vers. 29, 30)"—C. B. "The unity of Christians is a vital unity. The members of the body of Christ form one whole, because they partake of one common life. The same spiritual life exists in all Christians, derived from the same source, supplying them with similar energy, and prompting them to the same habits and aims"—DODS.

28. **First, apostles**—"who plant the gospel in the heathen nations. **Secondly, prophets** —who either foretell things to come, or speak by extraordinary inspiration, for the edification of the Church. **Thirdly, teachers**—who precede those that work miracles. Under 'prophets' and 'teachers' are comprised evangelists and pastors. (Eph. 4. 11.) **Helps, governments.** It does not appear that these mean distinct offices; rather, any persons might be called 'helps,' from a peculiar

dexterity in helping the distressed; and 'governments,' for a peculiar talent for governing or presiding in assemblies"—WESLEY.

"These different orders held their rank by Divine appointment; and all this exterior dignity in the Church, though often followed with hunger, exile, and martyrdom, was real dignity in the eyes of heaven. We must account those that rule well worthy of double honour. If Christianity has conquered in the fight, let the princes of the congregation wear their laurel. On the other hand, the truth must be declared. If those bishops have abandoned Christ the Son of God for Jesus the Son of Mary; if revelation be substituted by philosophy, their apostolic claims are all nugatory"—SUTCLIFFE. "It is God who has set in the Church all the different gifts and offices, and who has established among them a decreasing scale of value. The apostle does not state the conclusion from this fact, which was sufficiently apparent from what had been said in regard to the members set in the body by the hand of God. The result is this: No one should consider himself as useless, or be so considered by the Church, because he is less brilliantly endowed than this or that other"—GODET. "We need, and may be enriched by even the humblest; and it is our privilege, if Christ abide in us, to be a benefit to all around"—BEET.

29, 30. "**Are all apostles?** Has God given the same gifts to all? By no means, for that would have been to make every member a sort of whole body, consequently to render it independent of all the rest, and so destroy the body itself. God would not have individuals possessing all the gifts, because He would not have anyone in a position to be self-sufficient; He so ordered things that the brethren should all need one another. God has given to believers a certain spiritual endowment (ver. 28), but side by side with this endowment He has left a blank in each of them, and so a want which does not allow him to separate himself from the rest. No individual ought to pose as self-sufficient. The body, as a whole, only exists on the condition that each member needs all the rest. 'All are not, however, apostles.' None of those, therefore, who are not such, will be able to dispense with the brethren whom God has made apostles. And if this is true regarding apostles and prophets, it is also true in regard to all other gifts and offices"—GODET. "Our lack of certain brilliant gifts is no proof that we do not belong to Christ. For we possess other gifts incompatible with those we lack, and needful for the highest good of the community. An allotment of various gifts to various men is by the thoughtful care of God, and is needful for the welfare of the Church. All the members have capacities of usefulness, and all need to be supplemented by others"—BEET.

31. Ye **covet earnestly the best gifts**—"and they are worth your pursuit, though but few of you can attain them. But there is a far more excellent gift than all these; and one which all may, yea must, attain or perish"—WESLEY.

"*Lit.* **Be envious of**, or **desire eagerly.** (In Gal. 1. 18.) 'Zealously affected.' The best gifts were (see ch. 14) those which were most calculated to promote the edification of the Church. But they were also precisely those (see next chapter and Gal. 5. 22) which, so far from being peculiar to the individual, were within the reach of all Christians alike"—C. B. **A more excellent way**—*i.e.* the way of love, described in the following chapter. "S. Paul shows that above all gifts and the aspirations after them, there is a higher way open to the Christian—Love"—HOLSTEN. "What was suitable to us once, should not satisfy us now. Down among the rocky hollows of the sea there are creatures that cast their shell year by year; and up among the storm-beaten cliffs of the mountain, year by year also, the moulting eagle casts her feathers—these, that they may walk in larger, stronger mail; the other, that she may soar on broader pinions, and to higher flights. At such increase we should aim: to grow more busy in God's work; to spend more time and money in His service; to perform greater acts of self-denial; to increase both in the heavenliness of our temper, and in the generosity of our gifts. Not content with being only what once we were, and doing only what once we did, let us covet earnestly the best gifts, and attempt the loftiest heights of grace"—GUTHRIE. "**Covet earnestly**, etc. This is the best ambition. Christians should strive to excel, and be the best of what they undertake. **A more excellent way.** What was that? Charity of God and men. (Ch. 13.) Graces are better than gifts. Gifts as to heaven are but the lumber of a Christian; it is grace maketh him rich toward God; and is therefore chiefly to be coveted"—TRAPP.

CHAPTER XIII.

"THE NECESSITY OF LOVE IS SHOWN (vers. 1–3); THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES (vers. 4–7); THE DURATION OF IT (vers. 8–13)"—WESLEY.

This chapter has been called a hymn. In tone, indeed, it is truly lyrical, especially in the first verses. Charity is poetically personified. HEINRICI well says, "There is here such warmth as could only proceed from the purest experience of charity. It is as if LOVE itself stood before us, filled with its holy peace and profound sympathy."

1. **Though I speak with all the tongues**—"which are upon earth, and with the eloquence of an angel—**and have not love**—the love of God, and of all mankind for His sake, I am no better before God than the **sounding** instruments of **brass**, used in the worship of some of the heathen gods. **Or a tinkling cymbal.**

This was made of two pieces of hollow brass, which, being struck together, made a tinkling, but very little variety of sound"—WESLEY.

"**The tongues of men**—*i.e.* the languages of mankind—**and of angels.** The rabbis speak of the languages of angels. It is possible that S. Paul may be referring to this notion. But he himself also speaks (2 Cor. 12. 4) of hearing 'unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter,' when he was 'caught up to the third heaven.' **And have not charity**—Tyndale (who is followed by Cranmer and the Geneva Bible)—**LOVE.** The force of this eloquent panegyric on love is impaired, and the agreement between the various writers of the New Testament much obscured, by the rendering 'charity,' instead of 'love.' The aim no doubt of the Vulgate translators was to avoid the sensuous associations which the Latin word *amor* suggested. But the English word 'charity' has never risen to the height of the apostle's argument. At best it does but signify a kindly interest in and forbearance towards others. It is far from suggesting the ardent, active, energetic principle which the apostle had in view. And though the English word 'love' includes the affection which springs up between persons of different sexes, it is generally understood to denote only the higher and nobler forms of that affection, the lower being stigmatised under the name of *passion*"—C. B. "**And have not charity.** If I do not love the Lord supremely, with a love emanating from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, **I am become as sounding brass**"—SUTCLIFFE. "The two terms **brass** and **cymbal**, which denote, the one a piece of unwrought metal struck to produce sound, the other a concave plate, used so frequently in the East as a musical instrument, perfectly describe the inflation of an exalted imagination, and an over-excited sensibility. Religious language is then no longer the natural overflowing of a heart filled with love; it resembles the resonant sound of a dead and hollow instrument"—GODET.

2. **And though I have the gift of prophecy**—"of foretelling future events—**and understand all the mysteries**—both of God's word and providence—**and all knowledge**—of things Divine and human, that ever any mortal attained to;—**and though I have** the highest degree of miracle-working **faith, and have not this love—I am nothing**"—WESLEY.

"**All faith**—in the sense of ch. 12. 9—**so that I could remove mountains.** A quotation of words recorded in Matt. 17. 20; 21. 21. Whether S. Matthew's Gospel were already written or not, those words had reached S. Paul, and this must be regarded as a confirmation of the truth of the Gospel narrative. It is remarkable that they appear in a different form in Luke 17. 6. **I am nothing.** The apostle does not say that it is possible for a man to have all these gifts without love. He only says that if it *were* possible, it would be useless. But *real* faith, in the Scripture sense, without love, is an impossibility. (Comp. Gal. 5. 6; Eph. 3. 17, 19; 4. 13–16; Jas. 2. 18–26.) True Christian faith unites us to Christ, who *is Love*"—LIAS. "All these gifts are less excellent than charity. They are not the perfection of our nature. He who treads the brilliant road of the highest accomplishments is, as a man, inferior to him who treads the path of love. For in the spiritual world a man is measured, not by his genius, but by his likeness to God. Intellect is not Divine; love is the most essential of all the attributes of God. Thus, to the apostle's mind, there was emptiness in eloquence, nothingness in knowledge and even in faith, unless in liberality and sacrifice, where love was not"—ROBERTSON.

3. **And though I**—"deliberately, piece by piece—**give all my goods to feed the poor**, yea, though I **deliver up my body to be burned**—rather than I would renounce my religion—**and have not the love**—hereafter described;—**it profiteth me nothing.** Without this, whatever I speak, whatever I have, whatever I know, whatever I do, whatever I suffer, is *nothing*"—WESLEY.

"There are two Christian actions which might seem to be beyond question as evidence of a sound spiritual condition—almsgiving and martyrdom. The young man who sought guidance from Christ lacked but one thing: to sell his property and give to the poor. But, says S. Paul, **though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.** It is only too possible to do great acts of charity from a love of display, or from an uneasy sense of duty which parts reluctantly and grudgingly with what it bestows. That is understood. Common-sense tells every one but the abjectly superstitious man himself that it is as impossible to buy spiritual health on a bed of death as it is to buy the cure of his mortal disease. But martyrdom? Can a man give any stronger proof of his faith than to give his body to be burned? A willingness to suffer for one's opinion or one's faith is not in every case a guarantee of the existence of a heart transformed from selfishness to love. Love must be spontaneous, from the soul's self, not produced by considerations or the requirements of a position we wish to reach or to maintain. It is the result of God entering and possessing the soul. He that loveth is born of God. That is the only account to be given of the matter. And therefore it is that where love is absent all is absent"—DODS. "Love accepts only what is inspired by love. The most eminent gifts, the most heroic acts, avail nothing the instant they are not inspired by it. The absolute worth of charity also appears from the opposite consideration; while without

it all is nothing, it produces all of itself. It is the mother of all virtues, 'the bond of perfection,' as S. Paul himself says (Col. 3. 14)" —GODET.

4. "The love of God, and of our neighbour for God's sake, is patient towards all men. It suffers all the weakness, ignorance, errors, and infirmities of the children of God; all the malice and wickedness of the children of the world; and all this, not only for a time, but to the end. And in every step toward overcoming evil with good, it is kind, soft, mild, benign. It inspires the sufferer at once with the most amiable sweetness, and the most fervent and tender affection. **Love acteth not rashly** — does not hastily condemn anyone; never passes a severe sentence on a slight or sudden view of things. Nor does it ever act or behave in a violent, headstrong, or precipitate manner. **Is not puffed up**—yea, humbles the soul to the dust"—WESLEY.

"The grace of charity is described in this and the three following verses. This description is needed, because no single word in any language will express the fulness of the Christian grace here spoken of. Therefore S. Paul gives this exquisite description of what he means by the word, distinguishing it from almsgiving, passion, sentiment, philanthropy, while something of them all is contained within it" — ROBERTSON. "This is not a picture drawn at random. It is a mirror in which the church is called to contemplate the humiliating image of what it has become, while it beholds the state which it is called to endeavour to attain. While tracing it, the apostle has two things constantly before his eyes—on the one hand, the figure of Him who realised on earth the ideal of a life of charity; on the other, the remembered sins against charity to which the Corinthians had given way in the exercise of the fair gifts bestowed on their church, because the use of them had not been subordinated to this cardinal virtue. **Charity suffereth long**—in regard to wrongs, even repeated, from our neighbour; here is victory over a just resentment. **Kind**—full of goodness, animated by the constant need to make oneself useful; it is the victory over idle selfishness and comfortable self-pleasure"—GODET.

5. **It doth not behave indecently**—"is not rude or willingly offensive, to any. It **renders to all their due**—suitable to time, person, and all other circumstances. **Seeketh not her own** — ease, pleasure, honour, or temporal advantage. Nay, sometimes the lover of mankind seeketh not, in some sense, even his own spiritual advantage; does not think of himself, so long as a zeal for the glory of God and the souls of men swallows him up. But, though he is all on fire for these ends, yet he **is not provoked** to sharpness or unkindness toward anyone. Outward provocations indeed will frequently occur; but he triumphs over all. Love **thinketh no evil**—indeed, it cannot but see and hear evil things, and know that they are so; but it does not willingly think evil of any; neither infer evil where it does not appear. It tears up, root and branch, all imagining of what we have no proof. It casts out all jealousies, all evil surmises, all readiness to believe evil"—WESLEY.

"How the inner man gives expression to the outer. (Rom. 14. 10.) **Seeketh not her own** —acts and speaks from disinterested motives; the germ of this conduct is the rare quality of *unselfishness*. **Is not easily provoked**—ever keeps the temper under control. **Thinketh no evil**—does not even mentally register an evil done to itself, but allows it to glance off unrecorded. This is the cardinal virtue of *forgiveness of injuries*. **Is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly**. Love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence, and by immodest, irreverent, and eccentric actions. It balances a man, and gives him sense by bringing him into right relations with his fellows, and prompting him to esteem their gifts more highly than his own. **Is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil**—it is not fired with resentment at every little slight, and does not make a mental note and lay up in its memory the contempt shown by one, the indifference shown by another, the intention to wound betrayed by a third. Love is too little occupied with itself to feel these exhibitions of malice very keenly. Its eye is on the advantage to be gained by the needy, and not on itself" —DODS. **Thinketh no evil**—bears no malice. S. CHRYSOSTOM explains it by "is not suspicious." WATSON says: "Charity excludes all censoriousness or evil-speaking. When the end is not the correction of the offender, or when a declaration of the truth as to one person is not required by our love and duty to another; for whenever the end is merely to lower a person in the estimation of others, it is resolvable solely into an immoral feeling. This charity is an efficient affection, excluding all ill-will, and all injury."

6. **Rejoiceth not in iniquity**—"yea, weeps at either the sin or folly of even an enemy; takes no pleasure in hearing or in repeating it, but desires it may be forgotten for ever. **But rejoiceth in the truth** — bringing forth its proper fruit, holiness of heart and life. Good in general is its glory and joy, wherever diffused in all the world"—WESLEY.

Does not exult in any wrongdoing of others, but rejoices with a holy joy in the triumph of the truth of God, and especially as seen in the actions of good men. It has no pleasure in calumny or suspicions, but is thrilled with gladness where goodness is triumphant. "**Rejoiceth not in iniquity.** (Comp. Ps. 5. 4, 5, 'Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; Thou hatest all workers of ini

quity'; and Hos. 7. 3; Rom. 1. 32; 2 Thess. 2. 12.) **But rejoiceth in the truth**—better as *margin*, and Vulgate, 'with the truth.' Love rejoiceth with the victory of truth in the world, and at the consequent decline of unrighteousness, which is the opposite of truth. (Comp. 2 Thess. 2. 10; 2 John 4)"—LIAS.

7. **Love covereth all things**—"whatever evil the lover of mankind sees, hears, or knows of anyone, he mentions it to none; it never goes out of his lips, unless where absolute duty constrains to speak. **Believeth all things**—puts the most favourable construction on everything, and is ever ready to believe whatever may tend to the advantage of anyone's character. And when it can no longer believe well, it **hopes** whatever may excuse or extenuate the fault which cannot be denied. Where it cannot even excuse, it hopes God will at length give 'repentance unto life.' Meantime **it endureth all things**—whatever the injustice, the malice, the cruelty of men can inflict. He cannot only do, but likewise suffer, all things, through Christ who strengtheneth him"—WESLEY.

Beareth all things—is proof against all such things as provocations. **Believeth all things**—not the weakness of credulity, but the guilelessness of a simple and unsuspecting mind, which is itself based upon an unblemished life. **Endureth all things**—manifests the virtue of *fortitude*, the cheerful and loyal sense of duty. In no other way can we vanquish our foes, but by this steady and determined resistance and invincible courage. **Beareth all things**—"suffers," Vulgate, and so Wyclif and Tyndale. Here it means to endure patiently indignities and affronts, save of course where the wellbeing of others requires that they should be repelled. "**Believeth all things**—'not that a Christian should knowingly and willingly suffer himself to be imposed upon; not that he should deprive himself of prudence and judgment, so that he may be the more easily deceived; but that he should esteem it better to be deceived by his kindness and gentleness of heart than to injure his brother by needless suspicion'"—CALVIN. "It is always ready to think the best; to put the most favourable construction on anything; is glad to make all the allowance for human weakness which can be done without betraying the truth of God"—Dr. COKE. **Hopeth all things**—(1) of man, of whom love will ever hope the best, and deem reformation possible in the most hardened offenders; and (2) of God, that He will bring good out of evil, and that all the evils of this life will issue ultimately in the triumph of good. **Endureth all things**—sustains to the end, with unshaken confidence in the goodness of God, all the persecutions and afflictions of this life.

8. **Love never faileth.** "It accompanies to, and adorns us in, eternity; it prepares us for, and constitutes, heaven. **But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail**—when all things are fulfilled, and God is all in all. **Whether there be tongues, they shall cease**—one language shall prevail among all the inhabitants of heaven, and the low and imperfect languages of earth be forgotten. The **knowledge** likewise which we now so eagerly pursue, **shall** then **vanish away**—as starlight is lost in that of the mid-day sun, so our present knowledge in the light of eternity"—WESLEY.

"**Charity never faileth.** The Vulgate and some MSS. read 'falleth.' Tyndale renders, 'falleth never awaye.' In the LXX. (as in Job 15. 33, and Isa. 28. 1, 4) the word is used as a fading flower. In Rom. 9. 6 it is applied to the word of God. **Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.** Another word is here used in the original for the word translated 'fail.' It should rather be rendered 'be brought to an end,' *lit.* 'be worked out.' It is translated 'brought to nought' in ch. 1. 28, while in ver. 10 it is rendered 'done away,' in ver. 11 'put away,' and in the latter part of this very verse 'vanish away.' The utterances of the inspired man (see ch. 14. 1) are, we are here told, no longer of any value to us when we are face to face with the facts of which he was wont to speak"—LIAS. "**Never faileth.** Love is imperishable; it grows from less to more; there never comes a time when it gives place to some higher quality of soul, or when it is unimportant whether a man has it or no, or when it is no longer the criterion of the whole moral state. The most surprising spiritual gifts can make no such claim. **Prophecies, tongues, knowledge!** These gifts were for the temporary benefit of the Church. S. Paul was prepared for their disappearance. *Love never faileth!*"—DODS.

9. **For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.** "The wisest of men have here but short, narrow, imperfect conceptions, even of the things round about them, and much more of the deep things of God. And even the prophecies which men deliver from God are far from taking in the whole of future events, or of that wisdom and knowledge of God which is treasured up in the Scripture revelation"—WESLEY.

"**We know in part.** Knowledge and preaching are incomplete; therefore, when this dispensation ends, and the complete dispensation is brought in, these imperfect gifts shall cease. Gifts are but the implements of the Divine husbandry; graces are the seeds themselves. When the great harvest-time comes, the instruments, however useful, will be cast aside altogether; the seeds will, by the very process of death, be transformed into blossoms and fruits, and in that perfected form remain for ever"—ELLICOTT. "**Shall be done away.** The apostle wishes to explain why this doing away shall take place. Prophecy lifts on each occasion only a corner of the veil

which covers the plan of God and its final accomplishment. Similarly, the isolated acts of spiritual knowledge grasp the truth of salvation only in fragments, and consequently every particular point of the great fact. Even to possess the complete knowledge of one point, the whole would require to be known distinctly. Now this full and only true knowledge is not granted us in the present economy. As to tongues, the apostle does not think it necessary to justify their disappearance. The reason for it is too evident: it is their ecstatic character. The only ground for ecstatic transport is that we are not yet living fully in the reality of the Divine. When we live in God we are in Him without going out of ourselves"—GODET.

10. **But when that which is perfect is come**—"at death and in the last day—**that which is in part shall vanish away**—both that poor, low, imperfect, glimmering light, which is all the knowledge we now can attain to; and these slow and unsatisfactory methods of attaining, as well as of imparting it to others"—WESLEY.

"This verse states a universal principle, but refers specially to ver. 9. It proves 'will come to nought' in ver. 8. *Knowledge* and *prophecy* are but torches giving amid general darkness a partial light. Therefore, when dawns the eternal day they will become useless. They who now know most and speak most fluently will then have no advantage over others"—BEET.

11. "In our present state we are mere infants in point of knowledge, compared to what we shall be hereafter. **I put away childish things**—of my own accord, willingly, without trouble"—WESLEY.

"Our human existence is progressive; and just what childhood is to manhood the most advanced manhood is to our heavenly being. We put away childish things in manhood; we shall put away even manly or human things entirely in the spiritual state"—ROBERTSON. "**I thought**—formed conceptions; **I reckoned**—drew inferences. The **child** first speaks, then gives evidence of observation, and then of reasoning. **When I became**—or 'now that I am become,' 'have set aside.' **I made as nought**—as in vers. 8, 10; laid aside as useless the toys or school-books which once I prized and used. This comparison is an argument from the greater to the less. For the things of eternity are much more completely above and beyond our present thought than are the things of manhood to a child. Yet the mature knowledge of manhood makes school-books, etc., quite useless"—BEET.

12. **Now we see**—"even the things that surround us. But **by means of a glass**—or mirror, which reflects only their imperfect forms, in a dim, faint, obscure manner; so that our thoughts about them are puzzling and intricate, and everything is a kind of riddle to us. **But then**—we shall see, not a faint reflection, but the objects themselves—**face to face**—distinctly. **Now I know in part**—even when God Himself reveals things to me, great part of them is still kept under the veil. **But then I shall know even as also I am known**—in a clear, full, comprehensive manner; in some measure like God, who penetrates the centre of every object, and sees at one glance through my soul and all things"—WESLEY.

Lit. "by means of a mirror." Meyer reminds us that we are to think rather of the mirrors of polished metal used in ancient times, the reflection of which would often be obscure and imperfect, than of our modern looking-glasses. And GODET says: "The object of **to see**, is here God Himself, with His plan of grace and glory toward us. The mirrors of the ancients were of metal; those made at Corinth were famous. The image which they presented could never be perfectly distinct. We perceive Divine things, says the apostle, only by means of their image in a mirror. This figure signifies two things: knowledge of *mediate* character, and for that very reason always more or less *confused*." BEET adds: "From ver. 12 it is quite clear that the light which will supersede the gifts of knowledge and prophecy is that of eternity. Consequently, ver. 8 refers, not to the cessation of extraordinary gifts in the later ages of the Church, but to the end of the present life, either at death or at the coming of Christ. But it would be unfair to infer from this that S. Paul expected these gifts to continue till Christ comes. For about this he says nothing, but declares only that sooner or later, to the individual and to the race, these gifts will pass away."

13. **Faith, hope, love**—"are the sum of perfection on earth; love alone is the sum of perfection in heaven"—WESLEY.

"You may have strong, eagle-eyed **faith**: well—you will probably be enabled to do great things in life, to work wonders, to trample on impossibilities. You may have sanguine **hope**: well—your life will pass brightly, not gloomily. But the vision of God as He is, to see the King in His beauty, is vouchsafed, not to science, nor to talent, but only to **purity** and **love**"—ROBERTSON. "This is S. Paul's crowning testimony to the worth of **love**. He does not mean that love abides while faith becomes sight and hope fruition. Rather he indicates that **faith** and **hope** are also imperishable, and hereby distinguished from the spiritual gifts of which he has been speaking. Both in this life and in that which is to come, faith, hope, and love abide. Faith and hope are really permanent elements of human life, faith being the confidence we have in God, and hope the ever-renewed expectancy of future good. But while faith maintains us in connection with

God, love is the enjoyment of God and the partaking of His nature; and while hope renews our energy and guides our aims, it can bring us to no better thing than love. This is the root of all good, the beginning of all blessedness, because the germ of all likeness to God who Himself is love"—DODS.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. Follow after love—"with zeal, vigour, courage, patience; else you can neither attain nor keep it. **And**—in their place, as subservient to this—**desire spiritual gifts; but especially that ye may prophesy.** The word here does not mean foretelling things to come, but rather opening and applying the Scripture"—WESLEY.

God's best gifts are placed within the reach of all, but they must be sought by prayer and devotion, and *special* gifts may be asked of Him. (See ver. 13, and Jas. 1. 5.) "**But rather that ye may prophesy.** The gift of prophecy, as is abundantly evident from the whole of this section, was not confined to the prediction of future events. As KINGSLEY remarks, the prophet was 'not only a *fore*-teller but a *forth*-teller,' one who communicates the moral and spiritual truths which he has received by direct revelation from God"—C. B. "The general rule is this: Every one should seek, above all, the gifts most fitted to contribute to the common good. Such is the principle S. Paul applies first of all to the valuation of the two gifts which seem at that time to have played the most considerable part in the life of the church of Corinth, **speaking in tongues**, and **prophecy.** His thought is, strictly speaking, this: "Seek states of inspiration, and that especially with the view of attaining to the possession of the best of gifts, prophecy'"—GODET.

2. "**He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaks**, in effect, **not to men, but to God**—who alone understands him"—WESLEY.

"**For he that speaketh in an** unknown **tongue.** The word 'unknown' is not in the original. The word translated 'tongue' signifies a *human language* in ch. 13. 1. (Comp. Rev. 13. 7; 14. 6; 17. 15.) **Speaketh not unto men, but unto God.** Because the language is not the language of those to whom he is speaking, and therefore what he says is hidden from them. For **mysteries**, see ch. 4. 1"—C. B.

3. "**Edification, and exhortation, and comfort.** They communed with God by the speaking with tongues; they communed with the brethren by prophecy—building up, stirring up, cheering up, as each required"—ELLICOTT.

4. **Edifieth himself**—"only, on the most favourable supposition. **The church**—the whole congregation"—WESLEY.

"**He that speaketh in an** unknown **tongue edifieth himself**—not necessarily because he understands what he is saying, but because his spirit, stirred up by the Spirit of God, is led by the experience of the inward emotion to praise God"—ESTIUS. (See ver. 14.) **But he that prophesieth edifieth the church.** The profit of the brethren is ever S. Paul's object. (Comp. vers. 6, 12; ch. 6. 12, etc.) Prophecy is to be preferred to the gift of tongues because it is more directly useful. (See note, ch. 12. 28.)

5. **Greater**—"that is, more useful. By this alone are we to estimate all our gifts and talents"—WESLEY.

Except he interpret. This passage clearly implies that a man might speak in another language without himself knowing what he was saying. (See ver. 14.) Some, however, regard the speaking with tongues as ecstatic utterances in no human language, such as took place among the Montanists in ancient and the Irvingites in modern times.

6. **Revelation**—"of some gospel mystery. **Knowledge**—explaining the ancient types and prophecies. **Prophecy**—foretelling some future event. **Doctrine**—to regulate your tempers and lives. Perhaps this may be the sense of these obscure words"—WESLEY.

"**By revelation**—that which comes directly to the spirit from on high. **By knowledge**—that which is gained by observation and study. (See ch. 12. 8.) **By doctrine**—or rather, 'teaching,' the outward expression of knowledge. (See the distinction between the prophet and the teacher in ch. 12. 28)"—C. B.

7. **How shall it be known what is piped or harped**—"what music can be made, or what end answered?"—WESLEY.

"The effect of a melody depends entirely upon the distinction of its musical intervals. The effect of speech in like manner is dependent upon its being the communication of definite ideas"—LIAS. "The point here is not, as the English seems to suggest, that there must be a difference in tune, so as to know *what* is being piped or harped—that illustration comes in the next verse—but that each instrument has its own peculiar sound"—ELLICOTT.

8. **Who will prepare himself for the battle**—"unless he understand what the trumpet sounds? suppose a retreat or a march"—WESLEY.

"**An uncertain sound**—an 'indistinct' sound, that which conveys no clear impression to the mind. The muster, the charge, the rally, the retreat, are each indicated by a definite order of musical intervals upon the trumpet, or they would be useless for the purpose of calling soldiers together. So words are useless to mankind unless they represent things"—C. B. "Not only has each instrument its own sound, but in each instrument there is a distinction of notes. If a trumpet does not clearly sound the advance when it is intended, or the retreat when it is meant, the

trumpet is useless, the soldiers not knowing what to do"—ELLICOTT.

9. **Unless ye utter by the tongue**—"which is miraculously given you—**words easy to be understood**—by your hearers—**ye will speak to the air**—a proverbial expression, will utterly lose your labour"—WESLEY.

"As inanimate instruments must give forth distinct sounds if their music is to be understood. **So ye also.** As men, you ought to speak distinctly, if you wish to be understood by your fellows." If a man does not use words that those spoken to understand, it is useless to utter them.

10. **Many kinds of voices.** And yet no word in any language can be without meaning, but must correspond to some thought—for the thought exists first, and the word is invented as the expression of it.

11. **I shall be a barbarian to him**—"shall seem to talk unintelligible gibberish"—WESLEY.

"Language is useless unless we know what meaning is attached to each word uttered. The hearer is a foreigner (or **barbarian**), then, in the estimation of the speaker, and the speaker a foreigner in the estimation of the hearer"—ELLICOTT.

12. **Spiritual gifts** (in *margin*, "spirits")—obviously meaning here the *gifts* of the *Spirit*. **Excel**—*i.e.* "abound." Wyclif translates the word, "be plenteous"; and Tyndale, "have plenty."

13. **That he may** be able to **interpret**—"which was a distinct gift"—WESLEY.

Pray that he may interpret. (Comp. vers. 1, 5.) This passage may mean (1) pray that he may receive the faculty of interpretation, or (2) pray in such a language as he has the power of interpreting.

14. **If I pray in an unknown tongue.** "The apostle, as he did at the sixth verse, transfers it to himself. **My spirit prayeth**—by the power of the Spirit I understand the words myself—**but my understanding is unfruitful**—the knowledge I have is no benefit to others"—WESLEY.

My spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. "The *afflatus* of the Spirit suggests the words of prayer to the possessor of the gift. He is conscious that he is fervently addressing the Giver of all good in a spirit of supplication. But his consciousness goes no further. He does not know what he is saying"—LIAS. "The apostle is here speaking of public worship (see ver. 16), and not of private devotion; and the word **unfruitful** (better 'fruitless') implies the result, or rather the absence of result, as regards others"—ELLICOTT.

15. **"I will pray with the Spirit, but I will pray with the understanding also.** I will use my own understanding, as well as the power of the Spirit. I will not act so absurdly, as to utter in a congregation what can edify none but myself"—WESLEY.

"**What is it then?**—what is the purport of what I have been saying? That it is desirable that the spirit and understanding should combine in all the public utterances of a teacher"—C. B. "**What is it then?** The apostle, in answering this question—viz. 'What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter?'—still speaks in the first person, quoting his own conduct and resolution. He will not let his public ministrations, as regards prayer and praise, evaporate into mere enthusiasm; nor will he, on the other hand, allow a cold intellectual creed to chill and freeze the warm emotions of the spirit"—ELLICOTT.

16. **Otherwise how shall he that filleth the place of a private person**—"that is, any private hearer—**say Amen**—assenting and confirming your words, as it was even then usual for the whole congregation to do"—WESLEY.

"**Else when thou shalt bless**—a further argument. Even your prayers and thanksgivings are useless, for none can respond to them. Some commentators, *e.g.* Dean Stanley, have supposed the Eucharistic blessing to be meant. (Ch. 10. 16.) This, though probable, is by no means certain. That it was some well-known form of blessing or thanksgiving is however clear from what follows. **With the spirit**—*i.e.* in an unknown tongue. **He that occupieth the room of the unlearned.** 'Room' as in Matt. 23. 6; Luke 14. 7, 8, etc., stands for 'place.' Wyclif renders it here by 'place.' (Comp. 'office and roome' in Hollinshead's *Scotland.*) The word rendered here 'unlearned' signifies (1) a 'private person, layman,' one who holds no office. Hence (2) it comes to signify a man who has no special or technical knowledge of any particular art or science, as in Acts 4. 13; 2 Cor. 11. 6; just as a lawyer calls those 'laymen' who are not versed in law. Therefore the meaning here most probably is (with Meyer and Bishop Wordsworth), 'those who have no special gift such as that of prophecy or tongues.' Some would render 'the layman's place,' and regard it as referring to the seats set apart for the laity in the assembly. But the majority of commentators would render 'he who fills the situation of the not specially endowed.' **Amen**—*lit.* the Amen, the well-known response, either optative, 'So be it,' or affirmative, 'So it is,' as common in the synagogue as in the Christian Church to any prayer or thanksgiving. (See Neh. 5. 13; Rev. 5. 14.) Justin Martyr (circa 150) uses the same language concerning the response to the Eucharistic prayer in his day"—C. B.

17. "The expression **the other** denotes all the members of the congregation taken individually. The apostle, in ver. 6, put his own case to prove the uselessness of tongues without prophecy; here he alleges it again in proof of the uselessness of tongues unaccompanied with interpretation"—GODET.

18. "**I thank my God, I speak with tongues**

more than you all. S. Paul, no doubt, had the gift of interpretation. Yet he apparently did not often exercise in public, whatever he may have done in private, the gift of speaking with tongues unknown to his hearers. (See next verse)"—C. B.

19. **With my understanding**—"in a rational manner; so as not only to understand myself, but to be understood by others"—WESLEY.

"**Yet in the church**—whatever I may do in private, I should desire my public ministrations to be for the instruction and edification of the flock, and not for my own individual glorification. **Teach**—the word in the original is that from which our word 'catechise' is derived. The same word is used in Luke 1. 4; Acts 18. 25; 21. 21, 24; Rom. 2. 18, and twice in Gal. 6. 6. It signifies to make, to resound thoroughly in one's ears. The importance of sermons and catechetical teaching in public worship is thus indicated, as well as their proper object, the instruction and edification of the flock. (See ver. 24)"—LIAS. "It is better to be useful than brilliant. Gifts that are showy, and gifts that please—before these the world yields her homage, while the lowly teachers of the poor and the ignorant are forgotten and unnoticed. Only remember that, in the sight of the everlasting Eye, the one is creating sounds which perish with the hour that gave them birth, the other a work that is for ever—building and forming for the eternal world an immortal spirit"—ROBERTSON.

20. **Be not children in understanding.** "This is an admirable stroke of true oratory! to bring down the height of their spirits, by representing that wherein they prided themselves most, as mere folly and childishness. **In wickedness be ye infants**—have all the innocence of that tender age. **But in understanding be ye grown men**—knowing religion was not designed to destroy any of our natural faculties, but to exalt and improve them, our reason in particular"—WESLEY.

"**Howbeit in malice be ye children.** This is subjoined lest the apostle should be charged with contradicting his Master. There is a sense in which all Christians must be children. What is it the apostle tells us? They were to be children in malice, or rather perhaps vice. (Comp. on the one hand Matt. 11. 25; 18. 3; 19. 14; 1 Pet. 2. 2; on the other, ch. 3. 1; Eph. 14. 14, and Heb. 5. 12.) See also Matt. 10. 16; Rom. 16. 19)"—LIAS. SUTCLIFFE says: "This verse is a masterly reproof to teachers agitating minor questions and irregular forms of worship, while the powerful eloquence of the heart was in danger of being overlooked. S. Paul certainly disapproves of the burdensome forms of Jewish worship being forced on the Christian Church. Prayer, reading, expositions of the reading or exhortation, with singing, were the four ancient recognised forms of worship."

21. **It is written in the Law.** "The word here, as frequently, means the Old Testament. **In foreign tongues will I speak to this people.** And so He did. He spake terribly to them by the Babylonians, when they had set at nought what He had spoken by the prophets, who used their own language. These words received a further accomplishment on the day of Pentecost"—WESLEY.

In the Law it is written. The Law here stands for the whole Old Testament, as we might naturally expect from S. Paul's habit of regarding the whole of the Mosaic dispensation as a progressive order of things having its completion in Christ. (See Rom. 3. 19; Gal. 3. 23, 24; 4. 5; Heb. 9. 8, 10.) S. John uses the word in the same manner (ch. 10. 34; 12. 34; 15. 25.) The passage is from Isa. 28. 11, 12.

22. **Tongues are** intended **for a sign to unbelievers**—"to engage their attention, and convince them the message is of God. **Whereas prophecy is not** so much **for unbelievers**, as for the confirmation of them that already believe"—WESLEY.

"The passage here quoted has been regarded as a prophecy either (1) of the day of Pentecost, or (2) of the Babylonish captivity. The latter is more probable, and in that case it becomes not an argument but an illustration. The occupation of Judea by the Assyrian and Babylonian troops had been a sign to God's people of their unbelief and its punishment, and the unwonted speech that they had been doomed to hear was to them a call to repentance, especially when viewed in the light of the prophecy of Moses in Deut. 28. 49"—C. B. "Tongues should not be exalted in estimation above prophecy—inasmuch as the function of the latter is really grander than that of the former. Tongues were useful to arrest the attention of unbelievers, and, if rightly used, to arouse their convictions; but prophecy is in the highest sense useful for believers"—ELLICOTT. The apostle now supposes two cases fitted to impress, by way of extreme examples, the truth of the Law which he has just stated.

23. **Yet.** "Sometimes prophecy is of more use, even to unbelievers, than speaking with tongues. For instance, **if the whole church be met together**—on some extraordinary occasion. It is probable, in so large a city, they ordinarily met in several places. **And there come in ignorant persons**—men of learning might have understood the tongues in which they spoke. It is observable, S. Paul says here, 'ignorant persons' or 'unbelievers'; but in the next verse, **an unbeliever or an ignorant person.** Several bad men met together hinder each other by evil discourse. Single persons are more easily gained"—WESLEY.

"**One place**—the place of assembly, as in ch. 11. 20; Acts 2. 1. However well calculated the gift of tongues might be to arrest and compel attention when used properly, it is clear, says the apostle, that its introduction at the

public assemblies of the church was not a proper use of it, unless (ver. 27) it were restricted in its use by wise rules. If not so restricted, so far from its being a sign to unbelievers, it would give them, as well as the great body of the Christian laity, occasion of complaint, and even ridicule. **All**—not necessarily *all together*, as some have supposed, but that no other means of communication was adopted by any *but* the unknown tongue"—MEYER. "Feeling is a precious gift; but when men parade it, exhibit it, and give way to it, it is weakness instead of strength"—ROBERTSON.

24. **He is convicted by all**—"who speak in their turns, and speak to the heart of the hearers. **He is judged by all**—every one says something to which his conscience bears witness"—WESLEY.

"**But if all prophesy**—there is no danger of exaggeration regarding this gift. Each one uttering prophecy, telling forth the gospel truth and revealing the mind of God, will have a message that will be useful to the unbeliever. As one after another they utter the words of Divine truth, they each send something that pierces into his soul. By all of them he is convicted in his own conscience of some sin. He is condemned in his own eyes, a searching light is turned upon his heart. The secrets of his heart are made manifest, and he makes terrible discoveries of his guilt. (Heb. 4. 12, 13)"—ELLICOTT.

25. **The secrets of his heart are made manifest**—"laid open, clearly described; in a manner which to him is most astonishing and utterly unaccountable. How many instances of it are seen at this day! So does God still point His word"—WESLEY.

"**That God is in you of a truth**—*lit.* that God is 'really' in you (or 'among' you). This description of the effect of prophecy upon the unbeliever is in no way contrary to the assertion in ver. 22. *There* the apostle is speaking of a sign to attract the attention of the unbeliever; *here* his attention is already attracted. He has come to the Christian assembly, and is listening to the words spoken there in the name of Jesus Christ. Unless his conscience is 'seared with a hot iron' there will be no further need of signs to induce him to give his attention to what is spoken"—LIAS.

SECTION XII.—26-40. REGULATIONS TO ENSURE DECENCY AND ORDER.—26. **What a thing is it, brethren.** "This was another disorder among them. **Every one hath a psalm**—that is, at the same time one begins to sing a psalm; another to deliver **a doctrine**; another to speak in an unknown **tongue**; another to declare what has been **revealed to** him; another to **interpret** what the former is speaking; every one probably gathering a little company about him, just as they did in the schools of the philosophers. **Let all be done to edification**—so as to profit the hearers"—WESLEY.

"**Hath a psalm.** The apostle here reproves another fault. Not only are the Corinthians ambitious rather of the gifts which attract attention than of those which do good to others, but in their exercise of those gifts they are utterly neglectful of church order. Each member of the teaching body (ch. 12. 29 forbids us to include the whole church) had his own special subject to bring before the church; some hymn of praise, unpremeditated or otherwise, some point of Christian doctrine to enforce, some hidden mystery to reveal, some utterance in a foreign tongue, or some interpretation peculiar to himself of such utterance. This he desired to deliver just when the impulse seized him to do so, and all with a view of asserting himself, rather than of promoting the common welfare. The consequence was an amount of disorder which prevented the striking picture of the true effects of Christian prophecy in the last verse from being ever realised. For the various gifts mentioned in this verse, see vers. 2, 6, 13, and notes. The word psalm must be understood of a song of praise addressed to God, such as the Psalms of David, though it is by no means to be confined to them. (Comp. Eph. 5. 19.) **Let all things be done unto edifying.** (See ch. 6. 12; 8. 1; 10. 23; 12. 7; 2 Cor. 12. 19; 13. 10.) The apostle corrects two errors in this section—(1) the disorderly manner in which the services of the church were carried on, (2) the practice of women speaking in the public assembly"—C. B. "**Let all things be done unto edifying**—let each use his gift for the good of the congregation. Keep the great end of your meetings in view, and you need no formal rubrics. Make no boast of your æsthetic worship, your irreproachable liturgy, your melting music, if these things do not result in a more loyal service of Christ. Do not pique yourselves on your puritanic simplicity of worship, and the absence of all that is not spiritual, if this bareness and simplicity do not bring you more directly into the presence of your Lord. It matters little whether the vehicle in which we travel be highly decorated or plain, so long as it brings us safely to our destination. Are we the better for our services? Is it our chief aim in them to receive and promote an earnest religious spirit and a sincere service of Christ?"—DODS.

27. **By two or three at most.** "Let not above two or three speak at one meeting. **And that by course**—that is, one after another. **And let one interpret**—either himself (ver. 13); or, if he have not the gift, some other, into the vulgar tongue. It seems 'the gift of tongues' was an instantaneous knowledge of a tongue till then unknown, which he that received it could afterwards speak when he thought fit, without any new miracle"—WESLEY.

Here is the practical application of the general rule just laid down to the exercise

of the gift of tongues. Those who had that gift were not all to speak together, and so cause confusion; only two, or at the most three, were to speak in each assembly, and each of such group was to speak in turn, one at a time. There was to be with each group one who had the gift of interpretation, and he was to interpret to the listeners.

28. **Let him speak**—"that tongue, if he find it profitable to himself in his private devotions"—WESLEY.

In the church. Those words imply that the utterance was to be reserved until the speaker found himself in private, since in the church it could only serve for an opportunity of useless display.

29. **Let two or three of the prophets**—"not more at one meeting—**speak**—one after another, expounding the Scripture"—WESLEY.

"The same rule was to hold good of preaching. Those who felt that they had something to communicate must, notwithstanding, be governed by the desire to edify their brethren. The church was not to be wearied out by an endless succession of discourses, good indeed in themselves, but addressed to men who were not in a condition to profit by them. It would seem that two or three short discourses took the place in apostolic times of the modern sermon"—C. B.

30, 31. "**All**—who have that gift—**that all may learn**—both by speaking and by hearing"—WESLEY.

"Here we have a rule relating to *order*—If, while a prophet is speaking, another received a revelation, both should not speak simultaneously; the first should keep silence. **For you must all have it in your power to fill the prophet's function one after another** (of course, those who have the gift of prophecy)"—GODET.

32. **For the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.** "But what enthusiast considers this? The impulses of the Holy Spirit, even in men really inspired, so suit themselves to their rational faculties, as not to divest them of the government of themselves, like the heathen priests under their diabolical possession. Evil spirits threw their prophets into such ungovernable ecstasies, as forced them to speak and act like madmen. But the Spirit of God left His prophets the clear use of their judgment, when, and how long, it was fit for them to speak, and never hurried them into any improprieties either as to the matter, manner, or time of their speaking"—WESLEY.

"**And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.** The possession of a special gift from on high has, from Montanus in the second century, down to our own times, been supposed to confer on its possessor an immunity from all control, whether exercised by himself or others, and to entitle him to immediate attention, to the exclusion of every other consideration whatsoever. S. Paul, on the contrary, lays down the rule that spiritual, like all other gifts, are to be under the dominion of the reason, and may, like all other gifts, be easily misused. A holy self-restraint, even in the use of the highest gifts, must characterise the Christian. If a man comes into the assembly inspired to speak in an unknown tongue, the impulse is to be steadily repressed, unless there is a certainty that what is said can be interpreted, so that those present may understand it. If he comes into the assembly possessed with some over-mastering idea, he must keep it resolutely back until such time as he can give it vent without prejudice to Christian order, without injury to that which must be absolutely the first consideration in all public addresses—the edification of the flock. ESTIUS justly remarks that the difference between God's prophets and those inspired by evil spirits is to be found in the fact that the latter are rapt by madness beyond their own control, and are unable to be silent if they will. And ROBERTSON illustrates by a reference to modern forms of fanaticism the truth that 'uncontrolled religious feeling' is apt to 'overpower both reason and sense'"—C. B.

34. **Let your women be silent in the churches**—"unless they are under an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit. **For,** in other cases, **it is not permitted them to speak**—by way of teaching in public assemblies. **But to be in subjection**—to the man whose proper office it is to lead and to instruct the congregation"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul sees in the public speaking of women a mode of acting contrary to the attitude enjoined on her both by nature and the command of the Creator. (Comp. ch. 11. 1-16.) He does not say criminal, immoral; it is a question of propriety or modesty"—GODET.

"It may be questioned whether S. Paul's absolute prohibition to women to speak in a church meeting is binding now. . . . But this prohibition in no way touches the ministrations of women to women; and the gift in S. Paul's day of the prophetic spirit to women proved plainly that there was evangelical work for them to do. And there is abundance of such work now"—BEET.

35. **And even if they desire to learn anything.** "Still they are not to speak in public, but to **ask their own husbands at home**—that is the place, and those the persons to inquire of"—WESLEY.

"**At home**—emphatic. It is not wrong to wish to ask; but they must ask in the right place, and so as not to set aside the authority of the man to whom they are socially subject. A woman's position of subordination is her place of honour. To desert it is therefore a disgrace. This was probably a rebuke to some who gloried in their public speaking"—BEET.

36. "Are ye of Corinth either the first or

the only Christian?—If not, conform herein to the custom of all the churches"—WESLEY.

The self-assertion of the Corinthians was so great that they needed to be reminded that they had received the doctrine of Christ through the ministry of S. Paul, and that they owed a duty, not only to those who had preached the gospel to them, but to other churches, whose example could not be safely neglected. It is often needful to bring down presumption, and usually difficult to do so.

37. **Or spiritual**—"endowed with any extraordinary gift of the Spirit. **Let him**—prove it, by acknowledging that I now write by the Spirit"—WESLEY.

"**If any man think himself to be a prophet.** Since there were many appointed teachers (see ch. 12. 28, 29) who were not prophets, the test of the prophetic character was not ordination, but the possession of the prophetic gift. If any man fancied he possessed that gift, he was required to submit himself to the test of his willingness to obey God's appointed founder and ruler of the church"—C. B. "S. Paul claims here, as in other places, a deference to his doctrine as a Divine revelation. And he knew the difference between the thoughts of his own heart and the dictates of the Holy Ghost"—SUTCLIFFE.

38. **Let him be ignorant**—"be it at his own peril"—WESLEY.

"After all he has said, the apostle no longer seeks to convince those who think themselves wiser than he is; he abandons them at once to their inexperience and responsibility"—GODET.

39. **Therefore**—"to sum up the whole"—WESLEY.

The practical summing up of the whole matter. **Seek earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.**

40. **Decently**—"by every individual. **In order**—by the whole church"—WESLEY.

"**For decently**, see Rom. 13. 13, where the same word is translated 'honestly.' Also 1 Thess. 4. 12, and ch. 12. 23, where a word of similar derivation occurs, and is translated 'comeliness.' The Christian assembly should be a reflection of the universe, where *form* and *order* reign supreme"—LIAS. **Let all things be done decently and in order.** "This advice was greatly needed in a church in which the public services were sometimes turned into tumultuous exhibitions of rival gifts, each man trying to make himself heard above the din of voices, one speaking with tongues, another singing a hymn. He says, therefore, conduct your meetings in a seemly fashion"—DODS.

CHAPTER XV.

Vers. 1-58. THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION. — "S. Paul having now settled the minor questions of order in public worship, marriage, intercourse with the heathen, and other various difficulties which were distracting the Christian Church, turns at last to a matter of prime importance and perennial interest—the resurrection of the body. This great subject he handles not in the abstract, but with a view to the particular attitude and beliefs of the Corinthians. Some of them said broadly, 'There is no resurrection of the dead,' although apparently they had no intention of denying that Christ had risen. Accordingly S. Paul proceeds to show them that the resurrection of Christ and that of His followers hang together, that the resurrection of Christ is essential to the Christian creed, that it is amply attested, and that although great difficulties surround the subject, making it impossible to conceive what the risen body will be, yet the resurrection of the body is to be looked forward to with confident hope"—DODS.

1. **Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you.** This gospel was indeed good tidings. Besides the fact that Christ had been offered for our sins (ver. 3) S. Paul as well as the rest of the apostles (ver. 11) taught that He had risen again in order to communicate to us that new and Divine life whereby our own resurrection should be assured; a life which should make the human body, though laid in the grave, a seed from whence, in God's good time, a new and more glorious body should arise. This chapter is one of the deepest and most mysterious in the Bible. It is the one exception to the statement in ch. 3, that S. Paul was unable to feed the Corinthians with meat; for it ranks with the profound exposition of the principles of justification in the Epistle to the Romans, and the weighty but most difficult enunciation of the doctrine of God's foreknowledge and man's call in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

2. **Ye are saved, if ye hold fast.** "Your salvation is begun, and will be perfected if ye continue in the faith. **Unless ye have believed in vain**—unless indeed your faith was only a delusion"—WESLEY.

"The idea includes safety from sin as well as from its punishment. (See Matt. 1. 22.) S. Paul now sets himself to expound the whole doctrine of the resurrection which he had declared, and he begins by showing (vers. 3-11) that whole series of irrefutable testimonies on which faith in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus rests, the fact which forms the foundation of that which he wished to develop"—GODET.

3. **I received**—"from Christ Himself. It was not a fiction of my own"—WESLEY.

"**For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received.** The close resemblance of this passage to the Apostles' Creed shows that this summary of the doctrines of our faith is actually what it professes to be, a short compendium of apostolic teaching. Irenæus, a writer in the second century and a careful

observer of apostolic tradition, gives a very similar summary in his treatise against heresies, bk. iii. ch. 4. Dean Stanley calls attention to the fact that this bold affirmation of the truth of the resurrection, possibly the earliest we have (see above, ch. 11. 23), was written barely twenty-five years after the event. S. Paul does not state here from whom he received his doctrine, but he must have acquired some elementary instruction in the first principles of the Christian faith from his intercourse with the disciples (Acts 9. 19), and even at his admission into the Christian body. And what he had received from others he tested by examination of the Scriptures, by prayer and silent communing with God, till it became *his own*, by revelation, and by that inward conviction which none but God can give"—C. B.

4. **According to the Scriptures**—"he proves it first from Scripture, then from the testimony of a cloud of witnesses"—WESLEY.

"*Lit.* was buried and 'hath risen' again, the aorist referring to the single act, the perfect to Christ's continued life after His resurrection"—C. B. The dead body laid in the sepulchre disappeared. What became of it? No explanation other than the fact itself of the resurrection has ever been able to account for this mystery. This date of the **third day** was not accidental; for, as Hoffman observes, it is precisely then that dissolution ordinarily begins to appear.

5. **By the Twelve.** "This was their standing appellation; but their full number was not then present"—WESLEY.

"**Of Cephas.** (See Luke 24. 34.) S. Paul and S. John alone use the Aramaic form of the apostle's surname, the former only in this Epistle and once in the Epistle to the Galatians. This, coupled with the fact that S. John only uses the Aramaic form in the narrative in ch. 1. 42, is one of those minute touches which speak strongly for the genuineness of his Gospel"—C. B. The apostle here maintains the truth of an historical fact. He appeals solely to historical proof, and accumulates a mass of historical testimony, such as in any matter of history, if produced so shortly after the occurrence, would be deemed overwhelming.

6. **Above five hundred**—"probably in Galilee. A glorious and incontestable proof! **The greater part remain**—alive"—WESLEY.

Seen—on "a mountain of Galilee" (Matt. 28. 16-18), "where Jesus had appointed." There were a cloud of witnesses to assure and comfort the Church. BEET says: "That after the lapse of about twenty-five years **the more part** were still living, seems to imply that Christ chose young men chiefly to be witnesses of His resurrection, who might live long to testify it to others. That S. Paul knew that the majority were still alive, proves that those who had actually seen the risen Lord were marked men in the Early Church. (Comp. Josh. 24. 31, 'The elders that overlived Joshua.')"

7. **Then by all the apostles.** "The Twelve were mentioned (ver. 5). This title here, therefore, seems to include the Seventy, if not all those likewise, whom God afterwards *sent* to plant the gospel in heathen nations"—WESLEY.

"Notice S. Paul's accuracy in stating even the order of these appearances. The exact details were evidently known to him. Of the appearances mentioned, the first (Luke 24. 34) was to S. Peter; the second (ver. 36) to the assembled apostles; the third, to a gathering of five hundred persons; the fourth, to His brother James; and the fifth (perhaps John 20. 26), to the entire apostolic band. To all these well-known persons S. Paul appeals as witnesses that Christ has risen"—BEET. "**Then by all the apostles.** Finally, S. Paul mentions the fact which closed the series of the appearances of the Risen One, and which was separated from all the preceding by a much greater interval than those which had separated these from one another"—GODET.

8. **An untimely birth.** "It was impossible to abase himself more than he does by this single appellation. As 'an abortion' is not worthy the name of a man, so he affirms himself to be not worthy the name of an apostle"—WESLEY.

"The apostle here distinctly states that he saw the Lord at the time of his conversion as really as S. Peter and others had seen Him, though with touching pathos and strongly-marked emphasis he adds that it was not at the same time as the 'first-born had seen Him, but only as an untimely born one'"—ELLICOTT. "At the time of the above-mentioned appearances S. Paul was an enemy. But that he might take rank equal with the rest, long after appearing to the others, Christ 'appeared also' to him. **The untimely one**—in LXX. (Num. 12. 12; Job 3. 16; Eccles. 6. 3), an abortive offspring born at the wrong time, and not reckoned among the children. With deep humility S. Paul says that among the apostles he was the untimely birth: not that his apostolic birth was a failure, but abnormal in its circumstances"—BEET.

9. **I persecuted the church.** "True believers are humbled all their lives, even for the sins they committed before they believed"—WESLEY.

S. Paul, having just stated what he conceives that the Lord must have thought of him, now proceeds to state what he thinks of himself. TRAPP says on this verse: "True humility, as true balm, ever sinks to the bottom of the water, when pride, like oil, ever swims on the top."

10. **I laboured more than they all**—"that is, more than any of them, from a deep sense of the peculiar love God had shown me. **Yet**, to speak more properly, it is **not I, but the**

grace of God that is **with me.** This it is which at first qualified me for the work, and still excites me to zeal and diligence in it"—WESLEY.

"**But by the grace of God I am what I am.** S. Paul is willing to admit his *personal* inferiority to the other apostles, but such willingness does not lead him to make a similar admission regarding his **work.** For that was God's doing, not his, or only his so far as God's grace or favour enabled him to perform it. (See ch. 1. 30; 3. 6, 9; and comp. Matt. 10. 20; 2 Cor. 3. 5; Eph. 3. 7; Phil. 2. 12, 13.) **I laboured more abundantly than they all.** S. Paul does not hesitate to place his labours for the gospel's sake on a par with or even above those of the Twelve. The work of an apostle of the Gentiles must necessarily have been more arduous than that of an apostle of the Jews"—C. B. "How far his own labours surpassed those of others, S. Paul leaves his readers to judge. **The grace of God with me.** Although the results were wrought altogether by God, in undeserved favour, yet they were wrought through the instrumentality and 'with' the concurrence of S. Paul. Now, what a man has done determines his spiritual stature. Therefore, since all that S. Paul had done had been wrought in and through him by the favour of God, he could say, **By the grace of God I am what I am**"—BEET.

11. **Whether I or they, so we preach**—"all of us speak the same thing"—WESLEY.

"By his earnestness in saying this, the apostle testifies to the immense value and importance of historical Christianity"—ROBERTSON. "This declaration proves that it was matter of notoriety in the Church that the gospel of S. Peter and of the Twelve rested on the same foundations as that of S. Paul, on the facts of Christ's death and resurrection regarded as having effected the salvation of the sinful world 'for our sins' (ver. 3), 'and that according to the Scriptures' (vers. 3, 4). This verse, while summing up the foregoing passage, forms the transition to the following section"—GODET.

12. **How say some**—"who probably had been heathen philosophers"—WESLEY.

"The objector is to be understood, not as inquiring as to the process, but as to the possibility"—WATSON. "There were three different schools of thought among those outside the Christian Church which denied the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. The first was the materialistic school, represented by the Epicureans among the heathen, and by the Sadducees among the Jews. They thought that man would entirely cease to exist after death, and that any other idea was only the result of man's vanity and his insatiable longing after existence. The second, in which the Stoics were the most prominent body, taught, what amounted to the same thing, the Pantheistic doctrine of the ultimate reabsorption of the soul into the Divinity from which it had sprung, and therefore the final extinction of the individual personality. The third school, of which the disciples of Plato were the chief representatives, while maintaining the eternal personality and immortality of the soul, regarded matter as the cause of all evil, the only barrier between the soul and the Absolute Good, a thing, in fact, essentially and eternally alien to the Divine, and therefore could not conceive of immortality except through the entire freedom of the soul from so malignant and corrupting an influence. Hence the doctrine of the resurrection of the body was the principal stumbling-block in the way of an early reception of Christianity. It aroused the antagonism of an influential section among the Jews (Acts 4. 1, 2; 5. 17; 23. 6–9), and was considered by heathen philosophers inadmissible and absurd. (Acts 17. 32.) This doctrine for many centuries has proved the principal hindrance to the progress of Christianity"—C. B.

13. **If there be no resurrection**—"if it be a thing flatly impossible"—WESLEY.

"If a resurrection from the dead be impossible, then the resurrection of Christ Himself becomes either a mistake or an imposture. And since, on the apostle's principle, there is no hope of a future life but through Him, we are driven to the conclusion that the answer to His prayer, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,' was Annihilation! that He who had made His life one perpetual act of consecration to His Father's service received for His reward the same fate as attended the blaspheming malefactor"—ROBERTSON.

14. **Then is our preaching**—"from a commission supposed to be given after the resurrection—**vain**—without any real foundation"—WESLEY.

"You have a vain faith if you believe in a dead man. He might be a true *man*, though He remained in death. But it concerns you to believe that He was the Son of God too. And He was 'declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead' (Rom. 1. 4)"—DONNE. "The resurrection created the Church, the risen Christ made Christianity, and even now the Christian faith stands or falls with Him. . . . If it be true that no living Christ ever issued from the tomb of Joseph, then that tomb becomes the grave, not of a man, but of a religion, with all the hopes built on it, and all the splendid enthusiasms it has inspired"—FAIRBAIRN. "Never was there any imposture put upon the world as Christianity, if Christ be yet in the grave"—TRAPP. "From the first S. Paul had put the resurrection of Christ forward as an essential and fundamental part of the gospel he had received, and which he was accustomed to deliver"—DODS.

15. **If the dead rise not.** "If the very

notion of a resurrection be, as they say, absurd and impossible"—WESLEY.

Dean STANLEY reminds us that this Epistle was written within twenty-five years of the event to which it refers with such unhesitating confidence: "Yet that event is not merely affirmed, but is actually made the foundation of the apostle's whole argument." "There is a certain instinct within us generally which enables us to detect when a man is speaking the truth. . . . Truth, so to speak, has a certain *ring* by which it may be known. Now, this chapter *rings* with truth"—ROBERTSON. It certainly has not the appearance of having been written by a man who was endeavouring to persuade others of what he did not believe himself.

16. "If there be no resurrection, **then is Christ not risen.** Remark the severe, rigorous logic of S. Paul; he refuses to place the human race in one category and Jesus Christ in another. If Jesus rose, then the human race shall also rise; but if there be no resurrection for man, then the apostle, holding to his logic, says Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not risen"—ROBERTSON.

17. **Ye are still in your sins**—"that is, under the guilt of them. So that there needed something more than reformation (which was plainly wrought) in order to their being delivered from the guilt of sin, even that atonement, the sufficiency of which God attested by raising our great Surety from the grave"—WESLEY.

"**Your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.** Christ came, not only to make reconciliation for sin, but to free us from it. (Comp. Rom. 6. 11–23; 8. 2.) And this He did by proclaiming a life. He first conquered sin Himself. Then He offered the acceptable sacrifice of His pure and unpolluted life to God in the place of our corrupt and sinful lives. And then, having at once vindicated the righteousness of God's law and fulfilled it, He arose from the dead. Having thus led sin and death captive, He redeemed us from the power of both by imparting His own life to all who would enter into covenant with Him. Thus the resurrection of Christ was the triumph of humanity (see ver. 21) over sin and death; the reversal of the sentence, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' Had He not risen from the dead, humanity had not triumphed, the sentence had not been reversed, man had not been delivered from the yoke of sin, and therefore those who had 'fallen asleep' could never wake again. 'None of these things would have taken place, had He not emerged victor from the conflict by rising again' (CALVIN)"—C. B.

18. **They who sleep in Christ**—"who have died for Him or believing in Him—**are perished**—have lost their life and being together"—WESLEY.

"**Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ.** (See note on ch. 7. 39.) The word does not apply to the soul, for that does not sleep (Luke 16. 22, 23; 23. 43), but it describes the state of the bodies of those who sleep in Jesus"—WORDSWORTH. "**Are perished.** You are required to believe that those who died in the field of battle, bravely giving up their lives for others, died even as the false and coward dies. You are required to believe that when there arose a great cry at midnight, and the wreck went down, they who passed out of the world with the oath of blasphemy or the shriek of despair shared the same fate with those who calmly resigned their departing spirits into the Father's hand; in short, that those whose affections were so pure and good that they seemed to tell you of an eternity, perished as utterly as the selfish and impure. If from this you shrink as from a thing derogatory to God, then there remains but that conclusion to which S. Paul conducts us, 'Now is Christ risen from the dead'"—ROBERTSON.

19. **If in this life only we have hope**—"if we look for nothing beyond the grave. But if we have a Divine evidence of things not seen, if we have 'a hope full of immortality,' if we now taste of 'the powers of the world to come,' and see 'the crown that fadeth not away,' then, notwithstanding all our present trials, we are more happy than all men"—WESLEY.

S. Paul's meaning is plain. By the hope of a life beyond he had been induced to undergo the greatest privations in this life. He had been exposed to countless dangers and indignities. Although a Roman citizen, he had been cast into the arena to contend with wild beasts; there was no risk he had not run, no hardship he had not endured. But in all he was sustained by the assurance that there remained for him a rest and an inheritance in a future life. Remove this assurance and you remove the assumption on which his conduct is wholly built. If there is no future life either to win or to lose, then the Epicurean motto may take the place of Christ's promises, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

20. **But now**—"S. Paul declares that Christians 'have hope,' not 'in this life only.' His proof of the resurrection lies in a narrow compass (vers. 12–19). Almost all the rest of the chapter is taken up in illustrating, vindicating, and applying it. The proof is short, but solid and convincing—that which arose from Christ's resurrection. Now this not only proved a resurrection possible, but, as it proved Him to be a Divine Teacher, proved the certainty of a general resurrection, which He so expressly taught. **The first-fruits of them that slept**—the earnest, pledge, and insurance of their resurrection who slept in Him: even of all the righteous. It is of the resurrection of these and these only that the apostle speaks throughout the chapter"—WESLEY.

A new phase in this chapter now presents itself. The style changes. The logician becomes prophet, and discloses revelations which

had been made to him. "**But now is Christ risen from the dead.** S. Paul considers it needless to argue the point further. He appeals not so much to the reason—on points like this (see ch. 2. 14), it is likely to deceive us—as to the moral instincts of every human being. Of course a man has power to stifle them, but they tell him plainly enough that love of purity and truth, desire of immortality, belief in the love and justice of God, are no vain dreams, as they would be if the 'wise man died as the fool' (Eccles. 2. 16). Accordingly, the apostle now (vers. 20–28) proceeds to unfold the laws of God's spiritual kingdom as facts which cannot be gainsaid. He may appeal (as in vers. 29–32) to his own practice and that of others as a confirmation of what he says. But from henceforth he speaks with authority. He wastes no more time in discussion. **And become the first-fruits of them that slept.** The first-fruits (Lev. 23. 10) were the 'first ripe corn,' under the Law, solemnly offered to God, a fit type of Him who first presented our ripened humanity before the throne of God, an earnest of the mighty harvest hereafter to be gathered"—C. B. "Christ's resurrection is the sample and pledge of ours. When the farmer pulls the first ripe ears of wheat and carries them home, it is not for their own sake he values them, but because they are a specimen and sample of the whole crop; and when God raised Christ from the dead, the glory of the event consisted in its being a pledge and specimen of the triumph of mankind over death"—DODS. "The spiritual resurrection is but the mere foretaste and pledge of the literal. Let us seek to rise with Christ above this world and our own selves, for every act tells on that eternity, every thought and every word reap an everlasting harvest"—ROBERTSON.

21. "**For since by man came death,** etc. Adam was not the only man who died, but the first-fruits of a rich harvest; and so, Christ is not alone in resurrection, but is become the first-fruits of them that sleep. According to S. Paul's theology, the conduct of a man, the sin of Adam, carried in it disastrous consequences to all connected with him; but equally fruitful in consequences was the human life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The death of Adam was the first stroke of that funeral knell that has ceaselessly sounded through all generations; but the resurrection of Christ was equally the pledge and earnest that the same experience would be enjoyed by all 'that are Christ's'"—DODS.

22. "**As through Adam all,** even the righteous **die, so through Christ all these shall be made alive.** He does not say, 'shall revive' (as naturally as they die), but **shall be made alive,** by a power not their own"—WESLEY.

The abstract ideas of the previous verse now reappear in concrete form; **man** becomes **the Adam, man** again **the Christ: death** becomes **all men dead, resurrection** becomes **all men made alive.** In the Christ all men without exception, both believers and unbelievers, shall be "made alive."

23. **Afterward**—"the whole harvest. At the same time the wicked shall rise also. But they are not here taken into the account"—WESLEY.

"**Christ the first-fruits.** (Comp. Acts 26. 23; Col. 1. 18; Rev. 1. 5; also John 14. 19.) How should He be overcome by corruption who gave to many others the power of living again? Hence He is called 'the first-born from the dead,' 'the first-fruits of them that slept'"—CYRIL.

24. "**Then**—after the resurrection and the general judgment—**cometh the end**—of the world; the grand period of all those wonderful scenes that have appeared for so many succeeding generations. **When He shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, and He** (the Father) **shall have abolished all** adverse **rule, authority, and power.** Not that the Father will then begin to reign without the Son, nor will the Son then cease to reign. For the Divine reign both of the Father and Son is from everlasting to everlasting. But this is spoken of the Son's mediatorial kingdom, which will then be delivered up, and of the immediate kingdom or reign of the Father, which will then commence. Till then the Son transacts the business which the Father hath given Him, for those who are His, and by them as well as by the angels, with the Father, and against their enemies. So far as the Father gave the kingdom to the Son, the Son shall deliver it up to the Father. (John 13. 3.) Nor does the Father cease to reign when He gives it to the Son; neither the Son, when He delivers it to the Father; but the glory which He had before the world began (John 17. 5; Heb. 1. 8) will remain even after this is delivered up. Nor will He cease to be a King even in His human nature (Luke 1. 33). If the citizens of the 'New Jerusalem' shall 'reign for ever' (Rev. 22. 5), how much more shall He?"—WESLEY.

"**Then cometh the end**—the end, the completion, that is, of the present order of things, when sin and death cease to be, and 'the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ' (Rev. 11. 15). **When He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.** The passage suggests to us the idea of a prince, the heir-apparent of the kingdom, going out to war, and bringing the spoils and trophies of his conquest to his father's feet. Such an idea must have recurred with fresh vividness to the minds of the early Christians a few years afterwards, when they saw Titus bring the spoils of the holy city of the old covenant, the 'figure of the true,' to his father Vespasian, and must have led them to look

forward with eager expectation to the time when types and shadows should have their end, and the kingdom be the Lord's, and He the Governor among the people. At the last day, Christ as man shall receive the submission of all God's enemies, and then lay them, all His triumphs, all those whom He has delivered captive from the hand of the enemy, at His Father's feet. 'Not,' says ESTIUS, 'that Christ shall cease to reign,' for 'of His kingdom there shall be no end' (Luke 1. 33; comp. Dan. 7. 14; Heb. 1. 8; 2. 8), but that He will, by laying all His conquests at His Father's feet, proclaim Him as the source of all authority and power" — LIAS. "**All rule, and all authority and power**—not only hostile rule and authority and power, but all intermediate rule of any sort, good and bad. The direct government by God of all creatures is to be at last attained. All the interventions of authority and power, which the fall of man rendered necessary, will be needless when the complete triumph of Christ comes in. Thus humanity, having for ages shared the condition of fallen Adam, will be finally restored to the state of unfallen Adam. Man will see God, and be ruled by God face to face"—ELLICOTT.

25. **He must reign** — "because so it is written—**till He**—the Father—**hath put all His enemies under His feet**"—WESLEY.

S. Paul cites the well-known words of Ps. 110. 1. The Divine necessity expressed by **He must** follows from this promise of Jehovah to the Messiah. According to this Divine declaration, the reign of the Messiah on the throne of the Father must last **till** there be no longer any enemy left capable of separating God and man. Then this reign shall cease. Christ's victory, to be complete, must reach to the last enemy, and that even in the external and bodily domain.

26. **The last enemy that is destroyed is death**—"namely, after Satan (Heb. 2. 14) and sin (ch. 15. 56) are destroyed. In the same order they prevailed. Satan brought in sin, and sin brought forth death. And Christ, when He of old engaged with these enemies, first conquered Satan, then sin, in His death; and, lastly, death, in His resurrection. In the same order He delivers all the faithful from them, yea, and destroys these enemies themselves. Death He so destroys that it shall be no more; sin and Satan, so that they shall no more hurt His people"—WESLEY.

"**The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.** (Comp. Rev. 20. 14.) Death shall be the last of all, because (Rom. 6. 23) it is the 'wages of sin,' and must continue to exist until sin has come to an end. Then what we know as death, the separation of soul and body, the dissolution of the complex nature of man into its constituent elements, shall henceforth cease to be"—C. B. "When this **last enemy is destroyed**, all Christ's followers being now gathered in, and having entered on their eternal condition, the work of Christ, so far as this world is concerned, is over; and one idea conspicuous in this brief and pregnant passage is, that Christ came to subdue all the enemies of mankind, and that He will continue His work until His purpose is accomplished. One needs to be reminded that to see this victory accomplished, and to have had no share in it, will be the sorest humiliation and the most painful reflection to every generous mind. However slight be our power, let us strike such a blow as we can at the common enemies which must be destroyed ere the great consummation is reached"—DODS.

27. **Under Him** — "under the Son"—WESLEY.

"'All things are put under His feet,' says CYRIL of Alexandria, 'because He made all things.' (John 1. 3, 10; Eph. 3. 9; Col. 1. 16; Heb. 1. 2.) **It is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him.** This passage ought to be compared with the analogous one in Heb. 2. 7–9. Each of these supplies what is wanting in the other. In the one we have the Son, the manifestation of the Father's glory and love, bringing everything in this lower world, which the Father has put under Him, into the most complete subjection to, and the most entire union with, His heavenly Father. In the other we see the Eternal Father, while permitting, for His own wise purposes, the humiliation and suffering of Christ, doing so in order that all things should finally be put in subjection to 'His Beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased'"—C. B.

28. **The Son also shall be subject**—"shall deliver up the mediatorial kingdom. **That** the Three-One **God may be all in all**—all things consequently, all persons without any interruption, without the intervention of any creature, without the opposition of any enemy, shall be subordinate to God. All shall say, 'My God, and my all.' This is the end. Even an inspired apostle can see nothing beyond this"—WESLEY.

And when all things shall be subdued unto Him. If everything is put under Christ, it is in order that there may be no divided empire. "I and My Father are one," He said (John 10. 30). (Comp. John 17. 11, 22, as well as ch. 3. 23; 11. 3, of this Epistle.) BEET says: "In view of the mysterious words of vers. 24, 28, touching the relation of the Eternal Son to the Eternal Father, rather than speak, the expositor would prefer to bow in silent adoration. But what God has spoken we cannot forbear to re-echo. These verses teach the absolute and eternal submission of the Son to the Father. And, even when receiving the homage of the Son, the Father is spoken of by S. Paul, not as we should say God the Father as distinguished from God the Son, but simply as **God**. And to Him the Son bows with the express purpose that thus the

Father may be everything in the eyes and thoughts of all His servants."

29. **Who are baptized for the dead**—"perhaps baptized in hope of blessings to be received after they are numbered with the dead. Or, 'baptized in the room of the dead'—of them that are just fallen in the cause of Christ; like soldiers who advance in the room of their companions that fell just before their face"—WESLEY.

The practice known as baptism for the dead was absurd if there be no resurrection. To practise it and to deny the doctrine of the resurrection was illogical. What shall they do? *i.e.* what explanation shall they give of their conduct? asks the apostle. There have been numerous and ingenious conjectures as to the meaning of this passage. The only tenable interpretation is that there existed amongst some of the Christians at Corinth a practice of baptizing a living person in the stead of some dead convert who had died before that sacrament had been administered to him. The idea evidently was that whatever benefit flowed from baptism might be thus vicariously secured for the deceased Christian. Does S. Paul then, by what he says, sanction the superstitious practice? Certainly not. He carefully separates himself and the Corinthians, to whom he immediately addresses himself, from those who adopted this custom. He says, Those who do that, and disbelieve a resurrection, refute themselves.

30. **Why are we**—"the apostles—**also in danger every hour?** It is plain we can expect no amends in this life"—WESLEY.

"**And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?** Not only those who were daily being baptized for the dead witnessed to the universal belief among Christians in a resurrection, but the lives of daily peril in which S. Paul and the other missionaries of the gospel lived were sufficient evidence that they did not conceive all their hopes to be summed up in this life"—C. B. If there is no resurrection, he says, my whole life is a folly. No day passes but I am in danger of death at the hands either of an infuriated mob or a mistaken magistrate. I am in constant jeopardy, but I gladly encounter all dangers because I believe in the resurrection. S. Paul's meaning is plain. By the hope of a life beyond he had been induced to undergo the greatest privations in this life. But in all he was sustained by the assurance that there remained for him a rest and an inheritance in a future life. Remove this assurance and you remove the assumption on which his conduct is wholly built.

31. **I protest by your rejoicing, which I have**—"which love makes my own—**I die daily.** I am daily in the very jaws of death. Beside that I live, as it were, in a daily martyrdom"—WESLEY.

"**I protest by your rejoicing.** The word here rendered 'rejoicing' is translated 'boasting' in Rom. 3. 27, and less correctly 'whereof I may glory' in Rom. 15. 17. It may mean either (1) that S. Paul boasted of the fruits of faith in his Corinthian converts, or better (2) that *their* boasting in Christ was also *his* by reason of their common indwelling in Jesus Christ, whom he had been permitted to minister to them. (Comp. 2 Cor. 1. 14; 3. 3.) He makes this asseveration, because it was to that daily death of his (ch. 4. 9–13) that they owed their conversion. **I die daily.** (Comp. Rom. 6. 3, 4, 11; 7. 24; 8. 13, 36; 2 Cor. 1. 9; 4. 10–12; Gal. 2. 20; 5. 24; 6. 14; Col. 2. 20; 3. 3, 5.) The death of Christ was a death to sin, a death which must be imitated in His disciples by their putting all the sinful affections of their bodies to a lingering death. But such a task they would never be likely to undertake, but for the prospect of a resurrection"—C. B.

32. **If to speak after the manner of men**—"that is, to use a proverbial phrase, expressive of the most imminent danger—**I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus**—with the savage fury of a lawless multitude (Acts 19. 29, etc.). This seems to have been but just before. **Let us eat,** etc. We might on that supposition, as well say, with the Epicureans, Let us make the best of this short life, seeing we have no other portion"—WESLEY.

"**If after the manner of men**—'after man' Wyclif. Either (1), as *margin*, 'to speak after the manner of men,' or (2) 'for purely human and temporal objects,' like those of men in general. (See for this expression ch. 3. 3, and Rom. 3. 5; Gal. 1. 11; 3. 15.) **I have fought with beasts at Ephesus.** It must have been a metaphorical, not a literal, fighting with beasts of which the apostle spoke. His Roman citizenship (Acts 16. 37; 22. 25) protected him from being thrown to the lions in the arena. And it is generally believed that he eventually died by the sword, as a Roman citizen. He means to say that he contended with men who had the passions of beasts (as in Acts 19. 29, 34, though it is not certain that this particular event had yet occurred). **What advantageth it me**—*i.e.* as we should say, 'Where is the use of it?' **Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.** 'With our hopes of immortality gone, the value of humanity ceases,' and life becomes not worth living. Go, then, to the sensualist. Tell him that the pleasure of doing right is a sublimer existence than that of self-indulgence. He will answer you, 'The victory is uncertain, present enjoyment is sure.' Do you think you can arrest that with some fine sentiment about nobler and baser being? Why, you have made him out to be as base yourself. He dies, you tell him, like a dog. Why should he live like an angel? The instincts of the animal will be more than a match for all the transcendental reasonings of the philosophers"—ROBERTSON. "Convince men that this life is all, that death is final extinction, and they will eagerly drain this life of all the

pleasure it can yield. Make men feel that they are immortal beings; that this life, so far from being all, is the mere entrance and first step to existence; make men feel that there is open to them an endless moral progress, and you give them some encouragement to lay the foundations of this progress in a self-denying and virtuous life in this world"—DODS.

33. **Be not deceived**—"by such pernicious counsel as this. **Evil communications corrupt good manners.** He opposes to the Epicurean saying, a well-known verse of the poet Menander. **Evil communications**—discourse contrary to faith, hope, or love, naturally tends to destroy all holiness"—WESLEY.

"Apparently the Corinthians themselves had argued that morality was quite independent of a belief in immortality. For S. Paul goes on, **Be not deceived**—you cannot, however much you may think so, you *cannot* hear such theories without having your moral convictions undermined and your tone lowered. The beginnings of conduct are so hidden from our observation, our lives are formed by influences so imperceptible, what we hear sinks so insidiously into the mind and mingles so insensibly with our motives, that we can never say *what* we have heard without moral contamination"—DODS. "Evil words are not wind, as most imagine, but the devil's drivel, that leaves a foul stain upon the speaker, and oft sets the like upon the hearer. Shun unsavoury speeches, thou losest so much of thine honesty and piety as thou admittest evil into thy tongue"—TRAPP.

34. **Awake**—"an exclamation full of apostolical majesty. Shake off your lethargy! **To righteousness**—which flows from the true knowledge of God, and implies that your whole soul be broad awake. **And sin not**—that is, and ye will not sin. Sin supposes drowsiness of soul. There is need to press this. **For some** among you **have not the knowledge of God.** With all their boasted knowledge, they are totally ignorant of what it most concerns them to know. **I speak this to your shame**—for nothing is more shameful, than sleepy ignorance of God, and of the word and works of God; in these especially, considering the advantages they had enjoyed"—WESLEY.

"With this earnest call to arouse from the sleep of indulgence and of death, the apostle completes this section of the chapter, and the direct proofs of the doctrine of the resurrection. The exhortation is needed, for there are some who call themselves Christians and still have **an ignorance** regarding God. **To their shame** the apostle speaks this, not only the last words but the whole preceding argument. It was a shame that to Christians the apostle should have to vindicate the very fundamental truth of the faith"—ELLICOTT. GODET says: "This severe tone is intended to throw them back on themselves, and so to make humiliation succeed to pride, and the feeling of their fall to that of the superiority which they think they possess over all the other churches."

35. "**But some one** possibly **will say, How are the dead raised up,** after their whole frame is dissolved? **And with what kind of bodies do they come** again, after these are mouldered into dust?"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul answers these questions by arguments from analogy. As the seed dies before it can be quickened, as there is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon, as the imperfect precedes the perfect, as our natural life is earlier than our spiritual—so is the resurrection of the dead"—ROBERTSON. In Matt. 22. 23 ff., we have a similar objection to the fact of the resurrection, based on the same crude notion, common even in Christian ages, that the raised bodies will be exactly the same as those laid in the grave. Our Saviour, like S. Paul, meets it by proving that there is a life beyond the grave, assuming that this implies a resurrection of the dead; and by showing how incorrect are the common ideas about the life of the risen ones"—BEET.

36. "To the inquiry concerning the **manner** of rising, and the **quality** of the bodies that rise, the apostle answers first by a similitude (vers. 36–42), and then plainly and directly (vers. 42, 43). **That which thou sowest** is not quickened into new life and verdure **except it die**—undergo a dissolution of its parts, a change analogous to death. Thus S. Paul inverts the objection; as if he had said, Death is so far from hindering life, that it necessarily goes before it"—WESLEY.

Every living seed contains within itself a germ of life. Underground this germ begins to grow at the expense of the seed; soon the bulk of the seed is gone, and nothing remains of it but the dead, shrivelled husk. Every higher form of life presupposes the loss of that which precedes it. This is a law of nature. "**That which thou sowest**—the word 'thou' is emphatic. 'Thou who art mortal and perishing' (CHRYSOSTOM). The force or emphasis may be gathered thus. If God doth give a body unto that seed which 'thou' sowest for thine own use and benefit, much more will the same God give a body unto the seed which He Himself doth sow"—Dr. J. JACKSON. "**Is not quickened, except it die**—'thus what they made a sure sign of our not rising again he makes a proof of our rising' (CHRYSOSTOM). (Comp. John 12. 24.) It is the law of the spiritual as well as the natural world that decay is the parent of life. From the Fall came corruption, from 'the likeness of sinful flesh' a new and higher life. Humanity died to sin in Christ; it arose again to righteousness in Him"—C. B. "**Thou fool**—a hard knot must have a hard wedge, a dead heart a rousing reproof. He confutes atheists from the course of nature to which they ascribe so much"—TRAPP.

37. **Thou sowest not the body that shall**

be—"produced from the seed committed to the ground, **but a bare**, naked **grain**, widely different from that which will afterward rise out of the earth"—WESLEY.

"**And that which thou sowest.** There are two parts in this similitude—first, that it is not wonderful that bodies should arise again from corruption, since the same thing happens in the case of the seed; and next that it is not contrary to nature that our bodies should be endowed with new qualities, when from naked grain God produces so many ears clothed with a wonderful workmanship"—CALVIN. TYNDALE renders, "And what sowest thou?" "**Thou sowest not that body that shall be.** The same, yet not the same. The same, because the essence is the same; but not the same, because the latter is the more excellent (CHRYSOSTOM). The identity of the body does not depend upon its material particles, because physicists tell us that these are in a continual flux, and that in the course of seven years every material particle in the body has been changed. Personal identity depends upon the principle of continuity. The risen body arises out of that which has seen corruption, in the same way as the plant out of its germ. The length of time that elapses is nothing to Him to whom 'a thousand years are but as one day.' But as the seed is to all appearance very different to the plant which arises from it, although science tells us that it contains that whole plant in miniature, as the body of Jesus after His resurrection was endowed with many strange and new qualities (John 20. 19, 26), so as often to be unrecognisable by His disciples (Luke 24. 16, 31, 37; John 20. 14; 21. 4), though yet it was the same body (Luke 24. 39, 40; John 20. 20, 27); so we learn that the body we sow in the grave is 'not that body that shall be,' but the resurrection body,—the spiritual body,—while it exhibits visible and unequivocal signs of its connection with the body out of which it has arisen, will be possessed of many wondrous faculties which are denied to us here"—C. B.

38. **But God**—"not thou, O man, not the grain itself—**giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him**, from the time He distinguished the various species of beings; **and to each of the seeds**, not only of the fruits, but animals also (to which the apostle rises in the following verse) **its own body**; not only peculiar to that species, but proper to that individual, and arising out of the substance of that very grain"—WESLEY.

God's omnipotence is the *efficient cause*, as corruption is the necessary *condition*, of a seed's reproduction in a new and nobler form of life. And if God gives to every sown grain a plant-body corresponding in kind to its new state, shall He not in like manner give to every buried man a proper resurrection body? "**But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him**—*lit.* as He willed. (Comp. ch. 12. 11, where, however, the word is not the same as in the Greek.) Life even in its lowest form has the power of assimilating to itself atoms"—ROBERTSON. And these are arranged and developed according to the law that God has impressed on each seed. **And to every seed his own body.** "That body with which it is raised may be called its own body, and yet it is a new body. It is raised anew with stem and leaves and fruit, and yet all the while we know that it is no new corn; it is the old life in the seed reappearing, developed in a higher form"—ROBERTSON.

39. **All flesh**—"as if he had said, Even earthy bodies differ from earthy, and heavenly bodies from heavenly. What wonder, then, if heavenly bodies differ from earthy? or the bodies which rise from those that lay in the grave?"—WESLEY.

"**All flesh is not the same flesh.** The same principle is now applied to animate which has been applied to inanimate nature. There are different varieties and forms of bodily life. The apostle in this and the two following verses lays down the doctrine (see note on ver. 42) that the life hereafter will depend in every way upon the life here; that the body raised will correspond to the body sown; that the character impressed upon it during this life will remain with it throughout eternity. And this not merely in the broad general distinction between good and bad (see Gal. 6. 7, 8), but in the minuter shades of individual character. Recent editors, following the best MSS. and versions, place *fishes* in their proper place, last in the text, as in zoological order"—C. B. "S. Paul now develops a thought suggested by 'each of the seeds,' viz. the immense variety, and variety of kinds, of living bodies"—BEET. "In this series of examples, man is placed at the head; for, while belonging by his body to the animal kingdom, he alone of all living beings possesses the capacity of reaching a higher existence. S. Paul is about to contrast terrestrial beings with 'celestial bodies.' These latter differ from the former both in substance and splendour"—GODET.

40. **There are also heavenly bodies**—"as the sun, moon, and stars; **and there are earthy**—as vegetables and animals. **But the** brightest lustre which the latter can have is widely different from that of the former"—WESLEY.

"The word **bodies** puts in comparison the objects which live and move on earth with those brilliant objects which move or seem to move above our heads and infinitely beyond our reach. S. Paul thus reminds us that not only is there an infinite variety of material and living forms around us, but that far above us there are other bodies, and then goes on to say that these heavenly bodies are of altogether *another kind*, differing entirely from every one of the endless varieties of earthly bodies"—BEET.

41. "Yea, and the heavenly bodies themselves differ from each other"—WESLEY.

"They attest the infinite riches of God's work and the illimitable range of His power. Open your eyes, then, the apostle means to say, and as you see so many different glories shining in the heavens, you will cease to ask, as if God's power were limited, 'With what body shall they come?' You will understand how infinite are the resources of Divine power"—GODET.

42. **So also is the resurrection of the dead**—"so great is the difference between the body which fell, and that which rises. **It is sown**—a beautiful word; committed, as seed, to the ground. **In corruption**—just ready to putrefy, and, by various degrees of corruption and decay, to return to the dust from whence it came. **It is raised in incorruption**—utterly incapable of either dissolution or decay"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul does not attempt to describe the future body, but contents himself with pointing out one or two of its characteristics by which it is distinguished from the body we now wear. In this body there is decay, humiliation, weakness, a life that is merely temporary; in the body that is to be, decay gives place to incorruptibility, humiliation to glory, weakness to power, animal life to spiritual"—DODS. "Whether there are degrees of glory, as it seems probable, so we shall certainly know when we come to heaven. Three glimpses of the body's glory were seen—in Moses' face, in Christ's transfiguration, and in S. Stephen's countenance"—TRAPP.

43. **It is sown in dishonour**—"shocking to those who loved it best: human nature in disgrace! **It is raised in glory**—clothed with robes of light, fit for those whom the King of Heaven delights to honour. **It is sown in weakness**—deprived even of that feeble strength which it once enjoyed. **It is raised in power**—endued with vigour, strength, and activity, such as we cannot now conceive"—WESLEY.

"**Dishonour**—as if of no value. It was a technical term, in the days of free Athens, for a kind of outlawry involving loss of the rights of citizenship and of State protection. And this meaning would doubtless occur to S. Paul's readers, and was perhaps designed by him. Funeral pomp is but a mask hiding the truth that the body carried to the grave has lost the rights of humanity. Instead of the kind attentions rendered to it a few days ago, it is left alone in the dark and silent grave, as the meanest living body would not be. In absolute contrast to this is the splendour, exciting universal admiration, in which Christ's people will rise from the dead. **In glory** (see Col. 3. 4). **In power**—the wonderful and various capacity of the resurrection body"—BEET. What the **weakness** is we scarcely need to inquire. Decay of strength and vitality, ending in the absolute powerlessness of death, is the destiny of the body which is to be laid in the grave. But when it is raised, not only can it never be subject to the same weakness again, but it will be endowed with new faculties, as superior to those of the former body as those of the plant are to those of the seed.

44. "**It is sown** in this world a merely **animal body**—maintained by food, sleep, and air, like the bodies of brutes; but **it is raised** of a more refined contexture, needing none of these animal refreshments, and endued with qualities of a spiritual nature, like the angels of God"—WESLEY.

"It is not impossible, nor even improbable, that the death of our present body may set free a new and far more perfectly equipped body. The fact that we cannot conceive the nature of this body need not trouble us. S. Paul does not attempt to describe the future body, but contents himself with pointing out one or two of its characteristics by which it is distinguished from the body we now wear"—DODS. "These are simple foreshadowings of the glory of a resurrection body. We cannot go further; a **spiritual body** is one of those things 'which eye hath not seen, which have not entered into the mind of man, and which God reserves for them whom He loves"—GODET.

45. **The first Adam was made a living soul.** "God gave him such life as other animals enjoy; but **the last Adam**, CHRIST, **is a quickening Spirit.** As He 'hath life in Himself, so He quickeneth whom He will'; giving a more refined life to their very bodies at the resurrection"—WESLEY.

"Adam was **a living soul**—that is, a natural man—a man with intelligence, perception, and a moral sense, with power to form a society and to subdue nature to himself. He was that, and that only. **The last Adam**—the spiritual Man, whose prerogative it was, not as the first Adam, to live in Eden for himself, but to die on Calvary for others—was the Lord from heaven, who came to confer life"—ROBERTSON. "He does not call the second Adam a **living Spirit**, but a 'life-living' one; for He ministers the eternal life to all"—THEODORET. "The word **quickening** means 'that which gives life,' as we speak of the 'quick and the dead' in the Creed. The idea of activity to which the word 'quick' and its derivatives is now confined, comes from its original idea of life. We use the word 'lively' in a similar manner"—C. B.

46. **Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual.** "The law of God's universe is progress"—ROBERTSON. "His whole lecture on this passage will repay study. He shows how the Fall was an illustration of this law, a necessary consequence of a state of mere natural life; a 'step onward,' if for the time 'downward.' He traces it in the history of

nature and of nations, and finally applies it to individuals, and shows how our natural feelings and affections are the sources of our spiritual ones; how the moral life, the fulfilment, that is, of the law of our being as discerned by natural religion, the living up to the light we have (comp. Rom. 2. 14), leads up to the spiritual life, and how temptation and sorrow, themselves the fruit of a state of things undeveloped and incomplete, are necessary elements in the formation of the perfect, the spiritual man. (Comp. Heb. 2. 10)"—C. B. "We see this law ruling the history of creation and the history of man. The spiritual is the culminating point towards which all the process of nature tends. The gradual development of what is spiritual,—of will, of love, of moral excellence,—this, so far as man can see, is the end toward which all nature constantly and steadily is working"—DODS.

47. **The first man was from the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.** "'The first man,' being from the earth, is subject to corruption and dissolution, like the earth from which he came. 'The Second Man'—S. Paul could not so well say, 'is from heaven, heavenly': because, though man owes it to the earth that he is earthy, yet the LORD does not owe His glory to heaven. He himself made the heavens, and by descending from thence showed Himself to us as the Lord. Christ was not 'the second man' in order of time; but in this respect, that as Adam was a public person, who acted in the stead of all mankind, so was Christ. As Adam was the first general representative of men, Christ was the second and the last. And what they severally did, terminated not in themselves, but affected all whom they represented"—WESLEY.

"The **first man** was **earthy**; his body was fitted to the region of his abode; but **the second man is the Lord from heaven.** (John 6. 33; 3. 13.) If the first Adam could communicate to us our natural and animal bodies, cannot the Second Adam make our bodies spiritual ones? The dead in Christ shall not only rise, but shall rise thus gloriously changed"—M. HENRY. "The first representative man was from the earth, the second representative man was from heaven; and as was the first earthly Adam, so are we in our merely physical condition; and as is the second heavenly Adam, so shall we be in our heavenly state"—ELLICOTT.

48. **They that are earthy**—"who continue without any higher principle. **They that are heavenly** — who receive a Divine principle from heaven"—WESLEY.

"What Adam was, **a man of dust**, they are who live a life inherited from him. And what Christ is, such are they who partake His life. This comparison pertains only to those elements which come from the heads of the race. Because Adam's body was soul-governed, so are ours. Christ's glorified body, which will some day return to earth, is purely spirit-governed. And since He, equally with Adam, is Head of the race, we shall have bodies like His"—BEET.

49. **The image of the heavenly**—"holiness and glory"—WESLEY.

The **image** or "likeness." In this present life we are like Adam; in the next we shall be like Christ. (Comp. Rom. 8. 29; 2 Cor. 3. 18; Phil. 3. 21; Col. 3. 10.) Many MSS. read **let us also bear** in this passage. But S. Paul is not *exhorting* here, but *teaching*. And, moreover, the exhortation would seem a little out of place, since "regeneration cannot be obtained by striving or even by faith itself, it is an act of positive grace'—OLSHAUSEN. Tertullian, however, remarks expressly that S. Paul says **let us bear**, speaking in exhortation, not in doctrine. So Chrysostom, whom—with the Vulgate—Wyclif follows, translating **bere we also**; while Theodoret, on the contrary, says that S. Paul here was not speaking hortatively, but prophetically.

50. "**But** first we must be entirely changed; **for** such **flesh and blood** as we are clothed with now **cannot** enter into that kingdom which is wholly spiritual; **neither doth** this corruptible body **inherit** that incorruptible kingdom"—WESLEY.

"**Now this I say, brethren.** We enter here upon a new phase of the argument. The apostle now tells us how this great result shall be accomplished. We cannot inherit eternity as we are; a change is necessary. And this change will in the end be a sudden one, but will consist rather in the modification of the external conditions of the body than in any destruction of its essential properties. **That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**—it is not the material particles of our body which endure for ever. *They* are subject to corruption and dissolution. It is the spiritual principle of life which abides, and, like the seed, attracts to itself such material particles as shall serve it for a suitable habitation. The early heretics mentioned above (ver. 12) caught eagerly at this verse as disposing of the idea of a material resurrection. But the early Fathers of the Church showed conclusively that it was not to be so understood. They cited Luke 24. 39 to prove that Jesus Christ had 'flesh and bones' after His resurrection. And we may observe, moreover, that in S. Paul's language 'flesh and blood' stood for our ordinary humanity, as distinguished from everything of a spiritual nature. (See Rom. 8. 1-10; Gal. 1. 16; Eph. 6. 12.) **Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption** — an additional proof of what has just been stated. Our ordinary flesh and blood is by its very nature destined to corruption. It is not with *such* flesh and blood that we can become partakers of the incorruptible life"—C. B. "**Flesh and blood.** The body as it is corruptible,

cannot enter heaven, but must be changed; we shall appear with Him in glory. The vile body of Moses, that was hid in the valley of Moab, was brought forth glorious in the hill of Tabor. (Matt. 17. 3)"—TRAPP.

51. **A mystery** — "a truth hitherto unknown; and not yet fully known to any of the sons of men. **We**—Christians. The apostle considers them all as one in their succeeding generations. **Shall not all die** — suffer a separation of soul and body. **But we shall all** — who do not die—**be changed** — so that this animal body shall become spiritual"—WESLEY.

"A mystery means something which up to this time has been kept concealed, but is now made manifest. (Rom. 11. 25; Eph. 3. 3–5.) **We shall not all sleep**, etc. The apostle believed that the end of the world might come in the lifetime of some then living. We shall not all, he says, necessarily sleep, but we shall all be changed. The change from the earthly to the spiritual body is absolutely necessary. To some it will come through the ordinary process of death; to those who are alive at Christ's advent it will come suddenly, and in a moment. The dead shall be raised, **but we** (the living) **shall be changed**"—ELLICOTT.

52. **In a moment**—"amazing work of omnipotence! And cannot the same power now change us into saints in a moment? **The trumpet shall sound** — to awaken all that sleep in the dust of the earth"—WESLEY.

The dead in Christ shall rise. "In the same moment the yet mortal living are changed, and the whole redeemed host invested with glory and immortality; ascend to meet the Lord in the air, and so, after their public justification, and the condemnation of the wicked, shall be for ever with the Lord"—WATSON. "**The last trump.** The trumpet was used to summon an assembly (Ex. 20. 18; Ps. 81. 3; Isa. 18. 3; 27. 13), or to sound a warning. The last trumpet is the one which concludes a series which have already been sounding at intervals in notes of warning to the nations. (Ps. 47. 5; Isa. 27. 13; Jer. 51. 27.) This verse states with reiterated emphasis that this change shall not be a protracted process, but a sudden and momentary alteration in the condition of our bodies"—ELLICOTT.

53. "**For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.** (Comp. 2 Cor. 5. 4.) The apostle has just said that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.' He now explains in what sense these words are to be taken. The mortal body is not destroyed entirely and created again. 'Change,' says TERTULLIAN, 'must be dissociated from all idea of destruction. For change is one thing, destruction another.' It receives an addition of qualities which it did not possess before. It is 'clothed upon' with immortality. That which was corruptible is now freed from that liability ('sanctified and cleared from all impurity') (IRENÆUS). That which is mortal is swallowed up, and disappears in the vastness of life that knows no end"—C. B.

54. **Death is swallowed up in victory**—"that is, totally conquered, abolished for ever"—WESLEY.

These words, originally referring to the Jewish people (Isa. 25. 8), are naturally applied here to the human race, of which they were the chosen type.

55. **O death, where is thy sting?**—"which once was full of hellish poison. **O Hades**, the receptacle of separate souls, **where is thy victory?** Thou art now robbed of all thy spoil; all thy captives are set at liberty. 'Hades' *lit.* means the invisible world, and relates to the soul; death to the body. The Greek words are found in the LXX. translation of Hos. 13. 14"—WESLEY.

"**O death, where is thy sting?** This quotation follows neither the LXX. nor the Hebrew of Hos. 13. 14. The former is, 'Where is thy penalty, O death? where is thy sting, O Hades?' following, most probably, a different reading from the present Hebrew text, which runs thus: 'I will be thy plagues, O death; I will be thy pestilence, O grave' (or 'Hades,' for the Hebrew word has both significations). (See next note.) **O grave, where is thy victory?**—In the Greek, 'O Hades.' The Vulgate (which is followed by Tyndale), as well as most of the best MSS., reads 'death' here for Hades. So do Irenæus and Tertullian, writing in the second century. But the ancient Syriac version reads 'Hades.' Bishop Wordsworth suggests that the text was altered from a fear lest the passage should give any countenance to the idea of a god of the shades below, known to the Greeks by the name of 'Hades.' But in later Greek and in the LXX. its use to denominate the place of departed spirits was well established"—C. B. "A pardoned soul needs not fear death. He may look on death with joy, who can look on forgiveness with faith. To a pardoned soul death has lost his sting. Death to a pardoned sinner is like the arresting a man after the debt is paid"—WATSON.

56. **The sting of death is sin**—"without which it could have no power. But this sting none can resist by his own strength. **And the strength of sin is the Law**—as is largely declared. (Rom. 7. 7, etc.)"—WESLEY.

"Everywhere S. Paul teaches that it was sin which brought death upon man, that man would have broken through the law of death which reigns in the physical world, had he not by sin brought himself under the power of things physical. And this poisonous fang was pressed in by the Law. **The strength of sin is the Law.** It is positive disobedience, the preference of known evil to known good, the violation

of law whether written in the conscience or in spoken commandments, which gives sin its moral character. The choice of the evil in the presence of the good, it is that which constitutes sin"—DODS.

57. **But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory**—"over sin, death, and Hades" —WESLEY.

"**The victory**, by the atoning sacrifice of Christ for sin; by the joys of remission, which removes the sting of death, and substitutes the hope of glory; by uniting us to Himself, the everlasting Head of His body the Church; by making His own resurrection the pledge and earnest of ours. We have only to follow the Captain, and take the victory. And if this be the grace, what should be the song?"—SUTCLIFFE. The completeness and the glory of this change, and the complete victory over death, which it implies, force from the apostle a shout of victory. But this gives place at once to practical exhortations to do, unmoved by doubt or contradiction, the work of Christ" —BEET.

58. **Be ye steadfast**—"in yourselves. **Unmoveable**—by others; continually increasing in the work of faith and labour of love. **Knowing your labour is not in vain in the Lord**—whatever ye do for His sake shall have its full reward in that day. Let us also endeavour, by cultivating holiness in all its branches, to maintain this hope in its full energy; longing for that glorious day, when, in the utmost extent of the expression, **death shall be swallowed up** for ever, and millions of voices, after the long silence of the grave, shall burst out at once into that triumphant song, **O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?**"—WESLEY.

"**Therefore, my beloved brethren.** The aim of S. Paul is always practical. Even this magnificent passage comes to what from a merely oratorical point of view is a somewhat tame conclusion, a conclusion however which, regarded from the point of view of Christian edification, is full of beauty. 'Be not weary in well-doing,' the apostle would say. 'Labour on in faith and courage till life comes to an end. For your life is hid with Christ in God; and therefore your efforts and struggles here are not thrown away. Not one of them shall be lost sight of before the Eternal Throne'"—C. B. "Beyond our horizon there awaits us an endless enlarging world. Death, which seems to bound our view, is really but our real birth to a fuller, and eternal and true life. **Therefore, be ye steadfast.** The promptings of conscience do not delude you; your instinctive hopes will not be put to shame; your faith is reasonable; there is a life beyond. And no effort you now put forth will prove vain; no prayer, no earnest desire, no struggle towards what is spiritual, will fail of its effect. All that is spiritual is destined to live; it belongs to the eternal world: and all that you do in the spirit, all mastery of self and the world and the flesh, all devoted fellowship with God,—all is giving you a surer place and a more abundant entrance into the spiritual world, **for your labour is not in vain in the Lord**"—DODS.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. **The saints**—"a more solemn and a more affecting word, than if he had said, **the poor**" —WESLEY.

The same subject is mentioned in chaps. 8 and 9 of the Second Epistle. The disorganised state of Judea at this time, as described in the pages of Josephus, may account for the systematic efforts which were then being made throughout the Gentile churches for their aid. This collection is mentioned in Rom. 15. 26, written after the apostle's arrival at Corinth. Another reason for this Gentile liberality is given there. Jerusalem was the source whence all the blessings of the gospel had flowed. It was fitting that some recompense, however inadequate, should be made. (Comp. ch. 9. 11.)

2. **Let every one**—"not the rich only; let him also that hath little, gladly give of that little. **According as he hath been prospered**—increasing his alms as God increases his substance. According to this lowest rule of Christian prudence, if a man when he has or gains one pound gives a tenth to God, when he has or gains an hundred he will give the tenth of this also. And yet I show unto you a more excellent way. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Stint yourself to no proportion at all. But lend to God all you can"—WESLEY.

This verse, Acts 20. 7, and Rev. 1. 10, are the only passages in Scripture which notice the practice instituted from the very first among Christians of observing the day of the Lord's resurrection with especial reverence. But though it is clear enough, from the universal consent of Christians, that they were accustomed to meet together for worship on the Lord's Day, we cannot infer it from this passage. **Lay by him**—*i.e.* **at home**, not in the assembly, as is generally supposed. "He does not say, 'bring it at once,' lest the giver should be ashamed of the smallness of his contribution; but first lay it up by thyself, and when it is worthy of collecting, then bring it" —CHRYSOSTOM. He speaks of a custom in his time of placing a small box by the bedside into which an offering was to be put whenever prayer was made. WATSON explains: "An appeal is made to man's gratitude for the blessings of Providence to himself, and he is enjoined to give 'as the Lord hath prospered him.' Our fellow-creatures are constantly presented to us under tender relations, as our 'brethren,' or, more particularly, as 'of the household of faith.'" ROBERTSON sums up the teaching of this verse with the advice, "Systematise your charity. Save, by surrendering superfluities first. Tell that there is a sacred

fund, which will be made less by every unnecessary expense. Let us learn Christian economy first. Next we shall, by God's grace, learn Christian self-denial. For the Macedonians gave not out of their abundance, but out of their deep poverty."

4. **They shall go with me**—"to remove any possible suspicion"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul would not take charge of the money himself; and, moreover, it was fitting that members of the Corinthian church should have the pleasure, as well as the credit, of presenting their bounty in person to those who were to be the recipients of it"—C. B.

5, 6. **I pass through Macedonia**—"I purpose going that way"—WESLEY.

"**Bring me on my journey**—*lit.* 'send me forward.' The recognised word for helping forward on a journey or a mission"—STANLEY. (See Acts 15. 3; 20. 38; 21. 5; Rom. 15. 24.)

7. **I will not see you now**—"not till I have been in Macedonia"—WESLEY.

"From 2 Cor. 1. 15–23 we learn that S. Paul's original purpose was to come first to Corinth, then go to Macedonia and back to Corinth; and the reason of the change—viz. to avoid the severity with which, if he came at once, he would be compelled to act towards some of the Corinthians,—to avoid this he wrote the letter before us. Ch. 4. 18 suggests that this change of plan was already known and misunderstood"—BEET.

8. **I will stay at Ephesus**—"where he was at this time"—WESLEY.

"**At Ephesus**, indicates that there he wrote this letter. '**A** door great and effective' (2 Cor. 2. 12; Col. 4. 3; Acts 14. 27; Rev. 3. 8), opportunities for great usefulness, already fruitful in results. An important coincidence with Acts 19. 10"—BEET.

9. **A great door**—"as to the number of hearers — **and effectual** — as to the effects wrought upon them. **And there are many adversaries**—as there must always be where Satan's kingdom shakes. This was another reason for his staying there"—WESLEY.

"The use of **door** in the sense of 'opportunity' in the New Testament is remarkable. It is a favourite word with S. Paul. (See 2 Cor. 2. 12; Col. 4. 3.) This verse strikingly corroborates the narrative in the Acts. (Comp. Acts 19. 19, 20)"—LIAS. "**For he worketh.** So doth every faithful minister, though of meaner parts; the vine is the weakest of trees, but full of fruit. A little boat may do best in a low river. Philadelphia had but a little strength (Rev. 3. 8), and yet it served the turn, and did the deed"—TRAPP.

10. **Without fear**—"of anyone's despising him for his youth. **For he worketh the work of the Lord**—the true ground of reverence to pastors. Those who do so, none ought to despise"—WESLEY.

The apostle was evidently anxious to know how Timothy would be received by the Corinthians. He was young in years. He was young also in the faith. He had probably a constitutionally weak and timid nature (see 1 Tim. 3. 15, 23; 2 Tim. 1. 4), and he was of course officially very subordinate to S. Paul. In a church, therefore, some of whose members had gone so far as to question, if not actually to repudiate the authority even of the apostle himself, there was considerable danger for one like Timothy.

11. **I look for him with the brethren**—"that accompany him"—WESLEY.

Timothy and Erastus (Acts 19. 22) had been sent through Macedonia to Corinth some time before this Epistle was written, and when S. Paul heard how bad was the condition of the Corinthian church, he sends not only his Epistle, but with it Titus and two other brethren. (See 2 Cor. 8. 18, 22, 23.)

12. **I besought him much**—"to come to you —**with the brethren**—who were then going to Corinth. **Yet he was by no means willing to come now**—perhaps lest his coming should increase the divisions among them"—WESLEY.

"**As touching our brother Apollos.** S. Paul, free from the smallest spark of personal jealousy, had wished that Apollos, whose name had been used as the designation of a faction in opposition to the apostle himself, should go with this letter to Corinth. S. Paul had planted, Apollos had watered the church, and in the absence of the planter, Apollos would have been the most likely person to exercise authority there"—ELLICOTT.

13. "To conclude. **Watch ye**—against all your seen and unseen enemies. **Stand fast in the faith**—seeing and trusting Him that is invisible. **Acquit yourselves like men**—with courage and patience. **Be strong**—to do and suffer all His will"—WESLEY.

They were indolent and unstable and troubled by dissensions, and therefore he exhorts, **Watch, stand, quit you like men.** There is never a time when any church can afford not to observe these duties. "If you think Christianity a feeble, soft thing, ill adapted to call out the manlier features of character, read here"—ROBERTSON.

14. "**Let all that ye do be done in love** (R.V.). Love is the saint's livery. (John 13. 35.) Love began to grow cold among these Corinthians. Hence this sweet and savoury counsel. It were to be wished that this apostolical precept were well practised"—TRAPP.

15. **The first-fruits of Achaia**—"the first converts in that province"—WESLEY.

The Corinthian church had enjoyed the teaching of devoted men, and the apostle would have the teachers encouraged by the sympathy of a people so blessed.

16. **That ye also**—"in your turn—**submit to such**—so repaying their free service. **And to everyone that worketh with us and laboureth**—that labours in the gospel, either with or without a fellow-labourer"—WESLEY.

"**That ye submit yourselves.** (See Eph. 5. 21; 1 Pet. 5. 5.) **Helpeth with us.** There is no 'us' in the original. A general assistance in the work of the church seems to be what is meant by the apostle. Some would connect it with such,' and regard it as a direction to be willing to submit to the authority of all who were willing to work with the household of Stephanas. **And laboureth.** The Greek word implies 'toil,' *i.e.* the exertion which labour entails"—LIAS. "To every toiler for Christ we must give the deference due to his work"—BEET.

17. **I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus**—"who were now returned to Corinth; but the joy which their arrival had occasioned remained still in his heart. **They have supplied what was wanting on your part**—they have performed the offices of love, which you could not, by reason of your absence"—WESLEY.

"**Fortunatus and Achaicus.** Fortunatus is referred to by Clement as the bearer of his Epistle. Nothing is known of Achaicus. **That which was lacking on your part**—*i.e.* 'the void occasioned by your absence,' not the 'pecuniary need' of the apostle, as in 2 Cor. 11. 9 (comp. Phil. 2. 30). For the apostle there says that it is his boast, of which no man shall deprive him, that he has never cast any of the burden of his maintenance upon the Corinthian church"—LIAS. "S. Paul entertained great regard for the churches, and for the bodies of men, but he did not on this account ignore the individuals composing them. It is common enough to be zealous about a cause, about some scheme of social good, and yet to be careless respecting individual welfare. God's love provides for the universe, and yet spends an infinity of care on the fibre of a leaf"—ROBERTSON.

18. **For they have refreshed my spirit and yours**—"inasmuch as you share in my comfort. **Such therefore acknowledge**—with suitable love and respect"—WESLEY.

"This is a concise expression of the same consciousness of identity of feelings and interests which expresses itself so strongly in 2 Cor. 1. 3–7"—STANLEY. "These Corinthians are reinvigorated, through a perfect interchange of sympathy, by the joy that is imparted to S. Paul by the presence of one of their number"—LIAS.

19. **Aquila and Priscilla** had formerly made some abode at Corinth, and there S. Paul's acquaintance with them began (Acts 18. 1, 2)"—WESLEY.

S. Paul's fast friends and constant companions. Probably by **the church in their house** is meant a group of foreigners then resident in Ephesus, and accustomed to meet there for worship, as distinct from those who had been converted in Ephesus.

20. **With a holy kiss**—"not hollow, as Joab and Judas"—TRAPP. The word **holy** is added to guard against misconception in an impure age.

21. **With my own hand**—"what precedes having been written by an amanuensis"—WESLEY.

It was the apostle's habit to dictate his Epistles, but to add a few words at the end in his own handwriting. (See 2 Thess. 3. 17.) The concluding verses here are accordingly S. Paul's autograph. The earlier portions had been written by Sosthenes. (See ch. 1. 1.)

22. **If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ**—"if any be an enemy to His person, offices, doctrines, or commands—**let him be Anathema Maran-atha.** 'Anathema' signifies a thing devoted to destruction. It seems to have been customary with the Jews of that age, when they had pronounced any man an 'Anathema,' to add the Syriac expression, 'Maran-atha,' that is, 'The Lord cometh,' namely, to execute vengeance upon him. This weighty sentence the apostle chose to write with his own hand; and to insert it between his salutation and solemn benediction, that it might be the more attentively regarded"—WESLEY.

"Not to love Christ is a positive and fatal sin"—CUYLER. "There is no love so true, or so great, as that which Christ inspires"—THOMAS. From all the arguments and controversy which form the main portion of the Epistle, the apostle with his own hand brings back the thoughts of the Corinthians to the true test of their Christianity. Do they love the Lord Jesus? The word here used for love signifies not merely affectionate regard, but personal devotion. "**Let him be Anathema Maran-atha.** There is no connection between these two words. 'Anathema' signifies 'accursed.' The absence of love to Christ is condemnation. The word 'Maran-atha' is a Syriac expression—'the Lord is at hand,' or 'the Lord is come,' probably the former. The uncertainty of the moment when the Lord may come is the most solemn thought with which to remind them of the importance of being one with Christ"—ELLICOTT.

24. **My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.** "This affectionate commendation of the Corinthians to the favour of Christ, coupled with the assurance of his own unchanging affection, must have sounded very striking in the ears of a community accustomed to Gentile modes of thought. Compare the curt and cold 'Farewell' at the end of Claudius Lysias' letter in Acts 23. 30. Much of the beauty and significance of this conclusion is lost to us by over-familiarity. It is worthy of note that the Epistle begins and ends with Jesus Christ"—C. B.

Canon FARRAR says: "So ends the longest and, in some respects, the grandest, and most characteristic of S. Paul's Epistles. He had suppressed, indeed, all signs of the deep emotion

with which it had been written; but when it was despatched he dreaded the result it might produce—dreaded whether he should have said too much; dreaded the possible alienation by any over-severity of those whom he had only desired to win. His own soul was all quivering with its half-stifled thunder, and he was afraid lest the flash which he had sent forth should scathe too deeply the souls at which it had been hurled. He would even have given much to recall it (2 Cor. 7. 8), and awaited with trembling anxiety the earliest tidings of the manner in which it would be received. But God overruled all for good; and, indeed, the very writings which spring most naturally and spontaneously from a noble and sincere emotion, are often those that produce the deepest impression upon the world, and are less likely to be resented—at any rate, are more likely to be useful—than the tutored and polished utterances which are carefully tamed down into the limits of correct conventionality. Not only the church of Corinth, but the whole world has gained from the intensity of the apostle's feelings, and the impetuous spontaneity of the language in which they were expressed."

S. PAUL'S SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

"IN this Epistle, written from Macedonia, within a year after the former, S. Paul beautifully displays his tender affection toward the Corinthians, who were greatly moved by the seasonable severity of the former, and repeats several of the admonitions he had there given them. In that he had written concerning the affairs of the Corinthians; in this he writes chiefly concerning his own, but in such a manner as to direct all he mentions of himself to their spiritual profit. The thread and connection of the whole Epistle is historical; other things are interwoven only by way of digression.

"IT CONTAINS—

I. The Inscription, ...	Chap. i. 1, 2.
II. The Treatise itself.	
1. In Asia I was greatly pressed; but God comforted me; as I acted uprightly; even in this, that I have not yet come to you, who ought to obey me, ...	,, ,, 3. ,, ii. 11.
2. From Troas I hastened to Macedonia, spreading the gospel everywhere, the glorious charge of which I execute, according to its importance,	,, ,, 12–vii. 1.
3. In Macedonia I received a joyful message concerning you, ...	,, ,, 2–16.
4. In this journey I had a proof of the liberality of the Macedonians, whose example ye ought to follow, ...	,, viii. 1–ix. 15.
5. I am now on my way to you, armed with the power of Christ. Therefore obey, . .	,, x. 1–xiii. 10.
III. The Conclusion, ...	,, ,, ,, 11–13." —WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I. — Ver. 1. THANKSGIVING TO GOD.—1. **Timotheus our brother.** "S. Paul writing to Timotheus styled him his 'son'; writing of him, his 'brother'"—WESLEY.

With these same words the apostle commenced his First Epistle. (1 Cor. 1. 1.) Timothy, however, takes the place of Sosthenes. **Saints** —men consecrated to God, and living a life of devotion to Him. **Achaia.** We are to understand by this Hellas and the Peloponnesus, which, with Macedonia, made up the whole of Greece. Macedonia, however, was scarcely recognised by the Greeks in their best days as forming a part of their land. See articles "Achaia" and "Hellas" in Smith's *Dictionary of Geography.*

2. **Grace be to you**—"the peculiar favour of God. **Peace**—the blessedness which such favour brings."

3. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**—"a solemn and beautiful introduction, highly suitable to the apostolical spirit. **The Father of mercies and God of all comfort.** Mercies are the fountain of comfort; comfort is the outward expression of mercy. God shows mercy in the affliction itself. He gives comfort both in and after the affliction. Therefore is He termed, 'the God of all comfort.' Blessed be this God!"—WESLEY.

"The opening words are spoken out of the fulness of the apostle's heart. He has had a comfort which he recognises as having come from God. The nature of that comfort, as of the previous sorrow, is not stated definitely till we come to chaps. 2. 13; 7. 6, 7"—ELLICOTT. **Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** Two feelings rise at once in the apostle's mind. The first is an overwhelming gratitude for his deliverance from his distress, the second the keen sense of his entire unity of heart and soul with the Corinthian church, and his desire to impart to them whatever blessings he had received from God. Our version follows Wyclif here, substituting, however, *even* for *and*. The other English versions have "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," save the Rhemish, which renders accurately by the "God and Father," etc. (See John 20. 17; 1 Pet. 1. 3.)

4. **Who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any affliction.** "He that has experienced one kind of affliction is able to comfort others in that affliction. He that has experienced all kinds of affliction is able to comfort them in all"—WESLEY.

"That God is rightly blessed under these designations is illustrated by what the apostle has recently gone through, and by the use to which God intends him to apply his experiences. Whatever may be the form or weight of his affliction, God furnishes the appropriate comfort, to the end that he may be able to administer the comfort which he has himself so received to other sufferers, whatever may be the form or weight of their affliction. **That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.** S. Paul represents affliction (1) as a school of sympathy, (2) as a school of comfort (or rather encouragement, ver. 5), (3) as a school of assurance (ver. 10)"—ROBERTSON. **By the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.** "We may observe here, as elsewhere in Scripture, that no gift is bestowed upon anyone to keep to himself. If S. Paul is encouraged by God, it is not only for his own sake, but that he may be able to impart to others the encouragement which he has received. (Comp. John 15. 1–17; Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 3. 9; 4. 7; Eph. 4. 16; Col. 2. 19)"—C. B.

5. **For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us**—"the sufferings endured on His account. **So our comfort also aboundeth through Christ.** The sufferings were many, the comfort one; and yet not only equal to, but overbalancing, them all"—WESLEY.

The word translated **abound** means to "exceed, be over and above" (Matt. 5. 20; 14. 20). Thus the meaning of the passage is that the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, and that thus we are made partakers of them. (See Matt. 20. 22; Mark 10. 38; Gal. 2. 20; Heb. 13. 13.) For (see Notes on ch. 4. 11, 12) our sufferings for Christ's sake arise from the same cause as His, namely, the opposition of darkness to light, of death to the life that is imparted by Him to His members. Such passages as ch. 4. 10, Col. 1. 24, carry the idea a step further, and represent Christ as suffering *in* His members by virtue of His union with them. So also Matt. 25. 40, 45; Acts 9. 4; Gal. 6. 17; Phil. 3. 10. We have here the principle upon which comfort is obtained, the connecting link between the sufferings and the comfort is Christ.

6. **And whether we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation** — "for your present comfort, your present and future salvation. **Or whether we are comforted, it is for your comfort**—that we may be the better able to comfort you. **Which is effectual in the patient enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer**—through the efficacy of which ye patiently endure the same kind of sufferings with us"—WESLEY.

"**And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation.** The same may be said of every kind of suffering endured for the cause of God and of truth. It is not merely, as in Heb. 12. 6 (comp. Deut. 8. 5), that 'whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth' for his own sake, but that the sufferings one man endures for a good cause are the source of profit to others. (Comp. ch. 4. 15, 16; Eph. 3. 13; 2 Tim. 2. 10)"—LIAS. "There are some who are Christians, but, notwithstanding, are rough, hard, and rude; you cannot go to them

for sympathy. You cannot confide the more delicate difficulties of the soul to them. Theirs is the rude health which knows not of infirmities. They have not suffered. But tenderness is got by suffering, both physical and mental. This was Christ's own qualification for sympathy (Heb. 4. 15)"—ROBERTSON. "It is assumed that the **sufferings** of all Christians have much in common. All have anxieties, sorrows, disappointments, which bring a keener pain than the ills that threaten the spoiling of goods or even life itself"—ELLICOTT.

7. **And our hope concerning you**—"grounded on your patience in suffering for Christ's sake—**is steadfast**"—WESLEY.

His hope for them, for their salvation in the fullest sense of the word, had never been stronger than it was at that moment, and he did not doubt that they were at that very time sharers in the comfort as well as in the sufferings.

8. **We would not have you ignorant, brethren, of the trouble which befel us in Asia**—"probably the same which is described in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts. The Corinthians knew before that he had been in trouble: he now declares the greatness and the fruit of it. **We were exceedingly pressed, above our strength** — above the ordinary strength even of an apostle"—WESLEY.

"This is recorded in Acts 19. 24, when the silversmiths and the populace of Ephesus rushed into the theatre to occupy good seats, the better to see us devoured by the lions, not doubting of our condemnation, being charged with saying that Diana was no goddess. What displays of Providence in S. Paul's deliverance at this and at other times! (Ch. 11. 33)"—SUTCLIFFE. "S. Paul now accounts for his excellent praise, and for the mention of his affliction, by telling of a deadly peril from which he has been lately rescued, and it is to sympathising brothers that he tells the story"—BEET.

9. **Yea we had the sentence of death in ourselves**—"we ourselves expected nothing but death"—WESLEY.

"God often bringeth His people into great straits that they may apprehend their own insufficiency to help themselves, and may be induced to place their trust and hope in His all-sufficiency. He can do all things, and is to be trusted in at all times. Abraham's faith fastened upon this instance of the Divine power"—M. HENRY.

10. **We trust that He will still deliver**—"that we may at length be able to come to you"—WESLEY.

"Past experiences are great encouragements to faith and hope, and they lay great obligations to trust in God for time to come. We reproach our experiences if we distrust God in future straits, who hath delivered us in former troubles. David, even when a young man and had but a small stock of experiences, argued after this manner. (1 Sam. 17. 37)"—M. HENRY.

11. **You likewise** — "as well as other churches. **Helping with us by prayer, that for the gift**—namely, my deliverance — **bestowed upon us by means of many persons** —praying for it—**thanks may be given by many**"—WESLEY.

"For the right understanding of this Epistle, the identity of feeling between the apostle and his converts must be borne in mind throughout. It is the liveliest instance of the real community of feeling introduced by Christianity into the world"—STANLEY. "The best people may have benefit by the prayers of the meanest"—TRAPP.

12. "**For** I am the more emboldened to look for this, because I am conscious of my integrity; seeing **this is our rejoicing**—even in the deepest adversity. **The testimony of our conscience** — whatever others think of us. **That in simplicity**—having one end in view, aiming singly at the glory of God. **And godly sincerity**—without any tincture of guile, dissimulation, or disguise. **Not with carnal wisdom, but by the grace of God**—not by natural but Divine wisdom. **We have had our conversation in the world**—in the whole world; in every circumstance"—WESLEY.

"**Rejoicing** (R.V. 'glorying'). **Simplicity and godly sincerity** (R.V. 'Holiness and sincerity of God'). "**For our rejoicing is this**—'it is this,' says the apostle, 'which causes such a perennial flow of joy and consolation into my heart amid all my anxieties and distresses. I can feel in my conscience that what knits us together in sympathy is a Divine and not a human bond. On my part there is the inspiration from above, on yours the verifying faculty which enables you to recognise the truth of what I deliver to you.' This seems to be the connection of thought in this and the two following verses. The connection with what precedes appears to be the conviction of the apostle that the honesty and genuineness of his efforts to minister Christ to the Corinthians have fairly entitled him to hope for a share in their prayers. **The testimony of our conscience.** (Comp. 1 Cor. 4. 4; also Acts 23. 1; 24. 16; Rom. 9. 1; 1 John 3. 21.) **That in simplicity and godly sincerity.** For 'simplicity,' the best MSS. and editors read 'holiness'; but 'simplicity,' *i.e.* 'singleness of purpose,' seems to suit the context best. The word translated sincerity ('clenness' Wyclif, 'pureness' Tyndale), originally signifies that which is 'tested by the sun's rays,' and is therefore entirely transparent. (See note on 1 Cor. 5. 8; see also ch. 2. 7; Phil. 1. 10; 2 Pet. 3. 1.) The word 'sincerity' was adopted by our translators from the Rhemish version. The words translated 'godly sincerity' are, in the original, 'sincerity of God,' *i.e* either—(1) 'that which

is His gift, comes from Him,' or (2) 'that which is befitting His service,' as in the A.V. **Not with fleshly wisdom**—*lit.* 'in.' (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 17; 2. 1, 4, 13.) These passages show that there existed among the Corinthians a tendency to exalt the wisdom of this world, *i.e.* acquirements such as those of dialectic skill and rhetoric, above the spiritual enlightenment obtained by the submission of the intellect and will to the direction of God"—C. B. "He was merry under his load, because his heart was upright. The sincere will stand under great pressures, because they are sound"—TRAPP. "**We have had our conversation**—better, 'we conducted ourselves.' In its fullest sense, the apostle can say that he had striven to *live* everywhere so as to avoid giving grounds for suspicion. Nowhere had he been more careful so to live than at Corinth, where men were suspicious in proportion to their own viciousness"—ELLICOTT.

14. **Ye have acknowledged us in part**—"though not so fully as ye will do—**that we are your rejoicing**—that ye rejoice in having known us. **As ye also are ours**—as we also rejoice in the success of our labours among you; and we trust shall rejoice therein **in the day of the Lord Jesus**"—WESLEY.

"**As also**—S. Paul connects 'the future for which he *hopes*, with the past of which he *knows*'"—MEYER. **In part.** It is here delicately hinted that the *whole* Corinthian church did not acknowledge S. Paul. **We are your rejoicing**—rather "ground of rejoicing." The word here rendered "rejoicing" is rendered indifferently "boasting," "glorying," "rejoicing," "whereof to glory," in the A.V. (See Rom. 4. 2; 1 Cor. 5. 6; ch. 9. 3.) **Even as ye also are ours.** It was, moreover, the special object of the apostle to remind the Corinthians of the identity of their interests before he proceeded to vindicate himself or to rebuke them. *Some* of them, he says, already recognised this truth. (See also next verse.) Chrysostom remarks on the humility of the apostle in thus placing himself on a level with his converts. "They who save a soul from death lay up for themselves joy in that day when the light of eternity will reveal the value of a soul. And the same light will reveal the true grandeur of the heroes of the Church, and thus increase the joy of those who have been associated with them on earth. S. Paul declares that, just as he already possessed in his readers that which would be a joy to him in the day of Christ, so they regarded him"—BEET.

15. **In this confidence**—"that is, being confident of this"—WESLEY.

By the **second benefit** is meant the effects of the visit which the apostle hoped to have paid to the Corinthians after his return from Macedonia. It has been explained (1) of the favour of the apostle's presence, (2) of the outpouring of God's grace or favour which S. Paul, as an apostle of Christ, had the privilege of imparting. (See Rom. 1. 11.) Tyndale, who is followed by Cranmer and the Geneva Version, renders "one pleasure more."

17. **Did I use levity**—"did I lightly change my purpose? **Do I purpose according to the flesh**—are my purposes grounded on carnal or worldly considerations? **So that there should be with me yea and nay**—sometimes one, sometimes the other; that is, variableness and inconstancy"—WESLEY.

"**Did I use lightness?** (R.V. 'Did I show fickleness?') One of the special features of this Epistle, according to Robertson, is its exhibition of 'the way in which a Christian may defend himself when maligned or misrepresented. . . . An uncontradicted slander is believed readily, and often for long, and meanwhile influence is crippled or lost. Conceive what might have ensued, had S. Paul not met the slander against his character with denial at once! For few persons take the trouble to sift a charge which is not denied." "**According to the flesh**—*i.e.* 'Are they the decisions of my human will, which is subject to change through caprice, or are they decisions made according to the promptings of God's Spirit, and, as such, removed out of the region of human inconstancy of purpose? **That with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay.** Some have rendered this (1) 'that with me the yea should be yea and the nay nay,' as though in this last member of the sentence S. Paul was showing how impossible it was for him to be obstinate and to refuse to change his purpose for a reasonable cause. But the context is against this. Chrysostom, who adopts this view, lays the stress upon the words 'with me,' as though S. Paul's private and individual will were contrasted with the dictates of the Spirit, which he was bound to follow, whether they laid him open to the charge of inconsistency or not. But the best way is (2) to interpret the passage in the usual manner, and to regard the apostle as denying that he was infirm of purpose, and as reminding the Corinthians that he had but one definite end in view, which he was resolutely bent upon attaining, namely, the ministering to them the Spirit of Jesus Christ. To this one purpose all minor plans and resolutions must give way"—C. B.

18. **Our word to you**—"the whole tenor of our doctrine—**hath not been yea and nay**—wavering and uncertain"—WESLEY.

A solemn answer to the foregoing questions, followed by proof, is given in this and the two following verses.

19. **For Jesus Christ who was preached by us**—"that is, our preaching concerning Him—**was not yea and nay**—was not variable and inconsistent with itself—**but was yea in Him**—always one and the same, centring in Him"—WESLEY.

"**Silvanus**—called Silas in the Acts. He was sent with S. Paul and S. Barnabas, as 'a chief man among the brethren,' to guarantee

the authenticity of the apostolic letter which the former brought back with them from Jerusalem to Antioch after the discussion recorded in Acts (ch. 15), since, had S. Paul and S. Barnabas returned alone, their opponents might not improbably have disputed its genuineness. (See Acts 15. 22, 25, 27.) He was a *prophet*, Acts 15. 32 (see 1 Cor. ch. 14), and was chosen by S. Paul, after his dispute with S. Barnabas, as his fellow-traveller, by the advice of the churches. Some have thought that he was the brother mentioned in ch. 8. 18; 12. 18. He is mentioned by S. Paul with himself in the opening of each of the Epistles to the Thessalonians. He was with the apostle at Philippi (Acts 16. 19–40), at Thessalonica (ch. 17. 1, 4, 10), at Berea (ch. 17. 10), at Corinth (*not* at Athens, ch. 17. 15; 18. 5). He is not mentioned again in Scripture save by Peter in his First Epistle (ch. 5. 12), in which he speaks of him as one with whom he has little personal acquaintance, but much confidence"—LIAS. "It was infinitely unlikely that one who preached Christ, the absolutely true Christ, who enforced every precept with the emphatic '**Amen, Amen**' (the word occurs thirty-one times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, seven times in Luke, and in its reduplicated form twenty-five times in John, 'Verily, verily),' should afterwards be shamelessly untruthful, and use words that paltered with a double sense"—ELLICOTT.

20. **For all the promises of God are yea and Amen in Him**—"are surely established in and through Him. They are 'yea,' with respect to God promising; 'Amen,' with respect to men believing; 'yea,' with respect to the apostles; 'Amen,' with respect to their hearers"—WESLEY.

"Promises are prizes in the hand of God to stimulate the soul's activities. They have been fulfilled and ratified in Christ. **In Him is the yes.** Christ incarnate was a solemn and costly declaration by God that He will fulfil every one of the ancient promises, a declaration not admitting denial or doubt. **The Amen** (Rom. 1. 25), the expression of man's faith that the promise will be fulfilled. Since *in* Christ, God reasserts the old promises, *also through* Christ men believe them, and shout Amen. **Through us**—by whose preaching the 'Amen' has risen from the lips of many who never spoke it before. And this has been in order that **glory** may come to God, *i.e.* that His grandeur may shine forth and thus elicit admiration from men. (Comp. Rom. 15. 7, 9)"—BEET.

21. "I say, **to the glory of God**—for it is God alone that is able to fulfil these promises. **That establisheth us**—apostles and teachers. **With you**—all true believers. **In** the faith of Christ; **and hath anointed us**—with the oil of gladness, with joy in the Holy Ghost, thereby giving us strength both to do and suffer His will"—WESLEY.

"**Now He which establisheth thus with you in Christ**—rather, 'and He,' etc., as explaining the words 'by us.' 'Not as though we had any power in ourselves, to do anything of ourselves (comp. ch. 3. 5), but it is God who stablisheth us and who anointed us for our great work.' The meaning of the Greek word translated 'stablisheth,' as of the English one by which it is rendered, is to 'make firm, immovable.' For 'in Christ,' the original has 'unto' or 'upon' Christ, *i.e.* by the faith and hope in Him which are 'as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.' (Heb. 6. 19; comp. 1 Cor. 3. 11; also Matt. 15. 18; Eph. 2. 20)"—LIAS. In the insertion of **with you** we note S. Paul's characteristic anxiety to avoid the appearance of claiming for himself what others might not claim with equal right. He repeats the confident hope which he had expressed in 1 Cor. 1. 8.

22. **Who also hath sealed us**—"stamping His image on our hearts, thus marking and sealing us as His own property. **And given us the earnest of His Spirit.** There is a difference between an earnest and a pledge. A pledge is to be restored when the debt is paid; but an earnest is not taken away, but completed. Such an earnest is the Spirit. The first-fruits of it we have (Rom. 8. 23), and we wait for all the fulness"—WESLEY.

"The God of all grace has given to His people all the perfection of heaven to be their heritage for ever, and the earnest of His Spirit is to them the blessed token that all things are theirs. The Spirit's work of comfort and sanctification is a part of heaven's covenant blessing"—SPURGEON. "They were not to think that their past spiritual experience had any character of finality. It was rather but the pledge of yet greater gifts to come, even of that knowledge of God which is eternal life. (John 17. 3)"—ELLICOTT.

23. **I call God for a record upon my soul.** "Was not S. Paul now speaking by the Spirit? And can a more solemn oath be conceived? Who then can imagine that Christ ever designed to forbid all swearing? **That to spare you I came not yet to Corinth**—lest I should be obliged to use severity. He says elegantly 'to Corinth,' not 'to you,' when he is intimating his power to punish"—WESLEY.

"The word here translated **call for a record** is not used in Scripture in a bad sense. It signifies (1) to surname, as in Matt. 10. 3; (2) to appeal, as in Acts 25. 11; and (3) to call upon, as in Acts 22. 16; 1 Cor. 1. 2, etc. S. Augustine and other commentators have remarked that it is lawful for a Christian to take an oath upon a proper occasion. (Comp. Matt. 26. 63.) **That to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.** Though S. Paul could 'use sharpness' if need so required, he desired, as the minister of the God of love, rather to come in the 'spirit of meekness'"—LIAS. "The solemn earnestness of the appeal implies that on the ground of his delay in coming to Corinth a serious

charge had been brought against the apostle. (Comp. 1. 17; 1 Cor. 4. 18.) **Upon my soul**—as in Rom. 2. 9. Laying open the seat of life to be smitten if he speaks falsely. S. Paul appeals to God. In delaying his visit he was **sparing** them the punishment which, had he come, he would have been compelled to inflict. (Comp. 1 Cor. 4. 21.) Instead of punishing, he wrote (ch. 2. 3) the First Epistle"—BEET.

24. **Not that we have dominion over your faith**—"this is the prerogative of God alone. **But are helpers of your joy**—and faith from which it springs. **For by faith ye have stood**—to this day. We see the light in which ministers should always consider themselves, and in which they are to be considered by others. 'Not as having dominion over the faith' of their people, and having a right to dictate by their own authority what they shall believe, or what they shall do; but as 'helpers of their joy,' by helping them forward in faith and holiness. In this view, how amiable does their office appear! and how friendly to the happiness of mankind! How far, then, are they from true benevolence, who would expose it to ridicule and contempt?"—WESLEY.

The apostle would teach that he wishes not to domineer, but to be a fellow-worker with their "joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15. 13). He has asserted his authority, and declared his fidelity in the most solemn manner; but he will not claim too much. They do not stand in him, but in their faith in Christ, and he longs to confirm and strengthen that faith. He here defines accurately his relation to his converts. What power he had—and it was considerable (see 1 Cor. 4. 21; ch. 2. 9; 7. 15; 10. 6; 13. 2, 10)—was simply *ministerial*, to assist the free growth of the Christian life within them, one of whose foremost fruits (Gal. 5. 22) was joy, the joy of the man redeemed and sanctified in Christ, a joy which could not be possessed by those who "hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1. 18). He had no right to place himself between their souls and God, as a *necessary* channel in all cases of the Divine life." **By faith ye stand**—he does not say, by patience, or by hope, or the like. They are all drawn from faith. Strengthen that, and strengthen all other that are infused from it. As a tree, we cast not water on the branches, but on the root. So strengthen faith. We strengthen love and hope, and all, if we strengthen faith and assurance of God's love in Christ"—SIBBES. **For by faith ye stand.** "If they are enabled to stand firm against the overrunning flood of ungodliness, it is not in dependence upon any human being, however great and noble his mission (see vers. 21, 22; Matt. 10. 40; John 13. 20; 20. 21; 1 Cor. 7. 25, 40; 1 Thess. 4. 8), but by faith in a living Lord (comp. Rom. 11. 20; 1 Cor. 15. 1), who is able to save and to destroy"—C. B. "What the anchor and cable are to ship, when anchored off reef or rocky shore, the faith by which man makes God's strength his own is to believers in their times of trial"—GUTHRIE.

CHAPTER II.

1. **In grief**—"either on account of the particular offender, or of the church in general"—WESLEY.

In heaviness (R.V. "With sorrow"). S. Paul now further vindicates his consistency. Not only did he stay away from Corinth to spare the Corinthians the sharp rebukes which his immediate presence would have necessitated, but he hoped, by means of the Epistle, to work so salutary a reformation as to make his visit to Corinth a time of the deepest spiritual joy. S. Paul's great anxiety was *not* to visit the Corinthian church in such a frame of mind. It falls in best with the context to explain, "I determined that my *second* visit should not be paid while under the influence of painful feelings." Olshausen remarks that the "heaviness" here spoken of belongs as much to the Corinthians as to the apostle.

2. **For if I grieve you, who is he that cheereth me but he that is grieved by me?**—"that is, I cannot be comforted myself till his grief is removed"—WESLEY.

"**For if I make you sorry**—so all the principal English translators. But the rendering gives a false impression to a modern ear. The best equivalent in modern English is 'if I *pain* you.' The idea of sorrow for the sin does not appear to have been introduced as yet. The '*I*' in this passage is emphatic: 'if I, whose sole delight is to see you happy, inflict pain, it is with the object of bringing about happiness in the end.' The connection of this verse with the preceding implied in the word 'for' seems to be as follows: 'I *wrote* to cause pain, it is true, but it was in order that such pain should be removed before I came.' (Comp. ch. 7. 8.) **Who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?** The apparent selfishness of this passage, in which S. Paul appears to think that the grief he has caused is amply compensated for by the pleasure he receives from that grief, is explained by the words in the next verse, 'having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.' The meaning would seem to be that S. Paul wished not to come to Corinth in sorrow, but in joy, and that this end was attained by the result of the rebukes of his Epistle, which produced pain, and pain reformation, and reformation a pure and heavenly joy on the part of all—of S. Paul, of the Corinthian community, and of the offender himself, conditions obviously the most favourable to an apostolic visit"—LIAS.

3. **And I wrote thus to you**—"I wrote to you before in this determination, **not to come to you in grief**"—WESLEY.

"To rejoice in his converts was to S. Paul an absolute necessity (comp. 1 Thess. 3. 8), 'we live if you stand in the Lord'"—BEET.

"Nothing strikes a man more than the unkindness of a friend, than expectation of love dashed and disappointed. All evils, as elements, are most troublesome, when out of their proper place, as impiety in professors"—TRAPP.

4. **"From much anguish I wrote to you, not** so much **that ye might be grieved, as that ye might know** by my faithful admonition my **abundant love toward you"**—WESLEY.

"The heart always makes the best apology"—SUTCLIFFE. "It is the truest mark of affection not to cloak the sins of those who are entrusted to your care, to rebuke them openly and plainly, even at the risk of causing considerable distress"—ESTIUS. **With many tears**—"which in case of a brave and high-spirited man, are a token of intense grief"—CALVIN.

5. **He hath grieved me but in part**—"who still rejoice over the greater part of you. Otherwise I might **burden you all"**—WESLEY.

"Perhaps there is a slight reproof here, implying, as in 1 Cor. 5. 2, that the Corinthians had not sufficiently felt the disgrace brought on them all by such a crime. (Comp. ch. 1. 14.) The apostle thus, with no less adroitness than simple honesty, places the personal aspect of the question in the background, and deals with it as a matter of public principle, with which every member of the church is as intimately concerned as himself. The whole passage refers to the offender mentioned in 1 Cor. 5"—C. B. "The strong words of 1 Cor. 5. 1–5 might lead some to suppose that S. Paul looked upon the offence as a special sin against himself. He reminds them that the real injury was inflicted not upon himself, but upon those who tolerated the crime. That he needs, in mercy to the guilty man, to modify these words reveals how great was the injury inflicted by this one man upon the whole church"—BEET.

6. **Sufficient for such an one.** "With what a remarkable tenderness does S. Paul treat this offender! He never once mentions his name. Nor does he here so much as mention his crime. **By many**—not only by the rulers of the church; the whole congregation acquiesced in the sentence"—WESLEY.

The discipline of the apostolic Church, which had as its main object the restoration of the offender, was content when this object was attained. As soon as the offender renounced his sin, the end of the discipline was reached, and there was no further need of punishment. It was no desire of the Church in the apostle's times, however much that important principle may have been lost sight of afterwards, that the offender should be **swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.** "A plan diligently to be observed, for it teaches with what equity and clemency the discipline of the Church should be tempered, lest its vigour should exceed proper bounds"—CALVIN. "It was not only the dignity of the Corinthian church that S. Paul thought of; he thought also of the fallen, guilty state of his spirit who had degraded that church. He punished him that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"—ROBERTSON.

7. **"Such a one.** S. Paul has saved this offender from public disgrace by not mentioning his name. **Swallowed up.** Some commentators have supposed that S. Paul here meant apostasy or suicide. But he designedly leaves the result indefinite. It is impossible to foresee what will become of a man overwhelmed with excessive sorrow. **With overmuch sorrow**—*lit.* 'by the excess' of sorrow. 'Nothing is more dangerous than to give Satan a handle whereby he may harass a sinner into despair' (CALVIN). (Comp. also Gal. 6. 1, and Eccles. 8. 5)"—C. B.

8. **That ye would confirm your love.** The word for 'confirm' (better, perhaps, 'ratify'; comp. Gal. 3. 15) suggests the thought of an act as formal and public as the rebuke had been. The excommunicated man was to be readmitted to fellowship by a collective act of the church"—ELLICOTT.

9. The apostle renounces lordship over their faith, yet he requires compliance with all apostolic directions. He suggests that, having shown obedience in punishing, they should show it also in forgiving. "Ready to forgive" is a Christian duty, and should be also a Christian joy.

10. **To whom ye forgive**—"he makes no question of their complying with his direction—**anything**—so mildly does he speak even of that heinous sin, after it was repented of—**in the person of Christ**—by the authority wherewith He has invested me"—WESLEY.

He is not speaking of any private forgiveness of a personal injury, but of the public absolution of an offender lying under the censure of the Church. (See 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5.) We may observe (1) that S. Paul acts upon the report of the Corinthian church, properly authenticated by Titus, his representative there (ch. 7. 6–14), and (2) that he gives his official sanction to their act. ANDREW FULLER said: "If S. Paul could address the Corinthians, concerning one of their excluded members, who had been brought to repentance, **To whom ye forgive anything, I also,** much more would the friends of righteousness say, in their addresses to the Great Supreme, concerning an excluded member from the moral system, 'To whom Thou forgivest anything, we also.' Hence angels acknowledge Christians as brethren, and become ministering spirits to them while inhabitants of the present world."

11. **Lest Satan**—"to whom he had been delivered, and who sought to destroy not only his flesh, but his soul also—**get an advantage over us**—for the loss of one soul is a common loss"—WESLEY.

Devices. The word properly means "mental processes," "the product of mind" (MEYER).

It is translated "minds" in ch. 3. 14; 4. 4; 11. 3; Phil. 4. 7; "thought" in ch. 10. 5. In reference to Satan, all whose thoughts are evil, it may legitimately be translated devices, *i.e.* things which he "devised." (Luke 22. 31; 1 Cor. 7. 5; comp. 1 Pet. 5. 8; Rev. 12. 12.) S. Paul's meaning here is that to refuse forgiveness, when the time for it had come, would be only to give Satan an advantage, The offender had been delivered over to him. Not to release him from the bondage when he was truly repentant would be to afford the enemy of souls an opportunity of which he would not be slow to avail himself. Nothing is so likely to plunge a man into every kind of crime as despair.

12. **Now when I came to Troas**—"it seems in that passage from Asia to Macedonia, of which a short account is given (Acts 20. 1, 2), even though **a door was opened to me**—that is, there was free liberty to speak, and many were willing to hear"—WESLEY.

"Titus (see ch. 8. 6; 12. 18) had been sent by the apostle to superintend the 'collection for the saints' at Corinth (1 Cor. 16. 1). He was most probably the bearer of the former Epistle, and was anxiously expected by the apostle (ch. 7. 6) to bring information regarding the effect it had had upon the Corinthian church. Though Titus is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, he possessed in a high degree the confidence of the apostle (ch. 8. 16), as is shown by his taking the chief place—he seems even to have held a position of greater prominence than 'the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches' (ch. 8. 18)—in this important mission. Before this he, as a Gentile, had been the subject of some discussion between S. Paul and the Judaising party at Jerusalem. The latter maintained that Titus ought to be circumcised, the former that he ought not; but S. Paul carried his point. His character seems to have been one of deep earnestness and zeal (ch. 7. 13, 15; 8. 16, 17), calculated to win the confidence of the great apostle. He was afterwards placed in charge of the church in Crete, and in this capacity received from S. Paul a letter of instruction known as the Epistle to Titus"—LIAS. "**A door was opened**—an opportunity offered. Where the Master sets up a light, there is some work to be done; where He sends forth His labourers, there is some harvest to be gotten in"—TRAPP.

13. **I had no rest in my spirit**—"from an earnest desire to know how my letter had been received. **Because I did not find Titus**—in his return from you. **So I went forth into Macedonia**—where, being much nearer, I might more easily be informed concerning you. The apostle resumes the thread of his discourse (ch. 7. 2), interposing an admirable digression concerning what he had done and suffered elsewhere, the profit of which he by this means derives to the Corinthians also; and this as a prelude to his apology against the false apostles"—WESLEY.

"Notice the vivid picture, in vers. 12, 13, of S. Paul's deep anxiety about his readers' spiritual welfare. He has come to the important city of Troas to proclaim there the good news about Christ, and finds a way open to do so. But he cannot preach. For his spirit is ill at ease, waiting for tidings about his beloved children at Corinth. Drawn by this intense desire, he bids adieu to some at Troas who would gladly keep him, and once more crosses the blue Ægean to Europe. This anxiety suggests the greater importance, recognised by all true evangelists, of securing old converts than making new ones"—BEET.

14. "**To triumph**, implies not only victory, but an open manifestation of it. And as in triumphal processions, especially in the East, incense and perfumes were burned near the conqueror, the apostle beautifully alludes to this circumstance in the following verse; as likewise to the different effects which strong perfumes have upon different persons; some of whom they revive, while they throw others into the most violent disorders"—WESLEY.

"There is not any exaggeration here. The apostle was endowed with the prophetic spirit. He knew to what ends the work he had begun was tending; he had, in no inconsiderable degree, triumphed in every place where he had ministered; and he had planted those principles which he knew would accomplish a moral conquest yet more extensive and more glorious. Truth triumphs over error. The gospel triumphs over the vices of men, and is their full salvation"—WATSON. "**Now thanks be unto God.** This passage is an instance of the abrupt digressions peculiar to S. Paul's style. 'As soon as S. Paul came to the word Macedonia, memory presented to him what had greeted him there,' *i.e.* the favourable intelligence brought by Titus (ch. 7. 6, 7), 'and in his rapid way—thoughts succeeding each other like lightning—he says, without going through the form of explaining why he says it, 'Now thanks be to God'"—ROBERTSON.

15. **For we**—"the preachers of the gospel—**are to God a sweet odour of Christ.** God is well-pleased with this perfume diffused by us, both **in them that** believe and **are saved**—treated of in ch. 3. 1; 4. 2—**and in them that** obstinately disbelieve and, consequently, **perish**—treated of in ch. 4. 3–6"—WESLEY.

"The imagery of the triumphal procession is still before the apostle. *Some* of those who took part in it were destined to rewards and honours, others were doomed to perpetual imprisonment or death. Christ and His servants are a savour of life unto them who are in the way of salvation, because through conformity to the spirit of Christ's sacrifice arises conformity to His life; a savour of death unto those who are not in the way of salvation, because a deliverance refused does but make destruction inevitable. (Comp. Matt. 21. 44;

Luke 2. 34; John 3. 18–20; 9. 39; 12. 48; 15. 22)"—Lias. "If we believe this Epistle to have been written from Philippi, it is interesting to note the recurrence of the same imagery of a **sweet savour** in the Epistle to that church. (Phil. 4. 18.) Here the mind of the writer turns to the sterner, sadder side of the Roman triumph. Some who appeared in that triumph were *on their way to deliverance*, some *on their way to perish*, and this also has its analogue in the triumph of Christ. He does not shrink from the thought. In his belief in the righteousness and mercy of Christ, he is content to leave the souls of all men to His judgment. He will not the less do his work as incense-bearer, and let the **sweet savour** of the knowledge of God be wafted through the words which it has been given him to utter. All things are for His glory, for His righteousness will be seen to have been working through all"—Ellicott.

16. **And who is sufficient for these things?**—"no man living, but by the power of God's Spirit"—Wesley.

To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. The reading accepted by most recent editors is "a savour arising from death and resulting in death," and "a savour arising from life and resulting in life," according to a construction common to S. Paul, of which the most remarkable instance, perhaps, is Rom. 1. 17. The gospel is a savour arising from death, because it proclaims the death of Christ as the foundation of all reconciliation. (Comp. John 9. 39; 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24; 15. 14–18; 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.) To those only who believe in a risen, ascended, living Christ, is the gospel a savour arising from and tending to life. Dr. Plumptre remarks, on the way in which the figure of the triumphal procession is kept before the reader, "To some of those who were being led in procession, the odour of the incense would seem as a breath from Paradise, giving life and health; to others its sweetness would seem sickly and pestilential, coming as from a charnel-house." Maclaren says: "On the cross this process went on in two men, alike in necessity, alike in criminality; alike in this, that death's icy finger was just being laid upon their hearts, to stop all the flow of its wild blood and passion, but different in this, that the one of them turned himself, by God's grace, and laid hold of the gospel that was offered to him, and the other turned himself away, and derided, and died."

17. **For we are not as many, who adulterate the word of God**—"like those vintners (so the Greek word implies) who mix their wines with baser liquors. **But as of sincerity**—without any mixture—**but as from God.** This rises higher still; transmitting His pure word, not our own. **In the sight of God**—whom we regard as always present, and noting every word of our tongue—**speak we.** The tongue is ours, but the power is God's. **In Christ**—words which He gives, approves, and blesses"—Wesley.

"A question suggested by the solemnity of the position just described, before S. Paul passes to God's commendation of his work by the conversion of the Corinthians; and a reason for this question, viz. that S. Paul is very far from looking upon the gospel as mere merchandise for self-enrichment. **Before God**, etc., completes the inward picture of S. Paul's preaching. His words spring not from selfish, but from genuine purposes, and from God; and are such words as men speak when sincere and when moved by God"—Beet.

The following chapter is one long digression, and arose out of the necessity of explaining the apparent self-sufficiency and boasting of the 17th verse of this chapter. It is not till the beginning of ch. 4. that the subject of ch. 2. is taken up again.

CHAPTER III.

1. **Do we begin again to recommend ourselves**—"is it needful? Have I nothing but my own word to recommend me? S. Paul chiefly here intends himself; though not excluding Timotheus, Titus, and Silvanus. **Unless we need**—as if he had said, Do I indeed want such recommendation?"—Wesley.

"S. Paul now proceeds to recall plain proof (in vers. 2, 3) of the dignity claimed by him in ch. 2. 14 f. But he remembers that his words above may be thrown in his teeth by opponents, and anticipates it by the first question in ver. 1, and overthrows it by a second question, which compels his opponents to admit that he has **no need** to commend himself. Then, as an answer to his second question, he gives proof of his Divine mission. **Commendatory letters**—containing credentials needful for those who go among strangers. Such letters Apollos brought (Acts 18. 27) to Corinth"—Beet. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth" (Prov. 27. 2).

2. "**Ye are our recommendatory letter**—more convincing than bare words could be. **Written on our hearts**—deeply engraven there, and plainly legible to all around us"—Wesley.

Written on our hearts. "Others bear their letters of commendation in their hands, we in our consciences, being fully aware that the existence of the church of Corinth, due, under God, to us, is a sufficient authentication of the genuineness of our ministry." (See 1 Cor. 9. 2.) Olshausen, however, regards the words as referring to S. Paul's intercession for the Corinthians, just as the high priest (Ex. 28. 15–30) bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his breast when he went into the holy place to intercede with God. "The regenerate," he adds, "are linked to the heart of their spiritual father by a spiritual bond." "The fruitfulness of the people is the preacher's testimonial;

as the profiting of the scholar is the teacher's commendation"—TRAPP. "The Epistles of S. Paul were not those which were written then on parchment, or printed since in ink, but those which were written by God as truth on human hearts: **Ye are our epistle**"—ROBERTSON.

3. **Manifestly declared to be the letter of Christ**—"which He has formed and published to the world. **Ministered by us**—whom He has used herein as His instruments, therefore ye are our letter also. **Written not in tables of stone**—like the ten commandments—**but in the** tender, living **tables of their hearts**—God having taken away the hearts of stone, and given them hearts of flesh"—WESLEY.

"**Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared.** The Corinthians 'fell short in no gift,' but were 'enriched by Christ in all utterance and in all knowledge' (1 Cor. 1. 7). These were notorious facts that could not be gainsaid, capable of being 'known of all men.' **To be the epistle of Christ ministered by us**—*i.e.* brought into existence through our instrumentality. It can hardly be said that S. Paul has varied the figure of speech here. The Corinthians are an epistle. Of that epistle Christ is the Author; the thoughts and sentiments are His. S. Paul (comp. 1 Cor. 3. 5, 7, 9; 4. 1; ch. 6. 1) is the instrument by which the epistle was written. Its characters were preserved by no visible or perishable medium, but by the invisible operation of the Spirit. It was graven, not on stone, but on human hearts. And it was recognised wherever S. Paul went as the attestation of his claim to be regarded as a true minister of Christ, and this equally in his own consciousness (see last verse) and in that of all churches which he visited. Dean Stanley remarks on the number and variety of the similes with which the chapter is crowded. Dr. DALE appeals to Christian men, saying: 'I ask you to remember, at home, in the shop, and in the counting-house, that you are **epistles of Christ**; and that in your spirit, habits, and character, His very thoughts are to be translated into forms which common men can read and understand.' **Ink**—a black pigment of some kind was used by the ancients for all writings of any length. For shorter writings recourse was frequently had to waxen tablets. (See Jer. 36. 18; 2 John 12; 3 John 13, and articles 'Atramentum,' 'Tabulæ,' 'Stilus,' 'Liber,' in Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*.) **The Spirit of the living God.** S. Paul never seems to lose sight of the fact that Christianity is a communication of life—the life of Him who alone is the fountain of life (comp. also John 1. 4; 5. 26, 40; 14. 6; 2 Tim. 1. 10; 1 Pet. 2. 5)"—C. B. "**Tables of stone.** Dean Stanley refers us to Ezek. 31. 19; 36. 26, 27, and also suggests that the form of the expression, **tables of the heart**, may be derived from Prov. 3. 3, and 7. 3, not, however, from the LXX., which there has a different translation of the Hebrew word"—C. B.

4. **Such trust have we in God**—"that is, we trust in God that this is so"—WESLEY.

The words carry us back to the expressions of vers. 2 and 3, perhaps, also, to the assertion of his own sincerity and sufficiency implied in ch. 2. 16, 17. He has this confidence, but it is through Christ, who strengthens him. (Col. 1. 11.)

5. **Not that we are sufficient of ourselves**—"so much as to **think** one good thought, much less to convert sinners"—WESLEY.

"All our power for sacred performances is wholly from another. **To think**, we suppose, is an easy thing; but, unless God help, it is too hard for us. God must give us fresh supplies of His Spirit in every duty, or they cannot be rightly performed. The greatest fulness of a Christian is not the fulness of a fountain, but of a vessel, which, because always letting out, must always be taking in"—SWINNOCK. "A good thought is the least and lowest act of grace, and yet that we cannot do of ourselves; good thoughts and desires are as buds or blossoms upon a tree, which show themselves before the fruits; now if trees cannot bud of themselves, how much less can they bring forth fruits?"—AUSTEN.

6. **Who also hath made us able ministers of the new covenant**—"of the new, evangelical dispensation. **Not of the** Law, fitly called the **letter**, from God's literally writing it on the two tables. **But of the Spirit**—of the gospel dispensation, which is written on the tables of our hearts by the Spirit. **For the letter**—the Law, the Mosaic dispensation—**killeth**—seals in death those who still cleave to it. **But the Spirit**—the gospel conveying the Spirit to those who receive it—**giveth life**—both spiritual and eternal; yea, if we adhere to the literal sense even of the Moral Law, if we regard only the precept and the sanction as they stand in themselves, not as they lead us to Christ, they are doubtless a killing ordinance, and bind us down under the sentence of death"—WESLEY.

"**Ministers of a new covenant**—whose work it is to make known and carry out a new agreement of God with men. Notice the infinite superiority which S. Paul claims for the new covenant. It brings life, whereas the old covenant brought death. This contrast is not obscured by the truth that the death brought by the Law is designed by God to be the way to life. For, had not the Law been followed by the gospel, it could not, even directly, have led to life. And that the old covenant was preparatory to, and receives its entire value from, the new, which gives life at once to all who accept it, proves the infinite superiority of the latter"—BEET. "**Not of the letter, but of the Spirit.** (See Jer. 31. 31–34, and Ezek. 11. 19.) There is an obvious reference to these passages in the text. The difference between the old covenant and the new was that the former *prescribed*, the latter *inspired*; the former

gave written precepts, the latter the power to fulfil them; the former laid down the rules, the latter brought man's heart into the condition in which such rules became a part of his nature. The old form was superseded by the *principle*. Instead of saying, 'Thou shalt not say Fool or Raca,' Christ gave the principle of Love"—ROBERTSON. "The words **of the letter**, and **of the Spirit**, however, depend not on the word *covenant*, but on the word *ministers*. (See also Rom. 1. 16; 1 Cor. 1. 18, 24 and notes); also, for the expression (Rom. 2. 27; 7. 6), 'What then, was not that Law spiritual? How then did he say, We know that the Law is spiritual? Spiritual indeed, for it came from God, *but it bestowed not a spirit*"—CHRYSOSTOM. "**For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life**—'quykeneth,' Wyclif. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 45.) The formal enactment, whether positive or negative, can only *kill*. For while it makes no difference whatever in the condition of the man who fulfils it, it condemns him who disobeys or neglects to perform its precepts. (See John 3. 17, 18; Rom. 3. 20; 4. 20; 5. 13; 7. 10.) The 'spirit,' the breath or influence proceeding from God, can only 'give life,' since it comes from Him who is 'life,' and by breathing into man a new heart, enables him to perform naturally, without the aid of any enactments, the things that are pleasing to God. 'The Law, if it lay hold of a murderer, putteth him to death; the gospel, if it lay hold of a murderer, enlighteneth and giveth him life' (CHRYSOSTOM). (Comp. John 6. 63; Rom. 8. 11; 1 Cor. 15. 45; Gal. 6. 8; 1 Pet. 3. 18)"—C. B.

7. **And if the ministration of death**—"that is, the Mosaic dispensation, which proves such to those who prefer it to the gospel, the most considerable part of which was **engraven** on those two **stones**, was attended with so great glory"—WESLEY.

"The thoughts of the apostle have travelled to the record of the circumstances connected with the giving of the Law as the foundation of the first covenant, and of them he proceeds to speak fully. We can almost picture him to ourselves as taking up his LXX. version of the Law, and reproducing its very words and thoughts. **So that the children of Israel**, etc. They could not bear to look on the glory, even though it was perishing and evanescent"—ELLICOTT.

8. **The ministration of the Spirit**—"that is, the Christian dispensation"—WESLEY.

"The ministry of the gospel, which conveys the Spirit to those who believe. (Comp. Gal. 3. 4.) 'He that supplies to you the Spirit.' **Shall be in glory**—inference from the splendour of the ministry of Moses"—BEET.

9. **The ministration of condemnation.** "Such the Mosaic dispensation proved to all the Jews who rejected the gospel; whereas through the gospel (hence called **the ministration of righteousness**) God both imputed and imparted righteousness to all believers. But how can the Moral Law (which alone was engraven on stone) be the ministration of condemnation, if it requires no more than a sincere obedience, such as is proportioned to our infirm state? If this is sufficient to justify us, then the Law ceases to be a 'ministration of condemnation.' It becomes (flatly contrary to the apostle's doctrine) the 'ministration of righteousness'"—WESLEY.

"This verse develops, and thus supports, the argument of vers. 7, 8. **Condemnation**—the link connecting 'letter' with 'kills' in ver. 6. The Law pronounces the condemnation of all who disobey it; and therefore of all men. For none can obey it. Consequently, the only immediate effect of the Law is that just so far as we know it we are condemned by it. For 'through Law comes understanding of sin' (Rom. 3. 20). By conveying to men such a law Moses was a minister of condemnation. (Comp. 'minister of sin,' Gal. 2. 17.) **Of righteousness**—manifested in the gospel of faith for all who believe. (Rom. 1. 17; 3. 21 f.) As minister of the gospel, S. Paul was a means of imparting to men this righteousness. It is the link connecting the gospel preached by S. Paul and the Holy Spirit received by those who believe it. The immediate effect of the Law is to bring men under God's frown; the immediate effect of the gospel is that they rejoice in the smile of God. And S. Paul argues that if, as recorded in Ex. 34. 29, glory pertains to the former, then more abundant glory pertains to the latter"—BEET.

10. **It hath no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excelleth**—"that is, none in comparison of this more excellent glory. The greater light swallows up the less"—WESLEY.

Bishop WORDSWORTH, who places this passage and the LXX. of Ex. 34. in parallel columns, shows how S. Paul throughout this chapter is using the very words of the LXX., which must therefore be the index to his meaning. He paraphrases thus, "That was *glorified*, but glorious as it was, it was not glorified in one respect—that is, it was not glorified relatively to and in comparison with the *Evangelical* ministry, which far transcends its glory, and absorbs it." BEET says: "If a supernatural brightness attested the grandeur of the old covenant, and if the old covenant now sinks into insignificance in presence of the new, surely an infinite splendour belongs to, and therefore awaits, the ministry of the new covenant. For nothing less than infinite splendour can throw into the shade the splendour of the old covenant."

11. **That which remaineth**—"that dispensation which remains to the end of the world; that spirit and life which remain for ever"—WESLEY.

"With the passing nature of the covenant of which he was mediator, the passing bright-

ness of Moses' face was in beautiful though incidental agreement. Even the little outward details of the two covenants were in harmony with their inward essence"—BEET.

12. **Having therefore this hope**—"being fully persuaded of this"—WESLEY.

"**Seeing then that we have such hope**—*i.e.* the hope that the Christian covenant is one of which the glory is permanent—**we use great plainness of speech**—('trist,' *i.e.* 'trust,' Wyclif; 'boldness,' Tyndale and Cranmer). The translation, 'boldness of speech,' we owe to the Geneva Version. The word means originally (1) fulness or frankness of 'speech.' Hence it comes to mean (2) openness, frankness generally, and hence (3) boldness, intrepidity. The former is the meaning here. S. Paul contrasts the fulness and frankness of the gospel on all matters relating to the future of man with the mysterious silence of the Law (*i.e.* the books of Moses), which hardly in the most distant manner allude to a future life. It may be remarked that even Jesus Christ Himself used much reserve (Matt. 8. 4; 9. 30; 12. 16; 13. 10–13; 16. 20; 17. 9) until His work on earth was finished. Then (Matt. 28. 19; Mark 16. 15) He decreed that this reserve should cease for ever. 'We speak everywhere with freedom, keeping back nothing, concealing nothing, suspecting nothing, but speaking plainly' (CHRYSOSTOM). 'A ministry whose very life is outspokenness and free fearlessness—which scorns to take a *via media* because it is safe in the eyes of the world' (ROBERTSON). This unrestrained openness proceeds from his conviction that the future glory will substantiate his words"—S. C.

13. "**And** we do **not act as Moses** did, **who put a vail over his face**—which is to be understood with regard to his writings also. **So that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly to the end of that** dispensation **which is** now **abolished**—the end of this was Christ. The whole Mosaic dispensation tended to, and terminated in, him; but the Israelites had only a dim, wavering sight of Him of whom Moses spake in an obscure, covert manner"—WESLEY.

"That this privilege of unreserve was not equally vouchsafed to the old ministry is shown allegorically. It is assumed for the purpose of the allegory that the sons of Israel also, had they seen the gradual extinction of the glory on the face of Moses, would have regarded it as an emblem of transitoriness, and have fixed their gaze unduly upon the termination of his ministry. With this is combined the idea that a premature discernment of this transitoriness, by a people in spiritual infancy, would have prevented the old ministry from taking its full effect as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. We must remember that the passage is allegorical, and therefore exempted from strict historical criticism, as well as that the apostle has in view, not Moses only but the false teachers at Corinth, who deliberately used a vail to hide the gospel truth. Moses prophesied of the Messiah, and looked forward to a dispensation beyond his own. (Deut. 18. 15)"—S. C.

14. "**The same vail remaineth** on their understanding **unremoved**—not so much as 'folded back' (so the word implies) so as to admit a little glimmering light. **On the** public **reading of the Old Testament.** The vail is not now on the face of Moses or of his writings, but 'on the reading' of them, and 'on the heart of them that believe not.' **Which is taken away in Christ**—that is, from the heart of them that truly believe on Him"—WESLEY.

"The effect produced by the vail. They did not see the end of that which was passing away, 'but,' on the contrary, 'their thoughts got hardened.' This was the exact opposite of the result produced by the apostle's frank discharge of *his* office, which inscribed the tablets of the heart with the Spirit of the living God. The 'thoughts' are the spiritual perceptions, discernments, intuitions. These lost their sensibility and quickness, and became callous. The vail continued **not uplifted**, because it was in Christ that it was (to be) done away, and the Jews had not yet been converted to Christ. He is speaking of the national conversion, the salvation of all Israel, which is treated at length in Rom. 11"—S. C. "Unless God give sight as well as light, and enlighten both organ and object, we can see nothing"—TRAPP.

16. **When it**—"their heart—**shall turn to the Lord**—to Christ by living faith. **The vail is taken away**—that very moment; and they see, with the utmost clearness, how all types and prophecies of the Law are fully accomplished in Him"—WESLEY.

The vail shall be taken away. "The tense in the original is present, not future, and may be interpreted (1) with Bishop Wordsworth, 'is in process of removal,' or perhaps better (2) with Dean Alford, 'is there and then removed, *i.e.* at the moment when the heart turns to the Lord, just as Moses took off the vail when he turned to speak to God.' (See also Isa. 25. 7.) It is to be observed that these words are a quotation of the LXX. of Ex. 34. 34, substituting, however, the *present* for the *past* tense"—LIAS. "S. Paul cannot leave his people in darkness without expressing a hope that they will some day come to the light. This verse is true of each individual who turns to Christ. **Is taken away**—a fixed, unchangeable principle of the kingdom of God. So surely as one turns to Christ, the vail is removed"—BEET.

17. **Now the Lord**—"Christ **is that Spirit** of the Law whereof I speak, to which **the letter** was intended **to lead. And where the Spirit of the Lord**, Christ, **is, there is liberty**—not the vail, the emblem of slavery. There is liberty from servile fear, liberty from the guilt and from the power of sin, liberty to

behold with open face the glory of the Lord"—WESLEY.

"**Now the Lord is that Spirit**—*lit.* 'the Spirit,' *i.e.* the Spirit which was to replace the letter. The sense is as follows: 'The Lord (of whom I have just spoken—see last verse) (is the Spirit of which I have just spoken—see last verse) is the Spirit of which I have said (ver. 6) that it should be substituted for the letter.' For the Lord, even Jesus Christ, is Himself that new power — that higher inspiration — through which man finds what he ought to do written, no longer in precepts external to himself, but in his own regenerate heart. The new birth of the Spirit is but the implanting in man the humanity of Jesus Christ. 'The last Adam was made a life-giving Spirit' (1 Cor. 15. 45). This expression, like John 4. 24, refers, not to the *person*, but to the *essential nature* of God, just as in John 6. 63, the expression is applied even to the words of God, when they communicate to man essential principles of God's spiritual kingdom. (Comp. also John 1. 13; 3. 3, 5; Rom. 8. 2, 4.) Other explanations of this most difficult passage have been given. (1) 'The Spirit is the Lord,' Chrysostom; and he remarks on the order of the words in the Greek of John 4. 24 in support of his translation; (2) 'The Lord is identical with the Holy Spirit'; (3) 'The Lord with whom Moses spoke is the Holy Spirit'; (4) 'The Lord is the Holy Ghost, in so far as the Holy Ghost is the living principle of the indwelling of Christ'; (5) 'The Lord no dout is a Sprete,' Tyndale, whom Cranmer follows. It seems on the whole best to interpret the words as above. S. Paul now boldly declares that the 'Spirit' of which he has spoken is nothing less than Christ Himself. **And where the Spirit of the Lord is.** Hitherto St Paul has been speaking of the *Divine nature* of Him who transforms the heart of man. He now speaks of the *personal agency* through whom that work is achieved. Christ does these things by His Spirit, who is also the Spirit of the Father. (Rom. 8. 9; comp. also Gal. 4. 6; Phil. 1. 19; 1 Pet. 1. 11; with John 14. 16, 17, 26; 15. 26; 1 Cor. 2. 10–12, etc.) This interpretation involves no incongruity with the rest of the passage. The Three Persons in the blessed Trinity are one in essence, and that essence is Spirit. But the personal agency whereby God works His purpose in man's heart is the Holy Spirit, as Scripture everywhere declares. See the passages cited above. **There is liberty**—liberty not only to speak openly (ver. 12), but (ver. 18) to gaze with unveiled face upon the glory of God, and thus to learn how to fulfil the law of man's being. This liberty is the special privilege assured to man by the gospel. (See John 8. 32; Rom. 6. 18, 22)"—C. B. "There is no freedom from the shackles that bind the soul to earth, the flesh, and sin, till the Holy Spirit sets us free, and by the lightning force of truth breaks the chains that bind us to sin"—GUTHRIE.

18. "**And**, accordingly, **all we** that believe in Him, **beholding as in a glass**—in the mirror of the gospel—**the glory of the Lord**—His glorious love — **are transformed into the same image**—into the same love—**from** one degree of this **glory** to another, in a manner worthy of His almighty Spirit. What a beautiful contrast is here! Moses saw the glory of the Lord, and it rendered his face so bright that he covered it with a vail; Israel not being able to bear the reflected light. We behold His glory in the glass of His word, and our faces shine too; yet we vail them not, but diffuse the lustre which is continually increasing, as we fix the eye of our mind more and more steadfastly on His glory displayed in the gospel"—WESLEY.

But we all with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit (R. V.). BEET says: "This verse reveals the infinite value of persevering Christian contemplation. As we continue looking into the gospel mirror there rises before us with increasing clearness an image in which are combined every element of moral grandeur in its highest degree, the image of the GOD-MAN. As we contemplate it we feel its power (for it is a living and life-giving image of the Lord of the Spirit), and ourselves are changed, in a manner corresponding with Christ's gifts of the Spirit, into a likeness of Him at whom we gaze." WAITE says: "The idea apparently is that the glorified Saviour is realised by the spiritual vision as clearly as in a burnished mirror (ch. 3. 14)." And NEWMAN, who regards the verse as expressing the devotional spirit of the people of God, adds: "As speech is the organ of human society, and the means of human civilisation, so is prayer the instrument of Divine fellowship and Divine training."

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Therefore having this ministry**—spoken of, 2 Cor. 3. 6—**as we have received mercy**—"have been mercifully supported in all our trials—**we faint not**—we desist not in any degree from our glorious enterprise"—WESLEY.

The first two verses of this chapter contain the principles of the Christian ministry; they embrace its motives—a sense of mercy and a sense of hope; they declare its straightforwardness, its scorn of craft and secresy, its rejection of pious frauds and adroit casuistry; and they show that its influence is moral, and not official. The same topic and reasoning are continued to ver. 7. The persons addressed are still those whom he hopes to save from Judaism, and to whom therefore he must justify fully his apostleship and his mode of exercising it. On this account, *i.e.* because of the transcendent superiority of his ministry, holding it not by self-appointment, but having received it, utterly unworthy as he was (1 Cor. 15. 9), by an act of God's mercy, he does not

fail in the courage which both the mercy and the ministry demand of him. He claims for his office all the glory that belongs to it, and he preaches boldly the pure gospel, whatever it may cost him (ch. 3. 12).

2. **But have renounced**—"set at open defiance—**the hidden things of shame**—all things which men need to hide, or to be ashamed of. **Not walking in craftiness**—using no disguise, subtlety, guile. **Nor privily corrupting the pure word of God**—by additions or alterations, or by attempting to accommodate it to the taste of the hearers"—WESLEY.

"The truth appeals to every conscience, however wicked or ignorant. For it sets forth and agrees with the spiritual realities of every man's own heart, and proclaims that which every man's heart knows to be true. For the written Law accords with the law written in the heart; and the gospel accords with man's need of salvation. Otherwise there would be no hope for the unsaved"—BEET.

"**But by manifestation of the truth**—*i.e.* by bringing the truth clearly and plainly to light, without any attempt at concealment—**commending.** The word 'commending' has here obviously the same signification as 'recommend'—this cannot be said of ch. 3—**to every man's conscience.** The individual conscience is, and always must be, the ultimate tribunal to which all teaching must appeal, and S. Paul assumes that in it there resides a faculty of appreciating and acknowledging truth"—LIAS. "A pure conscience hath a witness in every man's bosom. (See. 1 Cor. 14. 24)"—TRAPP.

3. **But if our gospel also**—"as well as the Law of Moses"—WESLEY.

But and if our gospel is vailed, it is vailed in them that are perishing. The apostle here refers to an objection, "You say that a vail lay upon the hearts of the Jews when Moses was read. But your gospel is not clear and evident to all." For his answer see next note. **It is hid to them that are lost**—*lit.* "is hidden among the perishing." Our gospel *is* hid too, in some cases, I grant. But it is hid only in perishing souls, who will not lay hold on the only hope of deliverance. (Comp. John 3. 18; Acts 4. 12.) This is not the language of logic, but of deep and strong conviction.

4. **The god of this world.** "What a sublime and horrible description of Satan! He is indeed the god of all that believe not, and works in them with inconceivable energy. **Hath blinded**—not only veiled, the eye of their understanding. **Illumination** — is properly the reflection or propagation of light, from those who are already enlightened, to others. **Who is the image of God.** Hence also we may understand how great is the glory of Christ. He that sees the Son sees the Father in the face of Christ. The Son exactly exhibits the Father to us"—WESLEY.

"It is the worldly heart which hides the truth. **The light of the glorious gospel** is shut out by ourselves from our lives, apart from immorality, apart even from actual sin. For worldliness is distinct from sin, and the denunciation of it is peculiar to Christianity. It does not consist in distinct acts, nor in thoughts of transgression, but it is the spirit of a whole life, which hides all that is invisible, real, and eternal, because it is devoted to the transient and the unreal. Christ and the world cannot exist in the same heart. Men who find their all in the world—how can they, fevered by its business, excited by its pleasures, petrified by its maxims, see God in His purity, or comprehend the calm radiance of eternity?"—ROBERTSON. "Satan obtained the world by conquest; but conquest is a cracked title. A thief is not the more honest because he was able to force the poor traveller to deliver his purse; and a thief on the throne, like Satan, is no better than a private one on the road"—GURNALL.

5. **For**—"the fault is not in us, neither in the doctrine they hear from us—**we preach not ourselves**—as able either to enlighten, or pardon, or sanctify you—**but Jesus Christ**—as your only wisdom, righteousness, sanctification. **And ourselves your servants**—ready to do the meanest offices—**for Jesus' sake**—not for honour, interest, or pleasure"—WESLEY.

For we preach not ourselves. "A reason is here given for the foregoing statement. If S. Paul's gospel be hid, it is not because it is his own, and therefore destined to come to nought. (See ch. 3. 7.) No, it is the gospel of Christ which he preaches, and if any refuse to listen to it, it is because he has suffered himself to be blinded by the devil"—C. B. "We are to preach, not the Christ of this sect or of that man, but Christ fully—Christ our Hope and Pattern and Life—Christ in us, the Light which is in every man subjectively; and Christ the Light which, shining objectively in His life, and death, and resurrection, daily increases, as we gaze; the light of the Christ within us"—ROBERTSON. **And ourselves your servants**—"the original is stronger, 'and ourselves your **slaves**'—he does not say 'the slaves of Jesus,' but what is by far more humble and lowly, 'your slaves.' 'Yet that he may not appear to speak or think in too abject a strain, for Jesus' sake' (ESTIUS)"—C. B.

For God hath shined in our hearts—"the hearts of all those whom the god of this world no longer blinds. God who is Himself our Light; not only the Author of light, but also the Fountain of it. **To enlighten us with the knowledge of the glory of God**—of His glorious love and of His glorious image—**in the face of Jesus Christ**—which reflects His glory in another manner than the face of Moses did"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul states the reason why it is impossible for him to preach himself in any other capacity than that of a servant, or to preach anyone else except Christ as Lord. The allusion to his

conversion is obvious. The scales which fell from his bodily eyes at Damascus were but types of those which fell from his spirit. What was revealed to him was **the glory of God in the face of Christ**, God's image, whom he saw in His glorified form at his conversion. The express object which the shining of God in his heart had was the illumining or the luminous diffusion amongst men of the knowledge of this glory. (See Acts 9. 15, and comp. Gal. 1. 16.) When God had so converted him, and so disclosed to him the object of his conversion, how could he do otherwise than preach Christ as Lord, and the express image of the Father's perfection, or himself as anything else than the servant of the Church for Christ's sake!"—S. C. "**In the face of Jesus Christ.** The same word is used here as in ch. 2. 10. See note on the words 'image of God,' above. 'A notable place, whence we learn that God is not to be investigated in His unsearchable height, for He inhabits the light unapproachable (1 Tim. 6. 16), but to be known as far as He reveals Himself in Christ. It is more useful for us to behold God as He appears in His only-begotten Son, than to investigate His secret essence' (CALVIN)"—C. B.

7. **But we**—"not only the apostles, but all true believers—**have this treasure**—of Divine light, love, glory—**in earthen vessels**—in frail, feeble, perishing bodies. He proceeds to show that afflictions, yea death itself, are so far from hindering the ministration of the Spirit, that they even further it, sharpen the ministers, and increase the fruit. **That the excellence of the power**—which works these in us—**may** undeniably appear **to be of God**"—WESLEY.

"The treasure is the glorious ministry described in the last verse, not excluding the glory which he has in common with all believers, according to ch. 3. 18. The earthenware vessel, which is not the whole man (ver. 16), but only the body, expresses the absence of beauty and solidity, such as belongs to vessels of gold and silver, and the liability to defacement, breakage, and destruction. This does not imply a general baseness of the body. Christianity insists upon the true dignity of the body, which is the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost here, and destined to glory hereafter. God *intended* that **the power** should be His, for had He used as His ministers the great ones of the earth, it might have seemed that the gospel was established by human agency. But it was clear that the work was God's, when the organs employed were frail and worn"—S. C. "In a leathern purse may be a precious pearl"—TRAPP.

8. **We are troubled**, etc. "The four articles in this verse respect inward, the four in the next outward, afflictions. In each clause the former part shows the 'earthen vessels,' the latter 'the excellence of the power.' **Not crushed**—not swallowed up in care and anxiety. **Perplexed**—what course to take, but never despairing of His power and love to carry us through"—WESLEY.

Of these verses (8–9), BEET says: "We have a description of the weakness of the earthenware vessels, and of their preservation. **Helpless**—confined in narrow space. (Same word in ch. 6. 12; Rom. 2. 9.) This verse proves that it denotes something worse than *afflicted*. At every point difficulties press upon them; but they are not without way of escape. **Perplexed**—not knowing which way to go, seeing no way open to them. **Utterly perplexed**—same word as 'without way of escape' in ch. 1. 8. Although there seemed to be no way open to them, they were not absolutely without a way. This is not contradicted, but confirmed, by ch. 1. 8. From their own point of view there was then no way of escape: but God made one. **Pursued**—as in Rom. 12. 14. **Not deserted**, 'or *not left behind in*' peril—not abandoned to their pursuers. (Comp. Heb. 13. 5.) **Thrown down**—as if in their flight. **Not perishing**—a last triumphant denial. Notice the climax. At every step they are heavily pressed; but their path is not hedged up. Enemies pursue them; but they are not left alone in their flight. They fall; but even then they survive."

10. **Always**—"wherever we go—**bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus**—continually expecting to lay down our lives like Him—**that the life of Jesus might be manifested in our body also**—that we may also rise and be glorified like Him"—WESLEY.

"While apparently continuing the description of his hardships S. Paul now explains their relation to the sufferings of Christ, and then states their Divine purpose. **Always**—parallel to 'in everything' (ver. 8)—the putting to death—the whole process which ended in the death of Christ—**carrying about**, etc., explained in ver. 11, 'given up to death because of Jesus.' S. Paul's hardships and deadly peril arose from the same cause as those which led Christ to the cross; and were, therefore, in some sense, a repetition and reproduction of them. **In order that**, etc., lays stress on the Divine purpose of those perils. **Also the life**—the resurrection life, placed in conspicuous contrast to the death, of Christ. **Made manifest.** S. Paul's body, rescued by God's power from deadly peril, was a conspicuous picture of Jesus alive after He had been put to death. For the miraculous power which raised Christ from the grave saved S. Paul from going down into it (comp. ch. 13. 4). It was a picture of His *life*; in order that thus the power (ver. 7) of God might be manifested"—BEET. "The life of Jesus dwelling in the hearts of His saints is shown in the power they possess of enduring, in their often feeble frames, sufferings and toils such as might daunt the strongest men, as well as in the unselfishness which welcomes such sufferings and toils for the glory of God and the well-being of man.

Meyer cites Ignatius, 'If we do not of our own accord accept death after the manner of His passion, His life is not in us.'"

11. **For we who yet live**—"who are not yet killed for the testimony of Jesus—**are always delivered unto death**—are perpetually in the very jaws of destruction, which we willingly submit to, that we may 'obtain a better resurrection'"—WESLEY.

"**Always**, which is emphatic, and begins the verse in the original, shows more distinctly that the being put to death is not a thing undergone once for all, but a continually renewed process. He dies daily. **We the living**, which is rather more pointed than 'we which live,' serves in part the same purpose, signifying that he is maintained in life only to be handed over to death again. The original word for **are delivered** is the same which is used of Judas Iscariot's 'handing over' Jesus to His Roman executioners. Christ applies it both to Himself and His disciples. (Luke 21. 12.) It means strictly 'are being handed over.' The strong phrase, **in our mortal flesh**, is in an emphatic position at the end of the verse, and, substituted for 'in our body' of ver. 10, indicates how deeply the resurrection-life of Christ penetrated in the apostle's physical organism. It communicated a living power and a kind of imperishableness to the very substance of the body, to the flesh which is essentially mortal and corruptible'"—S. C.

12. **So then death worketh in us, life in you.** "You live in peace; we die daily. **Yet**—living or dying, so long as we believe, we cannot but speak"—WESLEY.

"**Death**—the abstract principle personified. In the plots and attacks of enemies 'death' was active, stretching out its hand to take them. And in their spared life, preserved by God's power and spent in proclaiming the gospel, the abstract principle of **life** was at work among their hearers. The preachers daily felt themselves sinking into the grave; and their daily deliverance was daily working eternal life among their converts"—BEET.

13. **Having the same spirit of faith**—"which animated the saints of old, David in particular, when he said, **I believed, and therefore have I spoken**—that is, I trusted in God, and therefore He hath put this song of praise in my mouth. **We also speak**—we preach the gospel, even in the midst of affliction and death, because we believe that God will **raise us up** from the dead, and will **present us**, ministers **with you**, all His members, 'faultless before His presence with exceeding joy'"—WESLEY.

"**We having the same spirit of faith.** The idea of boldness and outspokenness is still present with the apostle. He speaks openly, because he has reason to believe what he says. And the thought is connected with the last verse by the fact that it is to his speaking that the Corinthians owe their life. The 'same spirit' means the spirit that dwelt in the Psalmist. **According as it is written.** (See Ps. 116. 10.) The Psalmist was 'sore troubled,' but his faith enabled him to triumph over affliction and to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord. A similar faith enabled S. Paul and his fellow-labourers to declare the good tidings of Christ, though encompassed by infirmity and trouble"—LIAS. "The writer had been in imminent peril of life, and in consequence of *his belief* in God's protection, he spake in prayer for deliverance. Having obtained it, he proclaimed the mercy and righteousness of God, and declared that he should be *well-pleasing to God in the land of the living.* Similarly the apostle, having faith, confirmed by experience, that he will be delivered from his deadly trials further to serve God in the land of the living, does not allow his sufferings to stop his speaking"—S. C.

14. **Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus.** Here we have the source of the apostle's faith and confidence. He knew that the resurrection of Christ was an accomplished fact. Hence arose his persuasion that a life was given to him which should survive and overcome even death itself. **By Jesus.** All recent editors substitute "with Jesus," which, however, does not mean at the same time with, but by virtue of the operation of the same life and spirit. For the life that dwells in Jesus dwells also in His disciples. (John 6. 54.) We are the members, Christ the Head; we are the crop, "Christ the first-fruits." (1 Cor. 15. 23.) (Comp. Rom. 1. 4, as well as ch. 3. 17, 18, and Eph. 2. 5, 6; Col. 2. 13.) Chrysostom omits the words altogether. Meyer remarks that though S. Paul believed that he and the majority of his readers would live to see the actual coming of Christ in the flesh, the possibility that this might not be the case was ever before his eyes. (See 1 Cor. 15. 51; 1 Thess. 4. 15.)

15. **For all things**—"whether adverse or prosperous — **are for your sakes** — for the profit of all that believe, as well as all that preach. **That the overflowing grace**—which continues you alive both in soul and body—**might abound**—yet more **through the thanksgiving of many** — for thanksgiving invites more abundant grace"—WESLEY.

"The statement resembles that of ch. 1. 6, and the object which God has in view is the same with that described in the latter part of ch. 1. 2. **The grace** is the continual deliverance from death, as is the gift in ch. 1. 12. Its **having abounded** consists in its being ample and always vouchsafed. The original means, 'having come to greater increase.' The longer he is spared, the greater will be the number of persons won to Christ, or confirmed in Christ, and the greater the company of thanksgivers. The rendering of thanks and glory to God, for the inestimable benefits received through Christ, implies the restoration

of the true relation between God and man, and is, according to the apostle's view, the end and aim of everything in this world"—S. C.

16. **Therefore**—"because of this grace—**we faint not. The outward man** — the body. **The inward man**—the soul"—WESLEY.

The phrase **outward man** occurs only here. The "inward man" is spoken of in Rom. 7. 2, and Eph. 3. 16. In both passages it denotes not the whole of man's immaterial nature, but its highest part, through which he is receptive of Divine influences, of illumination, and of becoming a "new creature." The idea of "renewal" occurs in three other places in S. Paul—Rom. 12. 2; Eph. 4. 23; Col. 3. 2. The meaning here is not that he is receiving new supplies of resolution, courage, energy, enabling him to continue his work with intensified vigour, but that the spiritual man, according to Col. 3. 10, is **renewed** . . . according to the image of Him that created him. PETER MARTYR, dying, said: "My body is weak, my mind is well, well for the present, and it will be better hereafter." "There are some men to whom this hope is impossible. There are some who live a merely human life; and life merely as such, since it does not necessarily imply immortality, produces no inward certainty of an existence beyond the grave. But S. Paul, beset by persecution, the martyr of the cross, daily flying for his life, drew immortal comforts out of all his trials. Every peril, every decay of the outward, strengthened in him that inward man 'risen with Christ,' which is the earnest of our immortal life"—ROBERTSON.

17. **Our light affliction.** "The beauty and sublimity of S. Paul's expressions here, as descriptive of heavenly glory, opposed to temporal afflictions, surpass all imagination, and cannot be preserved in any translation or paraphrase, which after all must sink infinitely below the astonishing original"—WESLEY.

"The explanation of these two opposite processes going on simultaneously is that the same affliction, which works the physical waste, works also the spiritual renewal. It is almost impossible to reproduce the force of the original, in which the language labours under the load of glory. The momentary lightness of our affliction worketh for us, in a surpassing manner, to a surpassing result, an eternal weight of glory. Affliction, generally regarded as a load, has here the quality of lightness. Glory, generally regarded as an ethereal splendour, is a weight. The affliction is not light in itself, but only when put in the balance with the weight; nor momentary in itself, but only when set against eternity. (Rom. 8. 17, 18, is the parallel to this passage; comp. Heb. 2. 9, 10.) *Compensation* for affliction does not seem to be any part of the meaning; he is speaking rather of the *immediate* communication of Christ's spirit and life to those who bear His sufferings, which, in the forthcoming kingdom, will reveal itself in glory"—WAITE. "**Worketh for us.** If our dear Lord did not put these thorns into our bed, we should sleep out our lives and lose our glory: affliction calls to us as the angel to Elijah, 'Up,' thou hast a great way to go. **A far more exceeding**—words are too weak to express heaven's happiness"—TRAPP.

18. **The things that are seen** — "men, money, things of earth. **The things that are not seen**—God, grace, heaven"—WESLEY.

"**At the things which are not seen.** The Christian habitually views all that comes before him from the standpoint of the invisible world, which is revealed to him by the spirit from within. (See 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10, 13; 1 John 4. 5, 6; also Heb. 11. 1.) **For the things which are seen are temporal**—rather, 'temporary,' *i.e.* they last, and are intended to last, but a season. **But the things which are not seen are eternal.** Here was the secret of the apostle's confidence. The invisible truths of which he was persuaded, which lay at the root of the resurrection of Christ, and therefore of the moral strength he felt within him, and was enabled to impart to others, rested upon no uncertain basis, but upon the unchangeable will of the Eternal God"—LIAS. "**The things which are seen** are this visible world with its circumstances and experiences, whether they bring with them earthly good, or such evil as extreme bodily suffering. **The things which are not seen** are the future kingdom, with all its glorious circumstances and mode of existence, not excluding the body of glory itself. The reason for fixing the view upon the things not seen, and averting it from the seen, is that the gaze at the eternal qualifies, the gaze at the temporary disqualifies, men for glory"—S. C.

CHAPTER V.

1. **Our earthly house**—"which is only a tabernacle, or tent, not designed for a lasting habitation"—WESLEY.

"**For we know.** This verse gives the reason for what has gone before. 'We are consoled in our present afflictions, sustained in our hope of future glory, supported in our conviction that what is visible is speedily to be replaced by what is eternal, by the knowledge, spiritually acquired, that God has prepared a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15. 44) to replace the present frail and temporary habitation of the soul.' Calvin remarks that this, with S. Paul, is not a matter of *opinion* or *belief*, but of actual *knowledge*, a boast which no heathen dare have made. **Our earthly house of this tabernacle**—earthly, not earthy. That which exists *upon* the earth, not what is made of earth. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 40 and 47; see also John 3. 12; Phil. 2. 10.) **House of this tabernacle** is better rendered 'tabernacle-house.' Stanley suggests our English word 'tenement' as best expressing the idea of the

original, and supposes the Greek word to have been suggested to S. Paul by his Cilician house, as well as by his occupation of tent-making. (Acts 18. 3.) A similar expression is found in 2 Pet. 1. 13, and in Wisd. 9. 15"—C. B. "**For we know**—not we think, or hope only; this is the triumph of trust; this is, as Latimer calls it, 'the sweetmeats of the feast of a good conscience.' There are other dainty dishes in this feast, but this is the banquet"—TRAPP. "**A house not made with hands**—not as contrasted with the earthly body, which is also 'not made with hand,' but with *other* houses which are made with hand"—ALFORD. The expression is used to mark the Divine origin of the spiritual body. "It cannot be questioned that there is a deep and wide testimony in man's nature to the existence of a God, and of a future life; it may be pronounced either true or false, but it must be admitted to exist"—KER. "Man is, by the terms of his existence, a being of eternity, and he cannot unmake himself"—LIDDON.

2. **Desiring to be clothed upon.** "This body, which is now covered with flesh and blood, with the glorious house which is from heaven. Instead of flesh and blood, which cannot enter heaven, the rising body will be clothed or covered with what is analogous thereto, but incorruptible and immortal. Macarius speaks largely of this"—WESLEY.

"*Argument of* vers. 2-4.—By Christians now death is looked upon without terrible recoil, as being the only entrance into life. We bow to the inevitable. But in the early Christians the possibility of surviving the coming of Christ woke up with new intensity man's natural love of life, and made death seem very dark. They therefore longed eagerly for Christ's return, hoping thus to clothe themselves with immortal raiment, without laying aside their mortal bodies. This yearning for an immortal body, S. Paul felt to be Divinely implanted, and therefore not doomed to disappointment. But the possibility of death to S. Paul was too real to be ignored. Therefore, in view of it, his yearning for an immortal body assured him that if his present body be removed by death a heavenly body awaits him. For, otherwise, he will stand before Christ as a naked spirit, in utter contradiction to yearnings which he felt to be Divine, and of whose realisation he had a Divine pledge. Thus a purely human instinct, not weakened but intensified by Christianity, and sanctified by the felt presence of the Holy Spirit, is seen to be a prophecy of God's purpose concerning us"—BEET. "The flesh will not be annihilated, but spiritualised, glorified, and beautified, as the human body of Christ was at the transfiguration"—S. JEROME.

3. **If being clothed**—"that is, with the image of God, while we are in the body. **We shall not be found naked**—of the wedding garment"—WESLEY.

"If Christ shall find him at His advent not divested of his natural body by death, but still alive, his assumption of the new body will be a super-investment, a process like that of putting on an upper garment"—S. C.

4. **We groan, being burdened.** "The apostle speaks with exact propriety. A burden naturally expresses groans. And we are here burdened with numberless afflictions, infirmities, temptations. **Not that we would be unclothed**—not that we desire to remain without a body. Faith does not understand that philosophical contempt of what the wise Creator has given. **But clothed upon**—with the glorious, immortal, incorruptible, spiritual body. **That what is mortal**—this present mortal body—**may be swallowed up of life**—covered with that which lives for ever"—WESLEY.

"**Not for that we would be unclothed**, etc.—that is, it is not that we are to get rid of something, but to gain something. Not the lowering of the body, but the strengthening of the spirit—that is spirituality. S. Paul taught that the true way of mortifying the flesh is to strengthen the spirit. The mortal will disappear in the elevation of the immortal. It is quite possible that men might conceive (of the future state) as a disembodied state, and suppose the apostle to represent life in a visible form as a degradation"—ROBERTSON. "Such was the view of Greek philosophers almost without exception (see note on 1 Cor. 15. 12). S. Paul, affirming the old Jewish view that God had created all things, and made them very good, entirely repudiates this doctrine, and declares that he does not desire separation from the body, but only its spiritualisation. 'S. Paul regards it as an especial happiness not to taste death, not to be obliged to put off this body, but to be glorified living like Elijah, drawing the heavenly body over the present mortal body as a garment, yet in such a manner that the mortal body is absorbed in the nature of the spiritual body' (OLSHAUSEN). So TERTULLIAN, 'not as wishing to undergo death, but that death should be anticipated by life.' The whole passage should be compared with 1 Cor. 15. 35-54. **That mortality might be swallowed up of life**—*i.e.* 'covered over and arrayed in the vesture of immortality' (TERTULLIAN). 'Mortality' should rather be rendered 'what is mortal'"—C. B.

5. **Now He that hath wrought us to this very thing**—"this longing for immortality—**is God.** For none but God, none less than the Almighty, could have wrought this in us"—WESLEY.

"The Holy Spirit in S. Paul's heart was a pledge that the promise he had believed would be fulfilled, and was thus an earnest of the coming inheritance. (Comp. Eph. 1. 16.) Since S. Paul's clinging to his present body while yearning for a better is introduced merely in proof that if he die, there awaits him a body

from heaven, the words **this very thing** refer probably only to the yearning for the heavenly body, without reference to his reluctance to die"—BEET.

6. **Therefore we behave undauntedly**—"but most of all when we have death in view; **knowing that** our greatest happiness lies beyond the grave"—WESLEY.

Being therefore always of good courage (R.V.). "**We are confident, therefore,** or courageous in all dangers and sufferings, and dare venture even upon death itself, **knowing that while we sojourn in the body, we are absent,** 'we are exiles,' **from Christ,** in the enjoyment of whom our chief happiness consists"—BENSON. "**We are absent from the Lord.** God is present with all mankind, because He sustains them by His power; He dwells in them, because 'in Him they live, and move, and have their being.' He is present with His faithful ones by the greater energy of His Spirit; He lives in them, dwells in their midst, and so within them. But in the meantime He is absent from us, in that He does not yet present Himself to be seen face to face; because as yet we are exiles from His kingdom, and lack the blessed immortality which the angels, who are with Him, are privileged to enjoy"—CALVIN.

7. "**For** we cannot clearly see Him in this life, wherein **we walk by faith** only—an evidence, indeed, that necessarily implies a kind of 'seeing Him who is invisible,' yet as far beneath what we shall have in eternity, as it is above that of bare, unassisted reason"—WESLEY.

"In the government of the world it is the things unseen that are the motives of obedience. And God will have it that you shall believe His promises if ever you will have the benefit, and believe His threatenings if ever you will escape the threatened evil"—BAXTER. "The objects which direct our steps do not yet appear. We walk amid eternal realities, now unseen, but known through the word we have believed. Chief among these is our home in the presence of Christ. Hence we speak of a home unseen by mortal eye. Same thought in same connection in Rom. 8. 24"—BEET.

8. **Present with the Lord.** "This demonstrates that the happiness of the saints is not deferred till the resurrection"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul had established in his mind such a clear conviction of the invisible world, of the redeemed beyond this life, that it had become a refuge to him. This world could not touch him. He had the power of losing himself in that other world. By faith he rose into the bright and heavenly sphere"—BEECHER.

"This verse and vers. 6, 7, shed light on a matter of which the Bible says little, the state of the saved between death and the resurrection. For S. Paul evidently thinks of no alternative except to be **at home in the body** and **at home in the Lord.** Therefore departed believers are with Christ; and if so, not unconscious; for the unconscious are practically nowhere. Their nearness to Christ is such that, compared with it, their present spiritual union with Him is absence. And, although they have not yet entered their 'eternal house' and put on their heavenly clothing, yet in the presence of Christ they are 'at home.' And their eternal intercourse with Christ (1 Thess. 4. 17) has begun"—BEET.

9. **Therefore we are ambitious**—"the only ambition which has place in a Christian. **Whether present**—in the body—**or absent**—from it"—WESLEY.

Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him (R.V.). "S. Paul worked, knowing that the night was coming. That spirit which characterised his Master was remarkable in him. His was not the service of the slave; it was the joyous service of the freeman. He was not working to win life, but because he had life; he was labouring in love to *please* God"—ROBERTSON.

10. **For we all**—"apostles as well as other men, whether now present in the body, or absent from it—**must appear**—openly, without covering, where all hidden things will be revealed; probably the sins even of the faithful, which were forgiven long before. For many of their good works, as their repentance, their revenge against sin, cannot otherwise appear. But this will be done at their own desire, without grief, and without shame. **According to what he hath done in the body, whether good or evil.** In the body he did either good or evil; in the body he is recompensed accordingly"—WESLEY.

For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ (R.V.). "God will call His servants to give account of their time, their talents, and all the offices and trusts of life. Therefore while we are absent in the body, we labour the more to be accepted of Him"—SUTCLIFFE. "It is natural to try and please God when present with Him. But even when absent, Christians do not forget that He will judge them. **Before the judgment-seat of Christ.** (Comp. Matt. 25. 31-46; Rom. 14. 10.) Observe that 'God' is the word used in the latter passage, as though 'the two ideas were convertible'"—STANLEY. "The **judgment-seat,** in the New Testament, is used of the judge's seat, which, in the Roman basilica or judgment-hall, was 'a lofty seat, raised on an elevated platform,' so that the figure of the judge must have been seen towering above the crowd which thronged the long nave of the building"—STANLEY. "This, he adds, was the most august representation of justice which the world at that time, or perhaps ever, exhibited"—C. B. "If men were absolved from the fear of judgment to come, no restraint would be strong enough to bridle the impetuous resolutions of his depraved will"—BATES. **The things done in the body**—"that is, the

just reward of those things. Then shall a good conscience be more worth than all the world's good. **Whether it be good or bad.** Let us so live as those that must render an account of all"—TRAPP. This is the reason why Christians are to strive during the present life to be pleasing to God. Their wages in the next world shall be according to their acts in this. (Comp. Rom. 2. 5-10; 1 Thess. 4. 6; Jude 14, 15.)

11. **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we**—"the more earnestly **persuade men** to seek His favour; and as God knoweth this, so, **I trust**, ye know **it in your** own **consciences**"—WESLEY.

Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord (R.V.). "Assurance, so intimately connected with the love of God, is equally connected with the love of man. **Knowing** the awful situation of the impenitent at His bar, **we persuade men**—we risk all for their salvation. The world accounted this extraordinary zeal—fanaticism; but if the apostles were beside themselves, it was for the churches; it was that the rebellious world might be reconciled to God"—SUTCLIFFE. "When a man **knows** the terrors of the Lord, he 'persuades men.' Hence came the tears of Jeremiah; hence flowed the tears of Him who knew the doom of Jerusalem. Therefore, if in our tone there be anything denunciatory, threatening, may God give us the spirit to **persuade**! May He teach us to believe the terrors of which we speak! There is no *perhaps*. These are things which will be hereafter. You cannot alter the eternal laws. You cannot put your hand in the flame and not be burnt. You cannot sin in the body and escape the sin; for it goes inwards, becomes part of you, and is itself the penalty which cleaves for ever to your spirit. Sow in the flesh, and you will reap corruption. Yield to passion, and it becomes your tyrant and your torment. Be sensual, self-indulgent, indolent, worldly, hard—oh! they all have their corresponding penalties: Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap"—ROBERTSON. "The thought of the future punishment for the wicked, which the Bible reveals, is enough to make an earthquake of terror in every man's soul. I do not accept the doctrine of eternal punishment because I delight in it. I would cast in doubts, if I could, till I had filled hell up to the brim. I would destroy all faith in it; but that would do me no good; I could not destroy the thing. The exposition of future punishment, in God's word, is not to be regarded as a threat, but as a merciful declaration. If, in the ocean of life, over which we are bound to eternity, there are these rocks and shoals, it is no cruelty to chart them down; it is an eminent and prominent mercy"—BEECHER.

12. "**We do not say** this, as if we thought there was any need of **again recommending ourselves to you, but** to **give you an occasion of** rejoicing and praising God, and to furnish you with an **answer** to those false apostles **who glory in appearance, but not in heart**, being condemned by their own conscience"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul has just appealed to God and the consciences of his readers, and these are precisely the tribunals to which a self-commender does *not* appeal. So the thought, **We are not commending ourselves again**, suggested itself very naturally. The rendering is, **Who boast in person, not in heart**, and the sense, that they boast of things which lie upon the surface and make up only the outer and apparent man, not those qualities which constitute the inner, moral, spiritual Christian man"—S. C. "The false teachers gloried 'in appearance,' in outward demonstration, in dazzling credentials, such as eloquence, or prided themselves in a superabundance of spiritual gifts. On the contrary, S. Paul says that the true apostolic credentials are those of the heart; and, accordingly, the proofs he had given were—his truth, his sufferings, his persuasiveness, his simplicity, his boldness, and his life, as being an image of Christ's"—ROBERTSON.

13. **For if we are transported beyond ourselves**—"or at least, appear so to others, treated of, vers. 15-21, speaking or writing with uncommon vehemence—**it is to God.** He understands (if men do not) the emotion which Himself inspires. **If we be sober**—treated of, ch. 6. 1-10—if I proceed in a more calm, sedate manner—**it is for your sakes.** Even good men bear this, rather than the other method, in their teachers. But these must obey God, whoever is offended by it"—WESLEY.

Of sober mind (R.V.). "He sums up his whole existence under two forms of manifestation, of which one is what his enemies called his madness, the other what he calls his sober sanity. He would have them argue against his enemies thus, 'Whatever you may think of Paul he has but two ends in view. His life is devoted, in one aspect of it, to God and His glory: in another, to us and to our salvation'"—S. C. "There are cases in which it is wise for a Christian to vindicate himself against false charges; there are others in which it is wiser to restrain himself, and to remain silent. There are some charges of a nature so delicate, complicated, and shadowy, that public defence leaves the matter worse than before. It is better, then, to let time defend you. For there are cases in which dignified silence is the Christian's only defence. So it was in our Saviour's life. Men misinterpreted His words, and blackened His reputation. How was He to answer? Was He to go into the petty charges one by one? or was He to leave time and God to **defend His cause?** He was **sober** for our **cause**"—ROBERTSON.

14. **For the love of Christ**—"to us, and our love to Him—**constraineth us**—both to the

one and the other; beareth us on with such a strong, steady, prevailing influence, as winds and tides exert when they waft the vessel to its destined harbour. **While we thus judge, that if** Christ **died for all, then are all,** even the best of men, naturally **dead**—in a state of spiritual death, and liable to death eternal. For had any man been otherwise, Christ had not needed to have died for him"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul says, the Christian is **constrained** by love to act. And why? Because God has taught him that it is beautiful and right to do so, and because God has made the love of Christ paramount in his heart to all other love. Let us make, therefore, a distinction. When we say that a Christian is free from the law, we do not mean that he may break it, or not, as he likes. We mean that he is bound to do right by a nobler tie than 'you must.' Christian liberty, then, is a loving servitude to God"—ROBERTSON. "Love to Christ is an abiding motive. It is neither a fancy, nor a sentiment, nor an evanescent emotion. It is a principle—calm, steady, undecaying. Of all principles, a high-principled affection to the Saviour is the steadiest and most secure. Other incentives to action are apt to alter or lose their influence altogether"—HAMILTON. "The New Testament teaches something beyond morality—as much beyond it as the blossom is beyond the leaf, namely, the soul's vital connection with the Lord Jesus Christ"—BEECHER.

15. **And that He died for all**—"that all might be saved. **That they who live**—that all who live upon the earth—**should not henceforth**—from the moment they know Him—**live unto themselves**—seek their own honour, profit, pleasure,—**but unto Him**—in all righteousness and true holiness"—WESLEY.

"Such is the Christian law of sacrifice: to present our bodies and souls to Christ as a living offering. It is no longer the law of nature which rules our life, no longer self-preservation, self-indulgence; but it is self-surrender towards God and towards man"—ROBERTSON. "Christ, by His death, escaped completely from the burden and the curse of sin. S. Paul reckons, therefore, that the former life of sin of those for whom Christ died, has come to an end on His cross, and that, like Him, they too are dead to sin. (See Rom. 6. 10.) Objectively and virtually they died to sin when Christ died: they died subjectively and actually, only, when, and so far as in faith, they pronounced, touching themselves, the judgment of this verse, *i.e.* when they reckoned themselves to be dead to sin. S. Paul says that *all died*, because the subjective and actual death to sin of those who dare pronounce this judgment is a direct outworking and communication of the objective and historic death of Christ and of our divinely-ordained union with His death—Christ died in order that we may live a life in which every thought and purpose and effort point to Him, and all our powers and opportunities are used to please and exalt Him and to do His work. Thus Christ will be, what self once was, the one aim of life"—BEET.

16. **So that we from this time**—"that we knew the love of Christ—**know no one**—neither ourselves, nor you, neither the rest of the apostles (Gal. 2. 6), nor any other person. **After the flesh**—according to his former state, country, descent, nobility, riches, power, wisdom. We fear not the great. We regard not the rich or wise. We account not the least less than ourselves. We consider all, only in order to save all. Who is he that thus 'knows no one after the flesh'? In what land do these Christians live? **Yea, if we have known even Christ after the flesh**—so as to love Him barely with a natural love, so as to glory in having conversed with Him on earth, so as to expect only temporal benefits from Him"—WESLEY.

"**Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh**—*i.e.* 'we regard no man from a purely fleshly point of view, but look upon him as endowed with a new vital principle from above which has changed his heart.' (Comp. ver. 17; Rom. 8. 1–11; 1 Cor. 2. 10–16.) 'Even in Christ a transition took place analogous to that which happened to man in regeneration. In the resurrection the life according to the flesh passed over into a life according to the Spirit' (OLSHAUSEN). 'He who knows no man after the flesh has entirely lost sight in the case of a Jew, for example, of his Jewish origin, in the case of a rich man of his riches, in that of a learned man of his learning, in that of a slave of his slavery, and so on' (MEYER). (Comp. Matt. 2. 9; John 8. 39; Rom. 2. 28, 29; 10. 12; 1 Cor. 12. 13; Gal. 3. 28; Col. 3. 11.) **Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh**—*i.e.* from a purely human point of view, as the Son of David simply (Rom. 1. 3), not as the Incarnate Son of God, the Divine Word. S. Paul, and many others of the first preachers of the faith (comp. Acts 1. 6), had started with such carnal conceptions, but they had disappeared before the light of God's truth"—C. B. "S. Paul cannot refer to his no longer knowing Christ **according to the flesh.** Surely this would not need emphatic and contrasted assertion. He simply repeats the general assertion, which is the chief matter of this verse. In consequence of S. Paul's judgment about the death of Christ, he no longer looks upon men according to their appearance in flesh and blood. Yet he admits that he did so once, even in the case of Christ. But so completely is he changed that, in spite of this aggravated case in his past life, he no longer knows men according to the flesh"—BEET.

17. **Therefore if anyone be in Christ**—"a true believer in Him—**there is a new creation**—only the power that makes a world can make a Christian. And when he is so created, **the old things are passed away**—of their own accord, even as snow in spring. **Behold**—

the present, visible, undeniable change!—**all things are become new**—he has new life, new senses, new faculties, new affections, new appetites, new ideas and conceptions. His whole tenor of action and conversation is new, and he lives, as it were, in a new world. God, men, the whole creation, heaven, earth, and all therein, appear in a new light, and stand related to him in a new manner, since he was created anew in Christ Jesus"—WESLEY.

"Every sin is against a good man's nature; he is ill at ease when he has missed his prayers, he is amazed if he have fallen into error, he is infinitely ashamed of his imprudence; he remembers a sin as he thinks of an enemy, or the horrors of a midnight apparition; for all his capacities, his understanding, and his choosing faculties, are filled up with the opinions and persuasions, with the love and with the desires of God"—JEREMY TAYLOR. "**He is a new creature.** These words may be rendered, 'there is a new creature,' *i.e.* a new creation takes place within him. Whosoever is united to Christ by faith possesses in himself the gift of a Divine, regenerated, spiritual humanity, which Christ gives through His Spirit. (Comp. John 5. 21; 6. 33, 39, 40, 54, 57; 1 Cor. 15. 45; 1 Pet. 1. 3; 2. 2; and 2 Pet. 1. 4; also ch. 1. 21, 22; 3. 18; 4. 11; 5. 5.) This life, which he possessed not before, is in fact a new creation of the whole man, 'not to be distinguished from regeneration'"—MEYER. "What is the religion of too many? They are like machines, impelled by force; they are influenced only by external considerations. Their hearts are not engaged. Hence, in every religious exercise, they perform a task. They would love God much better, if He would excuse them from the hateful obligation. The obedience of the Christian is, in consequence of regeneration, natural; and hence it is pleasant and invariable"—JAY.

18. "**And all** these new **things are from God,** considered under this very notion, as **reconciling us**—the world (ver. 19)—**to Himself**"—WESLEY.

All the love of God is a flow of this Divine self-giving charity. Creation itself is sacrifice, the self-impartation of the Divine Being. "God is angry with the wicked. For Christ was the Representative of God under the name of humanity. Now Christ was *angry*. That, therefore, which God feels—or rather, the relation in which He stands towards sin—'corresponds with that which in pure humanity is the emotion of anger. No other word will then adequately represent God's feeling or rather attitude' (ROBERTSON). But the reconciliation was God's work of love, carried out by Jesus Christ, who came to reveal His nature and beneficial purposes to mankind, and to accomplish them by taking our mortal flesh, by His pure and stainless life, by His mysterious death upon the cross for our sakes, by His resurrection from the dead, as well as by His sending His Spirit to work out His blessed will in us. This is 'reconciliation by Jesus Christ.' **The ministry of reconciliation**—*lit.* 'the reconciliation,' *i.e.* that which has just been mentioned. (Comp. ch. 3. 3, where S. Paul describes the Corinthians as an epistle of Christ ministered by him with the Spirit of the living God.) The word ministry signifies service rendered freely, not of compulsion. It carries with it the idea of diligence, whatever derivation of the Greek word we take. It was the apostles' task, voluntarily undertaken by themselves, to proclaim the good tidings of reconciliation through Christ throughout the world, and thus to put it in men's power to accept and act upon it. Tyndale, followed by Cranmer and the Geneva Version, render 'and hath given unto us the office to preach the atonement'"—C. B.

19. **Namely**—the sum of which is, **God**—"the whole Godhead, but more eminently God the Father—**was in Christ, reconciling the world**—which was before at enmity with God—**to Himself**—so taking away that enmity, which could not otherwise be removed than by the blood of the Son of God"—WESLEY.

"**God was in Christ reconciling**—or 'that God in Christ was reconciling.' Either translation is grammatically and theologically admissible. The former translation, preferred by the Latin expositors, lays most stress upon the indwelling of God in Christ. (Comp. John 14. 10, 17.) The latter, which has found most favour among the Greek commentators, indicates the fact, not merely that God reconciled the world, but that the process of reconciliation was carried on 'in the person and work of Christ'"—MEYER. **The world unto Himself.** It is frequently declared in Scripture that God's *purpose* embraces all mankind ("the whole world," ALFORD). (Comp. John 1. 29; 3. 16; 4. 42; 5. 33; 1 Tim. 2. 4; 5. 10; 1 John 2. 2, etc.) "The way in which the text speaks of the reconciliation of God to us is, **Not imputing their trespasses**, for the atonement is made when God no longer reckons the sinner guilty. Here is the mystery of the atonement. God is reconciled to men for Christ's sake. Earnestly I insist that the atonement is through Christ. God is reconciled to humanity in Christ; then to us through Him. **God was in Christ.** It was a Divine humanity. To that humanity God is reconciled: there could be no enmity between God and Christ. To all those in whom Christ's Spirit is, God imputes the righteousness which is as yet only seminal, germinal: a seed, not a tree; a spring, not a river; an aspiration, not an attainment; a righteousness in faith, not a righteousness in works. We do not mean that each man reconciles himself as Christ did, by being righteous; but we mean that God views him favourably as partaking of that humanity which has been once exhibited on earth, a holy, perfect, and Divine thing"—ROBERTSON.

20. **Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ—we beseech you in Christ's stead.** "Herein the apostle might appear to some 'transported beyond himself.' In general he uses a more calm, sedate kind of exhortation, as in the beginning of the next chapter. What unparallelled condescension and Divine tender mercies are displayed in this verse! Did the judge ever beseech a condemned criminal to accept a pardon? Does the creditor ever beseech a ruined debtor to accept an acquittance in full? Yet our Almighty Lord, and our Eternal Judge, not only vouchsafes to offer these blessings, but invites us, entreats us, and with the most tender importunity solicits us not to reject them"—WESLEY.

"The apostle declares that it was **on Christ's behalf** that he was acting, *i.e.* in order that Christ might not fail to attain the object of his work; and that his mission was that of an ambassador, and that in this capacity he represented God. God is the author and giver of the reconciliation, men are the recipients. This language of the apostle supposes that the world is engaged in an unnatural and unprovoked rebellion against its Maker; that it is in His power to destroy sinners; that if He were to deal with them according to their deserts, this must be their portion; but that, through the mediation of His Son, He had, as it were, suspended hostilities, had sent His servants with words of peace, and had commissioned them to persuade, to entreat, and even to beseech them to be reconciled. And reconciliation to God includes everything that belongs to true conversion. It is the opposite of a state of alienation and enmity to Him (Col. 1. 21)"—FULLER.

21. **He made Him a sin-offering, who knew no sin**—"a commendation peculiar to Christ—**for us**—who knew no righteousness, who were inwardly and outwardly nothing but sin; who must have been consumed by the Divine justice, had not this atonement been made for our sins. **That we might be made the righteousness of God through Him**—might **through Him** be invested with that righteousness, first imputed to us, then implanted in us, which is in every sense **the righteousness of God**"—WESLEY.

S. Paul shows how strong an inducement to comply with his prayer he is empowered to hold out in his preaching, on account of the manner in which God's love and mercy established reconciliation. **"For He hath made Him to be sin for us**—*lit.* 'He made,' *i.e.* in the sacrifice on the cross. The word 'sin' has been variously explained as a 'sin-offering,' a sinner,' and so on. But it is best to take the word in its literal acceptation. 'He made Him to be sin,' *i.e.* appointed Him to be the Representative of sin and sinners, treated Him as sin and sinners are treated. (Comp. ver. 15.) He took on Himself to be the Representative of humanity in its aspect of sinfulness (comp. Rom. 8. 3; Phil. 2. 7), and to bear the burden of sin in all its completeness. Hence He won the right to represent humanity in all respects, and hence we are entitled to be regarded as God's righteousness (which He was), not in ourselves, but in Him as our Representative in all things"—C. B. **Who knew no sin.** (Comp. Heb. 4. 15; 1 Pet. 2. 22; 1 John 3. 5; John 8. 46.) **"That we might be made,** etc.—that is, that God might regard and treat us as though we were righteous, having a righteousness, not of our own, nor of the works of the Law, but yet a most real righteousness, of which God is the author and giver. The idea involved in the words 'in Him' is that of representation, as in ch. 4. 14, 'if One for all died, therefore all died.' The abstract terms **sin** and **righteousness** signify that there is no sin whatever of which Christ did not bear the guilt, nor any element of righteousness which believers do not obtain from God in Christ. He did not say righteous, but righteousness, and that the righteousness of God"—CHRYSOSTOM.

CHAPTER VI.

1. **"We then** not only **beseech,** but **as fellow-labourers** with you, who are working out your own salvation, **do also exhort you, not to receive the grace of God**—which we have been now describing—**in vain.** We **receive** it by faith; and *not in vain,* if we add to this persevering holiness"—WESLEY.

"**That ye receive not the grace of God in vain**—*i.e.* that ye make not His kindness in being reconciled to you through Jesus Christ useless by neglecting to walk according to the new life He hath given you in Him (ch. 5. 17). That even the new life itself may be so received as to make its reception useless is clear from the words, 'Every branch *in Me* that beareth not fruit He taketh away' (John 15. 2). 'For lest they should think that believing on Him that calleth is itself reconciliation, He adds these words, requiring the earnestness which respects the life' (CHRYSOSTOM)"—C. B. It seems as if S. Paul had in his mind some others who *had* received the grace of God in vain. The danger of so doing still exists, and demands the unceasing watchfulness of men, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

2. **For He saith.** "The sense is, As of old there was a particular time wherein God was pleased to pour out His peculiar blessing, so there is now. And this is a particular time: this is a time of peculiar blessing"—WESLEY.

"A statement of God Himself is adduced in support of the exhortations. God declares that He offers His grace to the heathen nations, amongst whom were the Corinthians, with a definite opportunity of accepting it. If the opportunity is allowed to slip, it will be lost. In the passage cited (Isa. 44. 8), the Messiah, 'the Servant of God,' complains of Israel, 'I have laboured *in vain:* I have spent my strength for nought and *in vain,*' which expressions suggested the apostle's 'in vain'

here. The Lord answered, **In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee.** This hearing and this succour, as the context of the prophecy implies, were to be realised in the bringing over of the Gentiles to Christ's cause. The grace of God, therefore, offered to the Corinthians, was a part of the hearing and the succour *rendered to the Messiah.* This shows in what sense S. Paul applies to the heathen believers what was originally addressed to the Saviour. It is in the very nature of 'a time' and 'a day' that they are fugitive and pass away. 'It is now or never'"—WAITE.

3. "**Giving**, as far as in us lies, **no offence, that the ministry be not blamed** on our account"—WESLEY.

"**Giving no offence in any thing.** This verse is closely connected in sense with ver. 1. S. Paul now enters upon a long passage, in which he shows how the 'ministry of reconciliation' is practically carried on. The demeanour of the apostles towards those among whom they preached the gospel is as forcible a mode of proclaiming the reconciliation as their words. Yet he has not lost sight of the vindication of himself, which runs through the whole Epistle. You may judge for yourself, he is saying in effect, whether this be the conduct to expect from one charged with such a mission"—C. B. "**The ministry**—the important office held by S. Paul and his companions. He felt that the influence of Christianity upon the world depended very much upon the collective impression made by its prominent advocates; and this impression would be determined in no small measure by his own personal conduct"—BEET.

4. **But approving ourselves as the ministers of God**—"such as His ministers ought to be. **In much patience**—shown (1) **in afflictions, necessities, distresses** — all which are general terms; (2) **in stripes, imprisonments, tumults**—which are particular sorts of afflictions, necessity, distress; (3) **in labours, watchings, fastings**—voluntarily endured. All these are expressed in the plural number, to denote a variety of them. In 'afflictions,' several ways to escape may appear, though none without difficulty; in 'necessities' one only, and that a difficult one; in 'distresses,' none at all appears"—WESLEY.

"The apostle commended himself into four classes—(1) from **patience** (or rather 'endurance') to **fastings**, referring to the bodily sufferings of the apostle; (2) from **pureness** to **love unfeigned**, referring to the virtues, that is, the manifestations of the Divine presence in S. Paul; (3) from **by the word of truth** to **by evil report and good report**, referring to the means whereby he was enabled to prove himself to be a true minister of God; and (4) the remainder, relating to the acceptation in which the apostles were held, and its contrast with the reality"—C. B.

5. **In tumults.** "The Greek word implies such attacks as a man cannot stand against, but which bear him hither and thither by violence"—WESLEY.

"**In stripes**—comp. ch. 11. 23, 24; Acts 16. 23. **In imprisonments**—comp. ch. 9. 23. The Acts of the Apostles, up to this date, records only one such, namely, that at Philippi. (Acts 16. 23–40.) But the Acts is far from recording all the events of S. Paul's life. **In tumults.** The word in the original signifies primarily 'unsettlement.' (Comp. *margin* of A.V., 'tossings to and fro.') S. Chrysostom would interpret it of the uncertain dwelling-place of the apostle. But the word came to mean disorder or tumult. (See Luke 21. 9; 1 Cor. 14. 33; Jas. 3. 16, as well as ch. 12. 20, where the word occurs.) In these passages moral disorder, not local unsettlement, is clearly implied. For the tumults which the apostle went through, see Acts 13. 50; 14. 5, 19; 16. 22; 17. 5; 18. 12; 19. 23–41. **In labours**—*i.e.* (1) the toils by which he supported himself (comp. Acts 18. 3; 20. 34; 1 Thess. 2. 9; 2 Thess. 3. 8); and (2) his labours for the cause of Christ (comp. Rom. 16. 12; 1 Tim. 4. 10). **In watchings**—*lit.* 'sleeplessness,' caused by 'manual labour, teaching, travelling, meditating, praying, cares, and the like' (MEYER). **In fastings.** Since S. Paul himself distinguished these fastings from ordinary hunger and thirst (ch. 11. 27) we must do so also. 'Not fasting from want, but a voluntary exercise of abstinence' (CALVIN). Fasting, we know, was practised under the new covenant as well as the old. (See Acts 13. 2, 3; 14. 23)"—C. B.

6. "**By prudence**—spiritual, Divine; not what the world terms so. Worldly prudence is the practical use of worldly wisdom; Divine prudence is the due exercise of grace, making spiritual understanding go as far as possible. **By love unfeigned**—the chief fruit of the Spirit"—WESLEY.

After his constant endurance, other graces and qualities which had characterised his ministerial life are enumerated—(1) **chastity** and **knowledge.** Next to his mastery over hunger comes, very naturally, his mastery over another appetite, and the more obviously suitable the mention of this was with reference to heathen and especially Corinthian licentiousness, the more unnecessary it is to give the original word any other than its proper sense of chastity. Knowledge goes hand in hand with chastity. **Long-suffering** and **kindness** are both forms of that charity (1 Cor. 13. 4), which, as he urges so strongly (1 Cor. 8. 1), should attend upon knowledge. The pure are sometimes intolerant of the impure, and those who have not abused knowledge of those that have. Not so S. Paul.

7. "**By the** convincing and converting **power of God**—accompanying His word; and also attesting it by divers miracles. **By the ar-**

mour of righteousness on the right hand and the left—that is, on all sides; the panoply or whole armour of God"—WESLEY.

"From the spirit and love in the *heart* the advance to *word* and *deed* is natural. **The word of truth** includes both his preaching and his communications in ordinary intercourse, for he had been accused of falsehood with regard to both. The 'power of God' (ch. 4. 7) comprises the whole of his ministerial activity, but the contest must determine what manifestation of this power is particularly meant, and it points to his disciplinary courage and firmness. He claimed no power of his own, for it was God's, but as he had exercised it decisively in one case (1 Cor. 5. 4), he might do so again, if his warnings were neglected. **The right-hand and left-hand weapons** may signify that he is no more afraid, as was falsely said, to assail with his right hand pagan corruption, than he was to pull down Judaising strongholds (ch. 10. 4), and that he was equally ready to parry with his left, by all righteous means in his power, every blow aimed at him in his office or person"—WAITE.

8. **By honour and dishonour**—"when we are present. **By evil report and good report**—when we are absent. Who could bear honour and good report, were it not balanced by dishonour! **As deceivers**—artful, designing men. So the world represents all true ministers of Christ. **Yet true**—upright, sincere, in the sight of God"—WESLEY.

In the evil report of their enemies they are **deceivers: and** good men know that they are **true.** These contrasts commend the apostles as ministers of God. The men whom some decry as deceivers are found to be true, and similar contrasts follow in the next verse.

9. **As unknown**—"for the world knoweth us not, as it knew Him not. **Yet well known**—to God, and to those who are the seals of our ministry. **As dying, yet behold**—suddenly, unexpectedly, God interposes and **we live**"—WESLEY.

"It is objected that they are obscure and **unknown. And** really they are daily **becoming well known,** and the principles of their conduct are day by day better understood. So great is their peril that they seem to be actually falling into the grave. (Comp. ch. 4. 11; 1 Cor. 15. 31; Rom. 8. 36.) Yet in the moment of apparent destruction, suddenly comes deliverance. **And behold we live**—graphic picture, retaining even the exclamation of wonder at unexpected rescue. **As chastised**—to some men they seem to be put by God under special discipline. So seemed a more illustrious Sufferer. (Isa. 53. 4.) **All things**—as in Rom. 3. 32; 1 Cor. 3. 22. The whole wealth of God is theirs, and will be their eternal enjoyment"—BEET.

10. **As sorrowing**—"for our own manifold imperfections, and for the sins and sufferings of our brethren—**yet always rejoicing**—in present peace, love, power, and a sure hope of future glory. **As having nothing, yet possessing all things**—for all things are ours, if we are Christ's. What a magnificence of thought is this!"—WESLEY.

"He does not, in the least, exempt himself from the general law of being schooled by suffering. He grants that his sufferings are God's discipline, but he does not allow external suffering to cause him grief. **Poor** he may be, but he can make many **rich** with the blessings of the gospel. (See Eph. 1. 7, 18; 2. 7; 3. 8, 16.) **Possessing all things**—*i.e.* in Christ. (Rom. 8. 32; 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23; Phil 4. 13.) Content is the gift of heaven, and not the certain effect of anything upon earth. Happiness and comfort stream immediately from God Himself, as light issues from the sun, and sometimes looks and darts itself into the meanest corners, while it forbears to visit the noblest rooms. It is not what a man *has*, but what he *is*, which must make him happy"—SOUTH.

11. "From the praise of the Christian ministry which he began, 1 Cor. 2. 14, he now draws his affectionate exhortation. **O ye Corinthians**—he seldom uses this appellation. But it has here a peculiar force. **Our mouth is opened toward you**—with uncommon freedom, because **our heart is enlarged**—in tenderness"—WESLEY.

"**Our mouth is open unto you**—*i.e.* 'we have spoken with perfect frankness on all points, keeping nothing back, because we love you. (Comp. ch. 3. 12)' (Chrysostom). **Our heart is enlarged**—*i.e.* in what has been said. The expression refers to the expansive effect of love and sympathy in the affections, just as we speak of a man of wide sympathies as 'large-hearted'"—C. B. "The apostle's affection overflows in an exuberant apostrophe. His love was deep, and this flow of eloquence arose out of the expansion of his heart. **Our heart is enlarged.** S. Paul had received a multitude of provocations from the Corinthians. They had denied the truthfulness of his ministry, charged him with interested motives, sneered at his manner, and held up to scorn the meanness of his appearance. In the face of this his heart expands—partly with compassion. Their insults and haughty tone only impressed him with a sense of their need, with the feeling of their wandering ignorance. They were his 'children.' His spirit sought for them the only excuse it could. Thus spoke, before him, One who loved even more than he; for the same thought occurs in the dying words of Christ, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' What a well-spring of love, inexhaustible in its freshness as in its life! And this is the true test of *gracious* charity. Does the heart expand or narrow as the life goes on? **Our mouth is open unto you.** He might have shut his lips, and in dignified pride refused to plead his own cause. But instead he speaks his thoughts aloud—

freely. Be sure that a man who speaks so has nothing to conceal. S. Paul has no reservation in his life, or on his lips: he was a genuine man, true in the innermost recesses of his spirit"—ROBERTSON.

12. **Ye are not straitened in us.** "Our heart is wide enough to receive you all. **But ye are straitened in your own bowels**—your hearts are shut up, and so not capable of the blessings you might enjoy"—WESLEY.

The scanty room was not in him, but in the seat of their own affections, and it hampered *his* free admission to *their* hearts. Even now the feeling in Corinth towards him was not all that he could desire.

13. **Now for a recompence of the same**—"of my parental tenderness. **I speak as to my children**—I ask nothing hard or grievous. **Be ye also enlarged**—open your hearts, first to God, and then to us (so ch. 8. 5), that God may 'dwell in you' (ch. 6. 16; 7. 1); and that ye may 'receive us' (ch. 7. 2)"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul details the circumstances of his ministry, and he asks in return, not the affection of the Corinthians, nor their admiration, but this: that they **receive not the grace of God in vain**, and again, **be ye also enlarged**"—ROBERTSON. "He claims, instead of their present narrow-heartedness, a reciprocation on their part of *his* capacious love for them. They should repay in the same kind and to the same extent as they received. Assuming that his request is granted, he proceeds after this noble preface to deliver in detail (ch. 6. 13–7. 1) the admonition which he couched in general terms at ch. 6. 1, 2"—WAITE.

14. **Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers**—"Christians with Jews or heathens. The apostle particularly speaks of marriage. But the reasons he urges equally hold against any needless intimacy with them. Of the five questions that follow, the three former contain the argument; the two latter, the conclusion"—WESLEY.

"**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.** Dean Stanley observes on the 'remarkable dislocation of the argument here.' But the connection of thought is not difficult to trace. The only reward (see last verse) S. Paul sought from the Corinthians was to conduct themselves in accordance with the gospel of Christ. This was the best form their sympathy with him could take. Therefore he touches on some of the points on which they were in the habit of doing most violence to their Christian profession. They did not keep sufficiently aloof from unbelievers, but even went so far as to 'sit at meat' with them 'in the idol-temple' (see 1 Cor. 8. 10, and notes), and thus become partakers with them in their idolatry, whereby they were the cause of infinite mischief to the souls of their brethren. The reference in the words 'unequally yoked together' is to the precept in Deut. 22. 10, a precept, like many similar ones in the same chapter (vers. 9, 11, 12) and elsewhere in the Mosaic laws, manifestly figurative in its character. The apostle's words must not be confined to intermarriages with the heathen, though of course it includes them in the prohibition. It refers to all kinds of close and intimate relations. 'They are yoked together with unbelievers, who enter into close companionship with them' (ESTIUS). **Unrighteousness** — *lit.* 'lawlessness,' the normal condition of the heathen man (Rom. 6. 19), while the Christian is endowed with 'God's righteousness' (ch. 5. 21). **Light and darkness.** (Comp. John 1. 5; 3. 19, the one signifying the condition of man in Christ, the other his condition without Christ; see also Eph. 5. 8; 1 Thess. 5. 5; and ch. 4. 4)"—C. B. "The fundamental idea is that everything has been created by God 'after its kind,' that everything is to be allowed to retain unadulterated the qualities which belong to its kind, and that there is impurity in mixing them"—WAITE.

15. "**What concord hath Christ**—whom ye serve—**with Belial**—to whom they belong"—WESLEY.

"**Belial.** This word, derived from two Hebrew ones signifying 'of no profit,' was used in the Old Testament (*e.g.* Deut. 13. 13; 1 Sam. 2. 12) in the phrase, 'child,' 'son,' or 'daughter of Belial,' to signify a worthless person, and generally (as in Deut. 15. 9, in the Hebrew) as a substantive signifying worthlessness. It seems to have been personified among the later Jews (some such personification seems clearly indicated by the language of the apostle), and to have become a synonym for Satan"—C. B.

16. **What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?** "If God would not endure idols in any part of the land wherein He dwelt, how much less, under His own roof! He does not say, 'with the temple of idols,' for idols do not dwell in their worshippers. **As God hath said**—to His ancient Church, and in them to all the Israel of God—**I will dwell in them, and walk in them**—the former signifying His perpetual presence; the latter, his operation. **And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people**—the sum of the whole gospel covenant"—WESLEY.

"From the general matter of 'unbelievers,' S. Paul comes now to the specific matter of idolatry. Against this he warned the Corinthian Christians in 1 Cor. 10. 14 ff. by referring to the Lord's Supper: he warns them now by the great truth that believers are the **temple of God.** The word **us** puts S. Paul among those he warns. They share with him this great dignity, and he with them the duty it involves. **Living God**—in contrast to lifeless idols, as in 1 Thess. 1. 9"—BEET. **I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** S. Paul here boldly transfers the prophecies that relate to the earthly Israel to the spiritual Israel, the Christian

Church. (Comp. Rom. 9. 25, 26; 1 Cor. 10. 1-11; Gal. 4. 26; Heb. 12. 22; 1 Pet. 2. 9, 10; Rev. 3. 12; 21. 2, 10.)

17. **Touch not the unclean person**—"keep at the utmost distance from him. **And I will receive you**—into My house and family"—WESLEY.

"**Wherefore come out from among them**—a combination of Isa. 52. 11 with Ezek. 20. 34. This passage must be read in conjunction with 1 Cor. 5. 10, and must be understood, not of absolute separation, but of abstinence from any kind of *intimacy*. 'Wherever union in the highest cannot be, there friendship and intimate partnership must not be tried (Robertson)"—C. B. That into which God will welcome those who come out in what the land of Canaan symbolises in the prophetic passages, and the next verse suggests that S. Paul had in his mind the idea of the family and household of God.

18. **And ye shall be to Me for sons and for daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.** "The promise made to Solomon (1 Chron. 28. 6) is here applied to all believers, as the promise made particularly to Joshua is applied to them (Heb. 13. 5). Who can express the worth, who can conceive the dignity, of this Divine adoption? Yet it belongs to all who believe the gospel, who have faith in Christ. They have access to the Almighty; such free and welcome access as a beloved child to an indulgent father. To Him they may fly for aid in every difficulty, and from Him obtain a supply in all their wants"—WESLEY.

"The blessings consequent upon this welcome are the privileges of adopted sons and daughters of God. When the titles, Father and Son, designate the relation between God and His people in the Old Testament, they signify only paternal affections and treatment on one side, and filial feelings and conduct on the other, that is a sonship by example. So S. Paul says of the Jews, 'to whom pertaineth the adoption' (Rom. 9. 4). Under the new covenant a higher sonship is accessible, also by adoption, not by generation. The condition of it is faith (Gal. 3. 26) in Christ. But to as many as receive Christ by faith, and so become sons of God, Christ grants the privilege of becoming also children of God, that is, sons by generation, by a new birth which is of God (John 1. 12), through the Spirit, and is *regeneration*. With this new birth begins the holy life of a new creature, and it is only by perseverance in this life of holiness that the position and blessings of adoption can be maintained. It is precisely this that the apostle is urging upon his readers"—S. C.

CHAPTER VII.

1. **Let us cleanse ourselves.** "This is the latter part of the exhortation, which was proposed (ch. 6. 1, and resumed, ver. 14). **From all pollution of the flesh**—all outward sin. **And of the spirit**—all inward. Yet let us not rest in negative religion, but **perfect holiness**—carrying it to the height in all its branches, and enduring to the end **in the** loving **fear of God**, the sure foundation of all holiness"—WESLEY.

"**Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness**—rather 'defilement' (see note on 6. 17), sin taking the place of 'the unclean thing' under the Law. For what is meant by defilement in the case of a Christian, see Matt. 15. 18-20; Mark 7. 20-23, where, however, the word translated 'defile' means to 'make common,' *i.e.* to reduce to the same condition as the rest of mankind. Here it is the *stain* of sin which is the predominant idea. **Of the flesh and spirit**—*i.e.* inward as well as outward. (See 1 Sam. 16. 7; Matt. 12. 34, 35.) The outward defilement is caused by sins of the *flesh*, or bodily part of man, the inward by those of the *spirit*, such as pride, unbelief, and the like"—LIAS. We must keep ourselves apart, not only from sensual, but also from spiritual defilement. The Jewish law required only the purification of the flesh; the gospel, which is the inner spirit of the Law, demands the purification of the spirit. The imagination, which was given to spiritualise the senses, is often turned into a means of sensualising the spirit. Beware of reverie, and indulgence in forbidden images, unless you would introduce into your bosom a serpent, which will creep and crawl, and leave the venom of its windings in your heart. Realise the grandeur of saintliness, and you will shrink from degrading your soul and debasing your spirit. **Perfecting holiness in the fear of God**—perfection and nothing less is to be the aim of the Christian. (Comp. Matt. 5. 48; Rom. 12. 2; Col. 1. 22, 28; 4. 12.) With this view he is to cleanse himself daily by sincere repentance from every defilement of sin, and to watch that he offend not in like kind again. The fear of offending God is a very necessary element in the process of sanctification. "We cannot do without awe; there is no depth of character without it. Tender motives are not enough to restrain from sin"—ROBERTSON.

2. **Receive us.** "The sum of what is said in this, as well as in the tenth and following chapters. **We have hurt no man**—in his person. **We have corrupted no man**—in his principles. **We have defrauded no man**—of his property. In this he intimates likewise the good he had done them, but with the utmost modesty, as it were not looking upon it"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul here refers to the charges brought against him. He had been accused of **wronging** the Corinthians, by claiming an authority to which he had no right, and which he turned to his own account (see 1 Cor. 9. 1-6; ch. 1. 12-17; 5. 12; 6. 3, 4, 12; 10. 7-11; 11. 7; 12. 14); of **corrupting** them by preaching false doctrine (ch. 2. 17; 4. 2), unless, with Thomas Aquinas, we interpret it of 'bad example; of

defrauding them (ch. 12. 17, 18), where the word here used is translated 'make a gain of.' To this he replies by challenging them to prove their assertions, to name a single instance in which he had done either"—C. B. Honesty, uprightness, integrity of character, are sometimes called mere moral virtues; and religious people are too often deficient in these points; but the bright honour of the Apostle Paul was never stained. He could say, **I have wronged no man**

3. **I speak not to condemn you**—"not as if I accused you of laying this to my charge. I am so far from thinking so unkindly of you, that **ye are in our hearts, to live and die with you**—that is, I could rejoice to spend all my days with you"—WESLEY.

"**I speak not to condemn you.** 'It might seem as if this were spoken *at* them with indirect reproach. Therefore he adds, 'I am not reproaching you for past injustice: I only say these things to assure you of my undiminished love' (ROBERTSON). **For I have said before.** (See ch. 1. 6; 4. 10–12, 15; 5. 11, 13-15.) **You are in our hearts to die and live with you.** 'There is one thing in the character of S. Paul which often escapes observation. Carlyle calls him an 'unkempt Apostle Paul,' and some say of him 'he was a man rude, brave, true, unpolished.' We all know his integrity, his truth, his daring, his incorruptible honesty. But besides these, there was a refined and delicate courtesy, which was for ever taking off the edge of his sharpest rebukes, and sensitively anticipating every pain his words might give' (ROBERTSON). He refers to Philemon 8, 12, 14, 17–20; Acts 26. 29; and Phil. 3. 18. (See also 1 Cor. 4. 14; ch. 6. 11–13; 9. 4, and the whole of the present chapter"—C. B.

4. **I am filled with comfort**—"of this he treats, ver. 6, etc.; of his joy, ver. 7, etc.; of both, ver. 13"—WESLEY.

"**Great is my boldness, 'frankness' of speech towards you.** This plainly refers to ch. 6. 11, and there is no reason to dilute the idea into 'confidence,' although the frankness *is* that of confidence in his readers. This, and not the desire to condemn, is the explanation of the unreservedness of his warning. More indicative of his love still than free speech to them is glorying speech to others on their behalf"—S. C.

5. **Our flesh**—"that is, we ourselves—**had no rest: from without**—from the heathens—**were fightings**—furious and cruel oppositions; **from within**—from our brethren—**were fears**—lest they should be seduced"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul's anxiety at Troas (ch. 2. 13) continued *even* after arriving in **Macedonia. We**—probably S. Paul and Timothy. **Our flesh,** depicts the effect on their body in virtue of its constitution, of their anxiety about the Corinthians. **Without, within,** expound 'in everything.' **Fears**—probably, as suggested by ver. 6, about the Corinthian church and the effect of his letter. (Comp. ch. 2. 4.) The state of that church might well give him dark forebodings"—BEET.

6. "It was not the mere *presence* of **Titus,** but the tidings he brought, which so rejoiced the apostle"—C. B.

7. **Your earnest desire**—"to rectify what had been amiss. **Your grief**—for what had offended God, and troubled me"—WESLEY.

"Titus clearly delivered his account with joyful emotion, and indeed the scene which he had to describe was extraordinary, as may be seen in ver. 11. The comfort was such as for the apostle to 'feel rejoiced rather than troubled as before'"—S. C.

8. **I did repent**—"that is, I felt a tender sorrow for having grieved you, till I saw the happy effect of it"—WESLEY.

"There was a moment in the apostle's life when he half regretted what he had done. To some persons this would be perplexing. They cannot understand how an inspired apostle could regret what he had done: if it were done by inspiration, what room could there be for misgivings? And if he regretted an act done under God's guidance, just as any common man might regret a foolish act, how could the apostle be inspired? But this, which might perplex some, exhibits the very beauty and naturalness of the whole narrative. God's inspiration does not take a man and make a passive machine of him. When God inspires, His Spirit mixes with the spirit of man in the form of thought, not without struggles and misgivings of the human element. Otherwise it would not be inspiration *of* the man, but simply a Divine echo *through* the man"—ROBERTSON. "Similar conflicts of the human with the Divine in the inspired writers may be seen in Ex. 4. 10–14; 6. 12; Jer. 1. 6–9; 14. 13; 20. 7–9, 14–18, and in the whole Book of Jonah. **For I perceive that the same Epistle hath made you sorry.** There are a good many various readings here, and the editors have adopted various punctuations, possibly from the difficulty mentioned in the last note. But in truth there need be no such difficulty. The right course was that taken in the First Epistle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But after the Epistle was sent, the tender human heart of S. Paul doubted whether he had done right, whether he had not given unnecessary pain, and the like, and his mind was not fully set at rest on the point until the arrival of Titus showed him clearly the hand of God in the matter. Such self-questionings are constantly going on in the mind of every conscientious man, even when he has been acting most thoroughly under the guidance of God's Spirit. The words here translated 'made sorry,' which is owing to Wyclif, is the same word which in ch 2. is rendered 'caused grief, and 'grieved'"—C. B.

9. "**Now I rejoice, not that ye were made**

sorry. Another instance of the tender consideration of S. Paul. He will not run the risk of being supposed, even for a moment, to have taken pleasure in others' pain"—C. B. "Learn never to smooth away, through fear of results, the difficulties of love and friendship by concealment, or a subtle suppression of facts or feelings. Reprove, explain, submit with all gentleness, and yet with all truth and openness. The deadliest poison you can instil into the wine of life is a fearful reserve which creates suspicion, or a lie which will canker and kill your own love, and through that your friend's. The great blessings of this life are friendship and affection. Be sure that the only irreparable blight of both is falseness"—ROBERTSON.

10. **The sorrow of the world**—"sorrow that arises from worldly considerations—**worketh death**—naturally tends to work or occasion death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal"—WESLEY.

The difference between the true repentance and the false remorse may be illustrated by the cases of David and Saul, S. Peter and Judas. True grief for sin works a change of mind leading to salvation, and salvation is *no matter* of regret. But the false grief which the world feels and which hath no eye to God, worketh death. ROBERTSON says: "The beautiful law is, that in proportion as the repentance increases, the grief diminishes. 'I rejoice,' says S. Paul, 'that I made you sorry, though it were *but for a time.*' Grief for a time, but repentance for ever." **But the sorrow of the world**—*i.e.* of the world untouched and unregenerated by the Spirit of God—the sorrow of the natural man, "the opposite of the sorrow according to God" (Stanley). (See 1 Cor. 2. 14.) **Worketh death**—death of the *body*, sometimes as when despair tempts to suicide, or brings on deadly sickness. Death of the *soul*, when sorrow fails to melt the heart, but leads it to that state of rebellious stubbornness, of entire alienation from God, which is expressed in the words "hardness of heart and contempt of His word and commandments." (Comp. Prov. 17. 22.)

11. **How great diligence is wrought in you**—"shown in all the following particulars. **Yea, clearing of yourselves**—some had been more, some less, faulty; whence arose these various affections. Hence their **apologising** and **indignation**, with respect to themselves; their **fear** and **desire**, with respect to the apostle; their **zeal** and **revenge**, with respect to the offender, yea, and themselves also. **Clearing of yourselves**—from either sharing in, or approving of, his sin. **Indignation**—that ye had not immediately corrected the offender. **Fear**—of God's displeasure, or lest I should come with a rod. **Vehement desire**—to see me again. **Zeal**—for the glory of God, and the soul of that sinner. **Yea, revenge**—ye took a kind of holy revenge upon yourselves, being scarce able to forgive yourselves. **In all things ye**—as a church—**have approved yourselves to be pure**—that is, free from blame, since ye received my letter"—WESLEY.

"**What carefulness**—*lit.* 'diligence' (so Tyndale and Cranmer; 'moral earnestness,' Robertson). (See Mark 6. 25; Luke 1. 39; where it is translated 'haste.') **What clearing of yourselves**—*lit.* 'defence or excuse,' but a better translation than that in the text is impossible. **Indignation** or 'vexation,' a sort of feeling between indignation and disgust at themselves for having been 'puffed up,' and not having 'rather mourned that he that had done this deed had not been taken away from among them' (1 Cor. 5. 2). **Fear.** (See 1 Cor. 4. 21, and ver. 15.) Or, perhaps, fear of God's wrath. (See ver. 1, but comp. note below.) **Vehement desire**—rather 'longing,' *i.e.* for S. Paul's presence. (See Phil. 1. 8; 2. 26; 1 Thess. 3. 6; also ch. 5. 2; 9. 14.) The same word in ver. 7 is translated 'earnest desire.' Theophylact detects here another instance of the anxiety of the apostle not to lay too much stress on his authority. To the idea of fear he immediately subjoins that of affection. **Revenge**—'punysshment,' Tyndale. The word is used of punishment inflicted by judicial process. (See Luke 18. 3; also ch. 10. 6.) Such a process had taken place in this case. (Comp. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, with 2 Cor. 2. 6)"—C. B.

12. "**It was not** only, or chiefly, **for the sake of** the incestuous person, or of his father; but to show my **care over you**"—WESLEY.

"The worst misfortune that can happen is to sin and to escape detection: shame and sorrow do God's work as nothing else can do it. A sin undetected is the soil out of which fresh sin will grow. The apostle was not delivering his own soul, but he was trying to save their souls"—ROBERTSON.

13. For this reason, because this and no other had been his purpose, and because the facts showed that it had been attained, **we are comforted.** No comfort could have come from attaining such purpose as had been imputed to him.

14. It was a special ground of rejoicing to S. Paul that the conduct of the Corinthians had shown the boast, which partly induced Titus to go, to be true, and that he was spared the humiliation of seeing his praise of them proved hollow.

15. The impression made upon Titus by his visit was so favourable that the apostle can use it as a seal of the established reconciliation between the church and himself, which he declared in ver. 16.

16. The apostle's meaning is, that in everything I am of good courage in consequence of your conduct. From this chapter, says ROBERTSON, we learn "the value of explanations. Had S. Paul left the matter unsettled, or only half settled, there never could have been a hearty understanding between him and the Corinthians. Whenever there is a mis-

understanding between man and man, the true remedy is a direct and open request for explanation." (Comp. Matt. 18. 15–17.)

CHAPTER VIII.

1. **We declare to you the grace of God**—"which evidently appeared by this happy effect"—WESLEY.

"The zeal of the Macedonians, to which S. Paul was an eye-witness, was an excellent starting-point for his topic, and calculated to provoke emulation. The first cause of Christian almsgiving is the grace of God. The grace **given in the churches** denotes that the churches were receptacles and *abiding-places* of the grace"—S. C.

2. **In a great trial of affliction**—"being continually persecuted, harassed, and plundered"—WESLEY.

"The apostle refers to the persecutions which they shared with him, which, if not endured in a proper spirit, would have shut them up in the contemplation of their own sorrows, instead of making them anxious to relieve those of others. **The abundance of their joy and their deep poverty.** (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 26.) 'In spite of their troubled condition they had displayed great joyfulness, and in spite of their poverty they had displayed great liberality' (De Wette). The Geneva Version, instead of 'deep poverty,' has 'the poverty which had consumed them even to the very bottom.' The literal rendering of 'deep' is down to the depth, or according to depth. 'Munificence,' says Chrysostom, 'is determined not by the measure of what is given, but by the mind of those who bestow it.' (Comp. Luke 21. 3.) The condition of Greece in the time of Augustus was one of great desolation and distress"—C. B.

3. **Willing of themselves**—*lit.* "of their own choice," not excluding, however, as Meyer well remarks, Divine, but only human, influence in the matter. (Comp. ver. 17.)

4. **Praying us with much entreaty**—"probably S. Paul had lovingly admonished them not to do beyond their power"—WESLEY.

These Macedonians pleaded hard to be allowed as a favour to join with the other churches in this service for the brethren in Judea. This verse suggests that S. Paul hesitated, because of their poverty, to accept their co-operation.

5. **And not as we hoped**—"that is, beyond all we could hope. **They gave themselves to us, by the will of God**—in obedience to His will, to be wholly directed by us"—WESLEY.

"**First.** Here may be a reference to the order of time, but it is better to understand it of the order of importance; 'above all' (Alford). **By the will of God.** It was God's will that they should have the power to act thus, if they were willing to carry out His will. (Comp. 1 Thess. 4. 3; 5. 18; 1 Tim. 2. 4)"—C. B.

6. **As he had begun**—"when he was with you before"—WESLEY.

"On a former visit to Corinth, doubtless that referred to in ch. 12. 18, undertaken at S. Paul's request, probably with express reference to this collection, some time before S. Paul wrote the First Epistle"—BEET.

7. Observe that faith and utterance and the like were of little avail without love. (See 1 Cor. 8. 1; 13.; 2 Pet. 1. 5–7.)

8. **I speak not by commandment.** "The apostles 'never spoke as dictators' (Robertson). (See ch. 1. 24, and ver. 10, as well as 1 Cor. 7. 6, 25; Philemon 8, 9, 13, 14; and 1 Pet. 5. 3)"—C. B. BEET says that S. Paul put to the **proof** the genuineness of their **love**, and so tested the worth of their Christian profession. And there is no surer way of doing this than to ask money for Christian purposes. For men generally trust in, and cling to, material good.

9. **For ye know**—"and this knowledge is the true source of love. **The grace**—the most sincere, most free, and most abundant love. **He became poor**—in becoming man, in all His life; in His death. **Rich**—in the favour and image of God"—WESLEY.

"In S. Paul's eyes 'Christ is the reference for everything. To Christ's life and to Christ's spirit, S. Paul refers all questions, both practical and speculative, for solution' (ROBERTSON). **Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor**—rather, 'being' rich (comp. John 3. 13 in the Greek, ch. 11. 31). There is no 'was' in the original. Jesus Christ did not cease to be rich when He made Himself poor. He did not cease to be God when He became Man. For 'became poor' we should perhaps translate, 'made Himself a beggar.' The word seems to indicate a more abject condition than mere poverty. 'For the word, see Matt. 5. 3, also ch. 6. 10, and ver. 2 of this chapter. For the idea, comp. Matt. 8. 20; Phil. 2. 6-8.' **That ye through His poverty might be rich.** We could only attain to God by His bringing Himself down to our level. (See John 1. 9–14, 18; 12. 45; 14. 9; Col. 1. 15; Heb. 1. 3.) And by thus putting Himself on an equality with us He enriched us with all the treasures that dwell in Him. (Comp. Eph. 1. 7, 8; 2. 5–7; 3. 16–19; Col. 2. 2, 3, etc., as well as Phil. 2. 6-8 just cited)"—LIAS.

10. Note the same careful distinction between command and counsel, as in 1 Cor. 7. 25.

11. The sense is "you made a resolution last year to do a certain work. Carry out that resolution now, and let the completion of the task bear witness, as far as your ability goes, to the genuineness of the resolution you then made"—C. B.

12. **A man**—"every believer—**is accepted**—with God—**according to what he hath.** And the same rule holds universally. Whosoever acknowledges himself to be a vile, guilty sinner, and, in consequence of this acknowledgment, flies for refuge to the wounds of a

crucified Saviour, and relies on His merits alone for salvation, may in every circumstance of life apply this indulgent declaration to himself"—WESLEY.

Christian liberality is the work of a willing mind. It is not the value of the contribution, but the love of the contributor which makes it precious. The offering is sanctified or made unholy in God's sight by the spirit in which it is given. The most striking passage in which this truth is illustrated is that of the widow's mite. Tried by the gauge of the treasurer of a charity, it was next to nothing. Tried by the test of charity, it was more than that of all. Her coins, worthless in the eyes of the rich Pharisee, were in the eyes of Christ transformed, by her love, into the gold of the Eternal City.

13. **"To you pressure**—*lit.* 'affliction'; privation of the necessaries of life, through liberality towards the Christians of Judea"—BEET. In S. Paul's spirit of entreaty we remark the spirit of reciprocity. It might have been supposed that because S. Paul was a Jew he was therefore anxious for his Jewish brethren; and that, in urging the Corinthians to give liberally, even out of their poverty, he forgot the unfairness of the request, and was satisfied so long as only the Jews were relieved—it mattered not at whose expense"—ROBERTSON.

14. **That their abundance**—"if need should so require — **may be**—at another time — **a supply to your want: that there may be an equality**—no want on one side, no superfluity on the other. It may likewise have a further meaning—that as the temporal bounty of the Corinthians did now supply the temporal wants of their poor brethren in Judea, so the prayers of these might be a means of bringing down many spiritual blessings on their benefactors; so that all the spiritual wants of the one might be amply supplied; all the temporal of the other"—WESLEY.

"The apostle is probably glancing at actual discontent inspired by his adversaries about his requisition of money, and he gently reminds his readers that they may, one day, need a requital in kind from those whom they assist"—S. C. "By establishing the principle of mutual monetary help, he was doing something to shelter the people of God in the dark days awaiting the Church and the world"—BEET.

15. **As it is written, He that had gathered the most had nothing over; and he that had gathered the least did not lack**—"that is, in which that scripture is in another sense fulfilled"—WESLEY.

"**As it is written**—in Ex. 16. 18. In this miracle S. Paul perceives a great universal principle of human life. God has given to every man a certain capacity and a certain power of enjoyment. Beyond that he cannot find delight. Whatever he heaps or hoards beyond that is not enjoyment but disquiet"—ROBERTSON. "As a pattern of what he desires to see in the Christian Church, S. Paul quotes Ex. 16. 18, almost word for word from the LXX., viz. the narrative of Israel in the wilderness, supplied by the gift of God, so that none had too much and none too little. **Had not more, had not less** than he needed. For they gathered according to the size of their families. So far as the Christian life permeates church members and churches will there be reproduced this ancient and beautiful ideal of a company in which each has sufficient, an ideal never realised in material good so completely as in Israel in the wilderness. For all men are but gatherers of food given by God"—BEET.

16. **"But thanks be to God.** The word translated 'thanks' here is that translated 'grace, gift,' in other places of this Epistle. We learn from vers. 6, 17, that Titus, moved by the strong interest in the Corinthians which his first mission had excited, and being requested by the apostle to undertake the work of stimulating their energy in the charitable work they had undertaken (ver. 10), determined of his own accord to visit Corinth, instead of writing (this seems the only way in which we can reconcile ver. 6 with ver. 17), and thus to stir up the Corinthians by his personal presence to a holy emulation of the good deeds of the churches of Macedonia. Titus can hardly, as some have thought, have been entrusted with this Epistle on the occasion of which the apostle speaks, for S. Paul speaks in the past tense of this mission"—C. B.

17. **Being more forward**—"than to need it, though he received it well"—WESLEY.

"The readiness of Titus, like all good in man, is the work and gift of God. So eager was he to complete the work he had begun that his journey was really an outflow of his own *earnest* wish"—BEET.

18. **We**—"I and Timothy. **The brother**—the ancients generally supposed this was S. Luke. **Whose praise**—for faithfully dispensing **the gospel, is through all the churches**"—WESLEY.

"The commendation of the first of Titus's two companions might mean either that he had written a Gospel, or was distinguished as a preacher, or as a worker in the gospel cause"—S. C.

19. **He was appointed by the churches**—"of Macedonia—**with this gift**—which they were carrying from Macedonia to Jerusalem. **For the declaration of our ready mind**—that of S. Paul and his fellow-traveller, ready to be the servants of all"—WESLEY.

"**And not that only**—*i.e.* not only is he praised throughout all the churches—**but who was also chosen of the churches**—*i.e.* chosen by the churches. (See note on 1 Cor. 14. 24; ch. 1. 16; 2. 6, 12 of this Epistle, and Heb. 12. 5, etc.) The word here used signifies 'chosen by show of hands.' So also in Acts 14. 23. Voting

by show of hands was the custom among the Greeks as among ourselves"—C. B.

20. "**Avoiding this.** The word is used in Greek of furling the sails of a vessel to avoid a disaster. It occurs again in the New Testament in 2 Thess. 3. 6. But it may perhaps be translated 'making this arrangement.' **That no man should blame us.** Chrysostom and Calvin remark on the care taken by the apostle to avoid giving the slightest cause for suspicion. He did not, says the former, send Titus alone. 'He was not,' says the latter, 'so satisfied with himself as to think it unworthy of his dignity to avoid calumny.' And he adds, 'Certainly nothing exposes a man to unpleasant insinuations more than the management of public money.' In this is to be observed S. Paul's wisdom, not only as a man of the world but as a man of God. He knew that he lived in a censorious age, that he was as a city set on a hill, that the world would scan his every act and his every word, and attribute all conceivable and even inconceivable evil to what he did in all honour. It was just because of S. Paul's honour and innocence that he was likely to have omitted this prudence"—ROBERTSON.

21. "**Honest things**—rather what is honourable. The word implies what is of good repute among mankind, and hence what is honourable and noble in itself. **Also in the sight of men.** It is not enough for the Christian to have a clear conscience. He must give no man an opportunity of insinuating that his conscience is *not* clear. (See Matt. 5. 14–16)"—C. B.

22. **With them**—"with Titus and Luke. **Our brother**—perhaps Apollos"—WESLEY.

"Titus's second companion must have been a coadjutor of S. Paul in matters of business connected with his ministry, for the word rendered 'diligent' in the A.V. signifies zeal and energy in the transaction of affairs"—S. C.

23. **My partner**—"in my cares and labours. **The glory of Christ**—signal instruments of advancing His glory"—WESLEY.

"That Titus was a companion of their beloved apostle, and a worker with him for their good, was his high commendation. The other two have three commendations. They are **brothers** in Christ, **apostles** approved and sent by Christian **churches**, men whose mission and work reveal the **glory of Christ.** To S. Paul and his readers they are brothers; to whole churches they are specially related as their apostles; and to **Christ** as men bringing Him glory"—BEET.

24. **Before the churches** — "present by their messengers"—WESLEY.

"A motive, drawn from ver. 23, for receiving the messengers worthily. Owing to their just stated relationships, what you do to them, you do **in the presence of the churches** who sent them"—BEET.

CHAPTER IX.

1. **To write to you**—"largely"—WESLEY.

"**For**—*i.e.* I am not writing to you about the ministry to the saints, for that is unnecessary. I am writing about your reception of the brethren, and your being ready when they come. (See ver. 3.) **The ministering**—*lit.* 'the ministry.' (See note on ch. 3. 3.) Anything which conveyed God's good gifts from one member of the church to another was, in the apostle's eyes, a 'ministry.' **It is superfluous for me to write to you.** 'Observe the tender wisdom of this proceeding. The charity which finds us unprepared is a call as hateful as that of any creditor whom it is hard to pay. S. Paul knew this well, therefore he gave timely notice' (ROBERTSON). It was unnecessary to write to them about the collection itself. It was not unnecessary to remind them, as a matter of Christian prudence, that they must not allow themselves to be taken unawares, lest the amount of their bounty should hardly correspond to what men had a reason to expect. (Comp. 1 Cor. 16. 2.) Calvin, however, thinks that the apostle wavered between confidence and anxiety. He knew their readiness, but he feared the instability of human nature"—LIAS.

2. **I boast to them of Macedonia**—"with whom he then was"—WESLEY.

And your zeal hath provoked very many. "We did not advise, we did not exhort; we only praised you, we only boasted of you; and this was enough for exhortation of them"—CHRYSOSTOM.

3. "**I have sent the** above-mentioned **brethren** before me"—WESLEY.

"**Yet have I sent.** Although instructions to make the collection were needless, it was not needless for me to send the brethren. (See note on ver. 1.) For 'I have sent,' the Greek has 'I sent.' **Our boasting**—*lit.* 'our ground of boasting,' but see ch. 5. 12. It was not that S. Paul expected no result from the collection, but feared that it might be one out of all proportion to what his expressions of confidence in the Corinthian church would have led other churches to expect. **In this behalf**—rather 'in this respect,' *i.e.* in regard to the matter of the collection. He had not hesitated to speak of their other good qualities. (See 1 Cor. 1. 4–8; and for the expression, see ch. 3. 10)"—C. B.

5. **Spoken of before** — "by me, to the Macedonians. **Not as a matter of covetousness**—as wrung by importunity from covetous persons"—WESLEY.

And not as of covetousness—rather, perhaps, "greed," *i.e.* to be given in a generous and not in a grudging spirit. But Dr. Plumptre regards it as possibly referring to S. Paul, "as a work of 'your' bounty, not of 'my' claims upon your purses." Ch. 7. 2; 12. 17, 18, which he cites, are decidedly in favour of this inter-

pretation. For "covetous, covetousness," see 1 Cor. 5. 10.

6. **He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully**—"a general rule. God will reward to the proportion of the work, and the temper whence it proceeds'—WESLEY.

"**He which soweth sparingly.** He calls it sowing," says CHRYSOSTOM, "in order that we may learn by the figure of the harvest that in giving we receive more than we give." (Comp. Gal. 6. 7–9; also Prov. 11. 18.) WAITE says: "To write that they should give liberally would have been superfluous, yet **this** he allows himself to say. Giving is not a sacrifice, but a sowing followed by a reaping, and as is the sowing so the reaping. The giver of the recompense is, of course, God. Both idea and language are taken from the Old Testament. (See Prov. 11. 24)."

7. **Of necessity**—"because he cannot tell how to refuse"—WESLEY.

"Passing from amount to motive, and states the inward moral condition, without which no man can reap. His sowing must spring out of deliberate preference, not out of a state of mind in which grief is felt at parting with possessions, nor out of compulsion, in which a man thinks that he **must** give, whether from respectability, reputation, or from urgent admonitions"—S. C.

8. "How remarkable are these words! Each is loaded with matter, and increases all the way it goes. **All grace**—every kind of blessing. **That ye may abound to every good work.** God gives us everything, that we may do good therewith, and so receive more blessings. All things in this life, even rewards, are, to the faithful, seeds in order to a future harvest"—WESLEY.

"**All grace.** See notes on *grace* elsewhere, especially ch. 8. 6. and ver. 15 of this chapter; also comp. 1 Cor. 16. 3. The meaning here is, 'God is able to make every gift of His loving-kindness to abound to you, that you, being thus enriched, may impart of His bounty to others.' **Sufficiency.** This is translated 'contentment' in 1 Tim. 6. 6, while the corresponding adjective is rendered 'content' in Phil. 4. 11. But 1 Tim. 6. 8 explains the meaning of the word. It is the state of mind which, needing nothing but the barest necessaries, regards all other things as superfluities, to be parted with whenever the needs of others require them. This is the force of the words 'all,' twice repeated, and 'always.' At all times, save when he is actually deprived of food and raiment, the Christian ought to regard himself as having enough. It is worthy of remark that this *self-sufficingness* was a favourite virtue with heathen philosophers, though destitute, in the case of the Stoics, of all the gentler and more attractive aspects in which it has been wont to present itself among Christians. The use of this word, as of the word noticed in ver. 6, seems to show that S. Paul was well acquainted with the philosophy of Aristotle"—LIAS. "**Sufficiency**—objective possession of, or subjective consciousness of possessing, all that they need. The latter sense here. Same word in 1 Tim. 6. 6; Phil. 4. 11. They who know that God will supply all their need, and they only, are independent of the uncertainties of life. They can therefore afford to give away money to others. Thus 'sufficiency' is essential for large and cheerful giving"—BEET.

9. **He hath scattered abroad**—"a generous word. With a full hand, without any anxious thought which way each grain falls. **His righteousness** — His beneficence, with the blessed effects of it—**remaineth for ever**—unexhausted, God still renewing His store"—WESLEY.

'God *can* provide abundantly for givers, and that He *actually does* so is now shown by Scripture. It is said of the man that feareth the Lord (Ps. 112. 9), 'He scattered, he gave to the poor.' **Scattered** denotes, not without reference to sowing, liberal giving in many directions. **To the poor** shows the giving discriminates its proper objects. The abiding of righteousness for ever is God's reward for scattering"—S. C. "**His righteousness remaineth for ever.** As this passage is simply quoted from the Old Testament, it seems unfair to build any theological argument upon it, especially as on points like these the Hebrew language has by no means the precision of the Greek. It probably means no more than this, that a good and charitable deed remains such for evermore. The parenthesis, which in the A.V. includes ver. 10, ought to include this verse only"—C. B.

10. **And He who supplieth seed**—"opportunity and ability to help others. **And bread**—all things needful for your own souls and bodies. **Will** continually **supply** you with that **seed**, yea, **multiply it** to you more and more. **And increase the fruits of your righteousness**—the happy effects of your love to God and man"—WESLEY.

"**Now He that ministereth.** The word used twice in this verse has the original signification of 'leading a chorus.' Hence it came to mean to 'defray the expenses' of a chorus, since, when a wealthy man was appointed to any office of importance in his city, it was usual for him to provide festal displays for the citizens. Hence it came to have the general meaning of 'furnish, provide,' as here. **Both minister.** In the best MSS. these verbs are in the future-indicative, *i.e. will* minister, *will* multiply, *will* increase; not, as the received Greek text, in the optative. **Bread for your food.** In the Greek these words seem to belong to the former verb, 'Now He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply,' etc. The words here

are a quotation from the LXX. version of Isa. 55. 10. **Increase the fruits of your righteousness.** (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 30; 3. 6.) The words are taken from the LXX. version of Hos. 10. 12. The metaphor is taken from the natural processes of growth just referred to. God supplies the seed of works of mercy; He multiplies it, and good works in plenty are the crop"—C. B. "God who *can* and *does* thus bless charitable giving, *will* do so in the case of the Corinthians. He who, in the natural economy of the world, supplies seed to the sower, and bread, as its fruit, for the support of life, will, in His moral economy, likewise requite those who till the soil and sow the seed of charity"—S. C.

11. **Which worketh by us thanksgiving to God**—"both from us who distribute, and them who receive your bounty"—WESLEY.

We have here the same truth as in the preceding verse, from another point of view. When men, by a right use of previous gifts, themselves thankfully receive God's further gifts, and again, in imitation of His bounty, use them for the good of others, so that these recipients also thank God for the benefaction, it is, as far as it goes, the re-establishment of the right relation between God and men, and men and men.

12. "The deep religious significance of the collection cannot be dismissed in a single sentence. Its chief value consisted in its spiritual results, so he impresses upon his readers that the immediate end attained by the work of charity, the supplying of the wants of the saints, however excellent, is not its only one, and then reiterates in a fuller form what he had said about the more excellent fruit of thanksgiving"—S. C.

13. **Your avowed subjection** — "openly testified by your actions — **to all men**—who stand in need of it"—WESLEY.

"This collection was a conspicuous act of submission to the apostolic authority which enjoined it, and to Christ (comp. 8. 5), for whose sake it was made, by those who professed to be His servants"—BEET.

14. "Teaches that the prayer of brethren for brethren is as much a glorifying of God as thanksgiving itself. The apostle attributes to the grateful Jewish Christians a feeling prompting their prayer"—S. C.

15. **His unspeakable gift** — "His outward and inward blessings, the number and excellence of which cannot be uttered"—WESLEY.

"**Thanks.** The word is the same which is elsewhere translated 'grace.' **For His unspeakable gift.** This, as Dean Alford suggests (after Chrysostom), can be none other than Jesus Christ Himself. No other gift could correspond to the word 'unspeakable,' which suggests (like Rom. 11. 33; Eph. 3. 18, 19) the idea of God. And in Jesus Christ 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. 2. 9). From Him all gifts of nature or grace proceed. And what the gift is which is above all others, we learn from such passages as Rom. 5. 15; 6. 23; Heb. 6. 4'—C. B.

CHAPTER X.

1. **Now I Paul myself** — "a strongly emphatical expression—**who when present am base among you.** So, probably, some of the false teachers affirmed. Copying after **the meekness and gentleness of Christ, entreat**—though I might command 'you'"—WESLEY.

Now I Paul myself. "Until now, S. Paul has addressed himself pre-eminently to the better intentioned in the Christian Church, but henceforth he addresses himself to those who had sought to lower his dignity and weaken his authority by representing him as weak in personal 'influence,' as well as in bodily strength and consistency of purpose, 'although courageous and full of self-commendation in his letters' (OLSHAUSEN). The word 'myself' is difficult to explain. Deans Stanley and Alford explain it (1) of S. Paul's intention to enter upon personal matters. S. Chrysostom seems to imply (2) that it refers to the emphasis with which he speaks, and he cites Gal. 5. 2; Philem. 19. But (3) it seems more probable that it means 'I, the very man who in absence am said to be bold, show my consistency by preferring meekness even in my letters. I am meek, not because I am afraid, but because I ought to be meek. But if meekness fails, then I must be severe.' (Comp. vers. 2, 9, 10; also 1 Cor. 4. 21.) It must be remembered that one main purpose of this Epistle is to vindicate the consistency of the apostle. (See ch. 1. 17–19)"—C. B.

2. "Do not constrain me **when present to be bold**—to exert my apostolical authority. **Who think of us as walking after the flesh**—as acting in a cowardly or crafty manner"—WESLEY.

Lit. **I entreat thee, not being bold.** Compliance or non-compliance with this request rested entirely with the Corinthians. The word here translated **beseech** is not the same as the one used in the last verse. BEET says: "This verse implies that there may be occasions requiring the Christian to lay aside the meekness and clemency which Christ loved to manifest, and to assert himself and act with severity. Sometimes (John 2. 15) Christ did so. But S. Paul's example warns us to do this, as he did, reluctantly and only after efforts to avoid it have failed, as something abnormal, caused and justified by abnormal circumstances."

3. **Though we walk in the flesh** — "in mortal bodies, and, consequently, are not free from human weakness. Yet **we do not war**—against the world and the devil—**after the flesh** — by any carnal or worldly methods,

Though the apostle here, and in several other parts of this Epistle, speaks in the plural number, for the sake of modesty and decency, yet he principally means himself. On him were these reflections thrown, and it is his own authority which he is vindicating"—WESLEY.

"**In the flesh.** To walk *in* the flesh is to possess the fleshly nature with its many infirmities. (See Rom. 7.) To walk *after* the flesh is to neglect the dictates of the higher spiritual nature, and to live as though the desires of the body were the only ones that needed satisfying. **War after the flesh.** The metaphor of a warfare, as applied to the Christian life, is a common one with S. Paul, though it is more usually used of the internal conflict of the Christian soul than of the external warfare waged against the evil around. (See 1 Cor. 9. 26; Eph. 6. 10–17; 1 Thess. 5. 8; 1 Tim. 1. 18; 6. 12; 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4; 4. 7.) Bishop Wordsworth remarks on the fact that 'the armies of imperial Rome, her camps and her campaigns,' and the rest, were 'objects that presented themselves to S. Paul in his travels, and were very familiar to his readers.' (Comp. ch. 2. 14–16)"—LIAS.

4. **For the weapons of our warfare**—"those we use in this war—**are not carnal**—but spiritual, and therefore **mighty to the throwing down of strongholds**—of all the difficulties which men or devils can raise in our way. Though faith and prayer belong also to the Christian armour (Eph. 6. 15, etc.), yet the word of God seems to be here chiefly intended"—WESLEY.

Mighty—*i.e.* "powerful," is an offset against the weakness of the flesh. For the reason why God chooses weak instruments see ch. 4. 7. But He always gives them the requisite "excess of power" over all opposition. **Pulling down of strongholds** shows the actual efficacy of these weapons in the hands of S. Paul. Every godly man may be equally valiant and triumphant.

5. "**Destroying** all vain **reasonings, and every high thing which exalteth itself**—as a wall or rampart—**against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought**—or, rather, faculty of the mind — **into captivity to the obedience of Christ.** Those evil reasonings are destroyed. The mind itself, being overcome and taken captive, lays down all authority of its own, and entirely gives itself up to perform, for the time to come, to Christ its conqueror, **the obedience of** faith"—WESLEY.

"**Casting down.** This is not spoken of the 'weapons,' but of the apostles. **Imaginations**—rather, as *margin*, 'reasonings.' The rendering 'imaginations' comes from Tyndale. S. Paul refers to the efforts of human reason to deal with things beyond it, the best corrective of which is and always will be the simple proclamation of God's message to man. **Against the knowledge of God.** For this phrase see Prov. 2. 5; Hos. 6. 6; 1 Cor. 15. 34; Col. 1. 10, and the kindred phrase in Isa. 11. 9; 2 Pet 2. 20. Here it signifies that by which we know God, *i.e.* the gospel. (See 1 Cor. 2. 16; 13. 12; Gal. 4. 9.) **Bringing into captivity**—another military metaphor"—C. B. **Every thought.** The word is the same as in ch. 2. 11; 3. 14; 4. 4. It occurs only in Phil. 4. 7, and in this Epistle. Not only ourselves, but **every thought** in us must bow to Christ. His victory over us must be complete. We cannot know Him as the supply of all our needs, as our strength and joy and life, until we have seen ourselves to be needy and helpless and lost, *i.e.* until every high thought within us has been brought down to the dust.

6. **Being in readiness to avenge all disobedience**—"not only by spiritual censure, but miraculous punishments. **When your obedience is fulfilled**—when the sound part of you have given proof of your obedience, so that I am in no danger of punishing the innocent with the guilty"—WESLEY.

"The opposition of his enemies suggests to S. Paul a military metaphor. To him life is not only a walk, but a warfare. But he is equipped with superhuman weapons, with which he pulls down whatever in man lifts itself up, thus hindering men from knowing God, and brings every thought to bow to God; and with which He is able to punish all that resist. This reveals the error of those who look upon S. Paul as acting merely from human motives and with human powers. And it gives immense force to his appeal to be allowed to leave unused these great punitive powers, and to imitate the meekness and clemency of Christ. Thus S. Paul begins his self-defence by an entreaty that his opponents will not compel him to punish them; and gives proof of his power to do so by pointing to the spiritual triumphs of blessing, far above human power, which he obtains day by day in the hearts of men. For these triumphs prove that the power of God is with him"—BEET.

7. **Do you look at the outward appearance of things**—"does any of you judge of a minister of Christ by his person, or any outward circumstance? **Let him again think this of himself**—let him learn it from his own reflection, before I convince him by a severer method"—WESLEY.

S. Paul asks in surprise whether his readers regard merely external advantages destitute of all spiritual worth, such as his Judaising enemies possessed. They boasted that they belonged to Christ in some special manner in which the apostle did not. Some of them despised S. Paul because of his lowly appearance and demeanour among them. He asks whether it is on the outside of things that they fixed their attention, and then bids them, instead of looking at externals and reckoning accordingly, to make another *reckoning* from the solitude of

their inner selves. The advice is good for men to-day.

8. **I should not be ashamed**—"as having said more than I could make good"—WESLEY.

"**I should not be ashamed**—*lit.* 'I shall not be ashamed,' or perhaps 'shamed,' *i.e.* brought to shame. 'Shall not be pointed out as a liar or a vain boaster' (CHRYSOSTOM)"—C. B.

9. "I say this, **that I may not seem to terrify you by letters**—threatening more than I can perform"—WESLEY.

"He had been accused of such terrorism. The letters meant are only those which he had written to the Corinthians. The weighty and strong passages in them were those in which he denounced heathen immoralities, as we know that he did in all the Corinthian letters"—S. C.

10. **His bodily presence is weak.** "His stature, says S. Chrysostom, was low, his body crooked, and his head bald"—WESLEY.

"**His bodily presence is weak.** The bodily weakness of the apostle seems clearly indicated by many passages in Scripture. We may perhaps gather from Acts 14. 12 (though this is doubtful) that he was of less dignified presence than S. Barnabas. He refers to his infirmity in 1 Cor. 2. 3. It was probably the thorn in the flesh of which he speaks in ch. 12. 7, and the 'temptation' which was 'in his flesh,' in Gal. 4. 13, 14. There is an admirable note on S. Paul's personal appearance at the end of Dr. Plumptre's Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles in the Bishop of Gloucester's *New Testament for English Readers.* **Worthi to be dispisid** (Wyclif). This is the proper meaning of the word 'contemptible.' Whatever S. Paul's fervour and mental and spiritual power may have been it is evident that he lacked the conventional gifts of the orator—the powerful voice, the fluent and facile delivery, the arts whereby to enchain attention. It was not the manner of his speech, but its matter, which attracted his hearers to him"—C. B.

11. **Such a one**—"*i.e.* the man who speaks in this way. **That, such as we are in word by letters**—it is evident that S. Paul's opponents were not very measured in their opposition to him. Not only did they deny his apostolic authority (1 Cor. 9. 1, 6), not only did they ridicule his appearance, but they even charged him with the grossest cowardice. For nothing is more contemptible than to utter loud threats when at a distance, and to subside into silence and meekness when confronted with an adversary"—LIAS.

12. **For we presume not**—"a strong irony, **to equal ourselves**—as partners of the same office. **Or to compare ourselves**—as partakers of the same labour. **They among themselves limiting themselves**—choosing and limiting their provinces according to their own fancy"—WESLEY.

"In the very act of saying, with a touch of irony, that he will not compare himself with the rival teachers, the apostle virtually does compare himself. And the point he makes is that they instituted no such comparison. They were their own standards of excellence"—ELLICOTT.

13. "**But we will not,** like them, **boastingly extend ourselves beyond our measure, but according to the measure of the province which God hath allotted us**—to me, in particular, as the Apostle of the Gentiles. **A measure** which **reaches even unto you.** God allotted to each apostle his province, and the measure or bounds thereof"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul fixes the rule of his conduct. He will not act beyond his commission as to persons or things, nor go beyond the line prescribed to him, which false apostles did. His resolution was to keep within his own province. His commission as an apostle was to preach the gospel everywhere, especially among the Gentiles, and he was not confined to one place; yet he observed the directions of Providence and the Holy Spirit as to where he should labour"—M. HENRY.

14. **We are come even to you**—"by a gradual, regular process, having taken the intermediate places in our way, **in** preaching **the gospel of Christ**"—WESLEY.

"The meaning is, For we are not straining ourselves beyond our due limits in claiming you as our charge, for it is an undeniable fact that we came as far as you in our work of preaching the gospel. Corinth was the farthest point the gospel had yet reached"—LIAS.

15. **Having hope, now your faith is increased**—"so that you can the better spare us. **To be enlarged by you abundantly**—that is, enabled by you to go still further"—WESLEY.

"**Not boasting of things without our measure.** The apostle now repeats what he has before said in ver. 13, but directs his remarks more pointedly against the false teachers by adding, **in other men's labours.** For they, as Meyer remarks, were adorning themselves with strange feathers as they intruded themselves into other men's spheres of work. See also for S. Paul's line of conduct, Gal. 2. 9. **When your faith is increased.** Two reasons may be assigned for this reservation: (1) that as we have seen (ch. 2. 12, 13), S. Paul could not settle himself to any other work while the Corinthian church was in such an unsatisfactory condition, and (2) that the consistent conduct of one Christian community was an immense help to the first missionaries of the gospel in founding another. (See Tit. 2. 8; 1 Pet. 2. 12.) **Enlarged.** The apostle seems to identify himself with his work, as he has before identified himself with the Corinthian church. (See ch. 3. 2; 7. 3.) He is enlarged when the Church is enlarged by his means"—C. B.

16. **In the regions beyond you**—"to the

west and south, where the gospel had not yet been preached"—WESLEY.

To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you—*i.e.* the rest of Greece, Italy, and Spain. (Comp. Rom. 15. 19, 24-28.) S. Paul here attributes his further progress in the gospel not to his own energy, but to their faith, another instance of his identification of himself with those in whom the same life dwelt. (Comp. ch. 1. 11.) **And not to boast in another man's line**—*lit.* and not "to have boasted." Both this word and the word translated "enlarged" and "preach the gospel" are in the past tense. S. Paul here again reflects indirectly, but most severely, upon his opponents. **Our** hope is first that your faith may increase, and then that we may congratulate ourselves on having carried the good tidings of the gospel to those who as yet have not heard them, not, as others do, on the successes which by intruding into another man's work, we have found ready made for us.

17. **But he that glorieth.** This passage occurs in 1 Cor. 1. 31, where it is prefaced by the words, "it is written." It is, in fact, a paraphrase of Jer. 9. 24. Meyer remarks that a noble example of this kind of glorying is given by S. Paul himself in 1 Cor. 15. 10. (Comp. also ch. 12. 10.)

18. **For not he that commendeth himself is approved.** "S. Paul's self-commendation is only wrung from him by circumstances. The Corinthians cannot judge of things 'after the appearance' (ver. 7). S. Paul, bearing in mind the wise man's advice to 'answer a fool according to his folly' (Prov. 26. 5), shows that even from that point of view the new teachers could not arrogate to themselves any superiority over him. But he takes care to remark that the only true ground of approval is to do the work of God"—C. B.

CHAPTER XI.

1. **I wish ye would bear.** "So does he pave the way for what otherwise might have given offence. **With my folly**—of commending myself; which to many may appear folly; and really would be so, were it not on this occasion absolutely necessary"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul admits the foolishness of talking about oneself; but claims forbearance, on the ground that he does not say much. To talk about oneself is usually a mark of unsound mind. Of this folly, to a small extent, and (ver. 13) to serve God, S. Paul will now be guilty. These words (comp. ver. 16; 12. 1-11) betray a man unaccustomed to speak about himself. He cannot do so, even to serve God, without apology"—BEET.

2. **For.** "The cause of his seeming folly is expressed in this and the following verse; the cause why they should bear with him (ver. 4)"—WESLEY.

Present you as a chaste virgin to Christ—"*i.e.* at His coming. (Comp. Eph. 5. 27) where Christ is said, *Himself* to present the Church to Himself. The betrothal in S. Paul's day, as in some Christian countries at the present time, preceded the marriage sometimes by a considerable interval. There is a reference here also to the passages from the Old Testament cited above, and to Ezek. 23., etc."—C. B.

3. **But I fear.** "Love is full of these fears. **Lest as the serpent**—a most apposite comparison—**deceived Eve**—simple, ignorant of evil—**by his subtlety**—which is in the highest degree dangerous to such a disposition—**so your minds**—we might therefore be tempted, even if there were no sin in us—**might be corrupted**—losing their virginal purity—**from the simplicity that is in Christ**—that simplicity which is lovingly intent on Him alone, seeking no other person or thing"—WESLEY.

As the serpent beguiled Eve. "The Church, as a second Eve, is espoused to Christ, the new Adam. (1 Cor. 15. 45.) She must beware lest, like Eve, she listens to the voice of the same tempter, who ever lieth in wait to deceive, and to lose the privileges she was destined to enjoy. (See ch. 2. 11.) **Through his subtlety.** (See ch. 4. 2.) A similar sentiment will be found in Col. 2. 4-8. For the serpent, see Gen. 3. 1"—LIAS. **From the simplicity**—rather, "single-mindedness." (See ch. 1. 12; 8. 2; 9. 11-13.) **That is in Christ**—"*lit.* that is unto Christ" "that ye had toward Christ"—CRANMER. "This is an expression commonly mistaken. People suppose simplicity means that a child or ploughman can understand. Now if this be simplicity, the simplicity of the gospel was corrupted by S. Paul himself. 'Simple,' according to S. Paul, means, 'unmixed, unadulterated'"—ROBERTSON. The meaning therefore is, "your single-minded devotion to Christ."

4. **If indeed**—"any could show you another Saviour, a more powerful Spirit, a better gospel. **Ye might well bear with him**—but this is impossible"—WESLEY.

He that cometh. "This shows that the false teachers came from elsewhere, whence they brought their corruptions (Chrysostom). (Comp. Acts 15. 1-24; Gal. 2. 4-12.) Otherwise, says Olshausen, they would have been excommunicated. **Another Jesus.** The word is not the same as that translated 'another' below. In this case it means the 'same' Jesus ('the historical Jesus,' Stanley), but preached in such a way as to produce a different impression. (Comp. the Greek in Gal. 1. 6, 7.) **Or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received**—*lit.* 'whom (or which) ye did not receive.' The preaching of Jesus after quite another fashion, that of bondage to law (Acts 15. 1; Gal. 4. 21), would involve the communication of a *different* spirit (see last note) to the spirit of liberty made known by S. Paul (Rom. 8. 2-15)"—C. B.

5. "He is not seriously comparing himself with them, but speaking with increasing bitter-

ness of the supposed position of inferiority which they had tried to assign him"—S. C. S. Paul may mean that no apostles existed anywhere, however great they might be, who could claim superiority over him. (Comp. Gal. 2. 6–9.) ROBERTSON has some interesting remarks on the common interpretation: "Some cannot understand the feeling which prompts an expression like this. Shallow men would call it egotism, vanity, folly, as if egotism consisted only in speaking of oneself. True Christian modesty is not the being ignorant of what we are, neither does it consist in affecting ignorance. It consists in this—in having a high and sublime standard set before us, so that we feel how far we are from attaining to *that*."

6. **If I am unskilful in speech**—"if I speak in a plain, unadorned way, like an unlearned person. So the Greek word properly signifies" —WESLEY.

But though I be rude in speech. The word signifies one not specially instructed in an art. "It does not mean one who is not eloquent, but one who has not learned eloquence by the rules of rhetorical schools"—WORDSWORTH. (See ch. 10. 10.)

7. **Have I committed an offence?** "Will any turn this into an objection? **In humbling myself**—to work at my trade. **That ye might be exalted**—to be children of God"—WESLEY.

"This passage is ironical. The Corinthians had allowed S. Paul's anxious desire not to be burdensome to them to be used against him. (See 1 Cor. 9. 1–14.) He asks if such an anxiety for their welfare was to be imputed to him as a sin. (Comp. the very similar passage in ch. 12. 13.) **Abasing myself**—*i.e.* by working for his living, when he might have enjoyed what men are apt to regard as a dignified ease at their expense. For the word see note on ch. 10. 1. **That you might be exalted.** He speaks, not of temporal exaltation, for his coming made no difference, unless perhaps for the worse, in their temporal condition, but of the 'height of Christian salvation' (Meyer) to which they had been lifted"—C. B.

8. **I spoiled other churches.** "I, as it were, took the spoils of them: it is a military term. **Taking wages** (or 'pay,' another military word) **of them**—when I came to you at first. **And when I was present with you, and wanted**—my work not quite supplying my necessities—**I was chargeable to no man**—of Corinth"—WESLEY.

"I robbed other churches. Meyer says this is 'an hyperbolical expression.' And yet in one sense it was true, for the Corinthians were just as much bound to support the apostle when at Corinth as any other churches were when the apostle was with them, and therefore if, when at Corinth, he availed himself of assistance from those other churches, he was taking from them what they ought not to have been called upon to supply. Why he did so we are told in ver. 12. **Taking wages of them.** The Philippian church, we learn from Phil. 4. 15, 16 (comp. next verse), is the church referred to. **Their liberality**, S. Paul felt, was not likely to be cast in his teeth, therefore he readily accepted it. In later days he again received their bounty with a willingness which would not, he knew, be misconstrued. This is an instance of that minute but undesigned agreement in points of detail which constitutes so strong an argument for the genuineness of most of the Scriptures of the New Testament. (For the word translated 'wages,' see S. Luke 3. 14; Rom. 6. 23; 1 Cor. 9. 7.) It was most commonly used of a soldier's pay, when given *in kind*"—C. B.

9. **For**—"I chose to receive help from the poor Macedonians, rather than the rich Corinthians! Were the poor in all ages more generous than the rich?"—WESLEY.

"The principal fact set forth in this passage, the arrival at Corinth of brethren from Macedonia during S. Paul's residence in that city, is explicitly recorded (Acts 18. 1–5)"—PALEY.

10. **This my boasting shall not be stopped** —"for I will receive nothing from you"—WESLEY.

As the truth of Christ is in me—"rather, 'the truthe of Crist is in me' (Wyclif, whom the Geneva and Rheims versions follow here), or 'if the truth' (Tyndale and Cranmer). 'There is no oath' (Dean Alford, who refers to Rom. 9. 1). 'The mind of Christ is in him (1 Cor. 2. 16), the heart of Christ beats in him (Phil. 1. 8), Christ speaks in him (ch. 12. 3), and all this through the Spirit of Christ which dwells in him"—MEYER.

11. "Do I refuse to receive anything of you, **because I love you not? God knoweth** that that is not the case"—WESLEY.

"Wherefore? The question interrupts the discourse as if to compel the readers to consider S. Paul's conduct and motive. **Because I do not love you?** His refusal of money from the Corinthians while accepting it from the Macedonians might seem to be an act of contemptuous dislike. For we seldom refuse a gift from those we love. **God knows**—before whom S. Paul's heart and apostolic work 'are made manifest'"—BEET. "He would not give occasion for any to accuse him of worldly designs in preaching the gospel"—M. HENRY.

12. **Who desire any occasion**—"to censure me. **That wherein they boast, they may be found even as we**—they boasted of being 'burdensome to no man.' But it was a vain boast in them, though not in the apostle"—WESLEY.

"That wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. These words seem to imply that the Corinthian false teachers did *not* accept money or maintenance for their services. But then it is difficult to see how they could have made that very practice an argument against S. Paul. It is, therefore,

better to suppose that they boasted of their disinterestedness, in spite of their willingness to enrich themselves at the Corinthians' expense (see next verse), and that S. Paul was determined that they should have no solid ground for insinuations of this kind against him—though such were made nevertheless (ch. 12. 16, 17) by those who judged of the apostle by themselves. So he steadfastly refused to take a farthing of money from the Corinthians, preferring to undergo privations (ver. 9) rather than give an opportunity to his opponents to assert of him what was true of themselves, that his professed disinterestedness was only a pretence"—LIAS.

14. **Satan himself is transformed**—"uses to transform himself; to put on the fairest appearance"—WESLEY.

"**Satan himself is transformed.** (Comp. ch. 2. 11.) Not that he is *really* so transformed, but that he appears to be so, to those who judge 'according to the appearance' (ch. 10. 7; Gal. 6. 12; Phil. 1. 15; 3. 18; Tit. 1. 10, 11), 'transformed into, not becoming' (Chrysostom). He reads '*if* Satan himself'"—C. B. "Satan's empire is darkness (Col. 1. 13). But it is his habit to approach men in the garb of an angel from heaven. And at all times evil is prone to assume the appearance of good"—BEET.

15. "**Therefore it is no great**, no strange, **thing; whose end**, notwithstanding all their disguises, **shall be according to their works**"—WESLEY.

"**His ministers**—doing, of their own free choice, his work. (Comp. 'his angels,' Matt. 25. 41; Rev. 12. 7.) Such are all who deal in falsehood and guile; for unconsciously they are acting under his guidance and are working out his purposes. This fearful description implies that S. Paul's opponents, though church members and professed followers and apostles of Jesus, were bad men, deliberately deceiving the Corinthian Christians. Therefore, since evil ever assumes the garb of good, in order to ensnare men, it was **no wonder** that these men assumed a garb which was not their own. **Ministers of righteousness**—as in ch. 3. 9. (Comp. Rom. 6. 19.) These men put on a new garb, representing themselves as men labouring to make dominant among men conformity to the law of God, and thus servants of the abstract principle of 'righteousness.' **Whose end**, etc. Their guilt was so evident that a mere statement of a general principle announces their fate. These words imply that S. Paul had no expectation that all men will eventually be saved. For he is evidently thinking of bad **works**; and therefore of a bad **end**"—BEET.

16. **I say again**—"he premises a new apology to this new commendation of himself. **Let no man think me a fool**—let none think I do this without the utmost necessity. But if any do think me foolish herein, yet bear with my folly"—WESLEY.

"**I say again.** (Comp. ch. 10. 8; 11. 1, 6.) Three times he has attempted to begin his boast. First he is interrupted by the recollection of the hollowness of the boast of his opponents; again, he is checked by the difficulty of pressing it on men so perverted by the influence of their false teachers; and again, when he is led aside to answer the charge arising from his refusal of support. Now once more he returns to the point, and now for the first time carries it through"—STANLEY. **Let no man think me a fool.** This reiterated appeal to the Corinthians is due to the fact that S. Paul keenly feels the unsuitableness of such boasting to the Christian character. (See ch. 12. 6, and notes on ch. 10. 8; 11. 1.) "Observe how, when about to enter upon his own praises, he checks himself"—CHRYSOSTOM.

17. **I speak not after the Lord**—"not by an express command from Him, though still under the direction of His Spirit. **But as it were foolishly**—in such a manner as many may think foolish"—WESLEY.

"There are many things"—he mentions war, self-defence, generous resentment—"which are not exactly **after** Christ, and yet are not contrary to the spirit of Christ"—ROBERTSON. "By itself it is not after the Lord, but it becomes so by the intention"—CHRYSOSTOM. "Like an oath, self-praise may under certain circumstances become necessary, especially for those who, like S. Paul, have the public duties of a sacred ministry to discharge"—WORDSWORTH. S. Paul was resolved "by all means to save some" (1 Cor. 9. 22). If there were those at Corinth who raised objections to his ministrations, he took them on their own ground, and showed that, low and unworthy as that ground was, even there they had no sufficient justification for their conduct. It is often necessary to adopt such a course, on the principle laid down by our Lord in Matt. 7. 6. Appeals to the higher spiritual instincts of men who have never cultivated those instincts are useless. We must deal with mankind as they are, and hope thus to lead them to become what at present they are not. And if it be asked how we are to know when to walk "after the Lord," and when to condescend to the folly of mankind, the answer is, whenever we conscientiously believe it to be for their benefit.

18. **After the flesh**—"that is, in external things"—WESLEY.

"This verse states explicitly the excuse first intimated. It is **because many boast according to the flesh that I also will boast.** The emphasis lies upon the reason. The words 'according to the flesh' show how such boasting cannot be 'according to the will of the Lord,' and that he requires some apology for resorting to it. They prepare his readers also for the carnal strain which he is about to adopt; carnal only because the things which were boasted of are external and circumstantial,

such as Hebrew descent, for instance (vers. 22, 23)"—S. C.

19. **Being wise**—"a beautiful irony"—WESLEY.

"Since S. Paul's readers are full of sense, it is easy for them to condescend to bear with others, who have less sense than themselves. This bitterly sarcastic justification of his own boasting, S. Paul supports at once, in ver. 20, by his readers' forbearance towards his opponents"—BEET.

20. **For ye suffer**—"not only the folly, but the gross abuses, of those false apostles. **If a man enslave you**—lord it over you in the most arbitrary manner. **If he devour you**—by his exorbitant demands; notwithstanding his boast of not being burdensome. **If he take from you**—by open violence. **If he exalt himself**—by the most unbounded self-commendation. **If he smite you on the face** (a very possible case)—under pretence of Divine zeal"—WESLEY.

Smite you on the face—an utterly extraordinary and inconceivable piece of presumption, according to our modern notions. But we do not habitually realise the immense extent to which Christianity has leavened our habits. Dean Stanley refers us to 1 Kings 22. 24; Matt. 5. 39; Luke 22. 64; Acts. 23. 2; 1 Tim. 3. 3; Tit. 1. 7; and to the canon of the Council of Braga (A.D. 675), which orders that no bishop at his will and pleasure shall strike (the original, however, seems to imply *scourging*) his clergy, lest he lose the respect which they owe him. He might have referred also to the famous Latrocinium, or robber synod of Ephesus, in which one patriarch of the church and his adherents literally stamped another to death, and even to a period so late as the Council of Trent, in which it is admitted, even by the Jesuit historian Pallavicino, that scenes of personal violence occurred among those who were or should have been teachers of religion. —See his *History of the Council of Trent*, bk. viii. ch. 6.

21. **I speak with regard to reproach, as though we had been weak**—"I say, 'Bear with me,' even on supposition that the weakness be real which they reproach me with"—WESLEY.

"**We have become weak**—by laying all our powers on the altar of Christ, and by going at His bidding into positions of helplessness. (Comp. Phil. 3. 8.) These words are inserted to make conspicuous the contrast which follows. **Anyone is daring** (as in ch. 10. 2)—as the opponents were. **I also**—keeps before us, as in vers. 16, 18, the comparison of S. Paul and his opponents. In whatever matter they act fearlessly, disregarding consequences, S. Paul, though ever acknowledging his own weakness, is equally fearless. They are not afraid to usurp authority over the Church of Christ, and S. Paul is not afraid to punish them" —BEET.

22. **Are they Hebrews, Israelites, the seed of Abraham**—"these were the heads on which they boasted"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul's answer is, that he too was a Hebrew; or, as he puts it in Phil. 3. 5, 'a Hebrew, born of Hebrews.' What he means is obviously that his parents were Jews of Palestine, and that the accident of his birth in Tarsus had not annulled his claim to that nationality. As a matter of fact it made him able to unite things that were commonly looked on as incompatible, and to be both a Hebrew and a Hellenist"—ELLICOTT.

23. "I am **more** so than they. **In deaths often**—surrounding me in the most dreadful forms"—WESLEY.

"**I speak as a fool**—rather as a 'madman.' Our translation is Tyndale's. The word in the original is stronger than that in vers. 16, 19. S. Paul is not thinking here so much of the impression his words may produce on the Corinthians, as of the fact that all 'boasting' in God's sight is 'excluded' by the 'law of faith' (Rom. 3. 27; comp. Luke 17. 10). Mad indeed is it to boast of anything as constituting a claim on God for reward. But facts are facts, and they may be appealed to, not for self-glorification, but (ch. 12. 11) to confute pretensions which ought never to be advanced. **In labours more abundant.** (Comp. 1. Cor. 15. 10.) He now commences the proof of this assertion, and it consists not in words but in deeds. He appeals to 'a life hitherto without precedent in the history of the world. Self-devotion at particular moments, or for some special national cause, had been often seen before; but a self-devotion involving sacrifices like those here described, extending through a period of at least fourteen years, and in behalf of no local or family interest, but for the interest of mankind at large, was up to this time a thing unknown' (Stanley). **In prisons more frequent**—'what is left out is more than is ennumerated' (Chrysostom). There is but *one* imprisonment mentioned up to this time in the Acts (ch. 16. 23). So there is but *one* beaten with rods (see below). The Acts of the Apostles, being written with a special purpose (see note on ch. 1. 8; 6. 5), does not attempt to give a *full* account of S. Paul's labours and sufferings. Estius accounts it a proof of S. Paul's modesty that he had never mentioned these things even to a friend so intimate as S. Luke.' **In deaths oft.** (Comp. ch. 1. 9, 10; 4. 11; 1 Cor. 15. 31.) 'Perils *containing* death,' *i.e.* as a possible event (Chrysostom)" —C. B.

24. **Five times I received from the Jews forty stripes save one**—"which was the utmost that the Law allowed. With the Romans he sometimes pleaded his privilege as a Roman; but from the Jews he suffered all things"—WESLEY.

"None of these are recorded in the Acts. It is probable that his words refer to the early

period of his work in Cilicia. The number of the stripes in Jewish punishments of this kind rested on the rule of Deut. 25. 3, which fixed forty as the *maximum*. The punishment was inflicted with a leather scourge of three knotted thongs"—ELLICOTT. "Notice that the Jews, even in cruelty and injustice to a servant of God, were scrupulously careful to obey in an insignificant detail the letter of the Law. (Comp. Matt. 23. 23)"—BEET.

25. **Thrice I have been shipwrecked**—"before his voyage to Rome. **In the deep**—probably floating on some part of the vessel"—WESLEY.

Thrice was I beaten with rods. (See Acts 16. 22, 23, and note on ver. 23.) *This* punishment is also said frequently to have caused the death of the victim. It was inflicted by the Romans on those who did not possess the privilege of Roman citizenship. (Acts 22. 25.)

"The shipwreck related in Acts 27 is not one of these, but occurred some time afterwards. We have no other account of those referred to here. **A night and a day.** The apostle here speaks of some terrible peril, compared to which even the shipwreck related in Acts 27 was a trifling one"—C. B.

27. **In cold and nakedness**—"having no place where to lay my head; no convenient raiment to cover me; yet appearing before noblemen, governors, kings, and not being ashamed"—WESLEY.

"The current of his thoughts has carried him away into sufferings and perils, but he has not exhausted the exertions and trials which wasted his body. **In toil and labour.** The first of these, in the original, describes the physical wear and tear and weariness, the second the painful efforts of hard work. The **hunger** and **thirst** meant were not endured in voluntary devotional exercises, but in famines, droughts, in the wilderness or at sea, or on long journeys. The **fastings** are abstinence practised when he preferred his ministerial labours to the satisfaction of his wants (ch. 6. 5)"—S. C.

28. **Beside the things which are from without**—"which I suffer on the account of others—namely, **the care of all the churches**—a more modest expression than if he had said, **the care of the whole Church. All**—even those I have not seen in the flesh. S. Peter himself could not have said this in so strong a sense"—WESLEY.

"This anxiety explains his prayers (Rom. 1. 9; Phil. 1. 4; Col. 1. 3; 1 Thess. 1. 2) for each church singly"—BEET. "It is remarkable that S. Paul does not glory in what he has done, but in what he had borne; he does not speak of his successes, of his converts, of the heresies he had subdued; but he speaks of the manifold trials which he had undergone for Christ. He had 'filled up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake, which is the Church.' This marks all his conduct and sufferings as being in the spirit of the cross, that it was for the sake of others"—ROBERTSON.

29. **Who**—"so he had not only the care of the churches but of every person therein—**is weak, and I am not weak**—by sympathy, as well as by condescension. **Who is offended**—hindered in, or turned out of, the good way, **and I burn not**—being pained as though I had fire in my bosom"—WESLEY.

"Examples of this anxiety, and its effect upon S. Paul. **Weak**—in faith and spiritual life (1 Cor. 8. 9; Rom. 14. 1). Weakness is practically a limitation of our action. S. Paul makes the weakness of these brethren a limitation of his own action. (So 1 Cor. 8. 9-13; Rom. 15. 1.) For his intense sympathy moves him to look at everything from their point of view, and to abstain from whatever will injure them"—BEET. "Men came to the apostle with their tales of shame, and told how they had been tempted and had fallen; and here, too, he, in that illimitable sympathy of his, seemed to have travelled with them on the downward road. He felt himself suffused, as it were, with the burning glow of their shame. He blushed with them and for them, as though the sin had been his own"—ELLICOTT.

30. **I will glory of the things that concern my infirmities**—"of what shows my weakness, rather than my strength"—WESLEY.

A retrospective and prospective reflection furnishes the transition step from what precedes to what follows.

31. "**God**, who knows all things, knows that he lies not in what he has said and is going to say—**who is blessed for ever** is a brief, pious doxology, adding solemnity to the asseveration, and perhaps expresses thankfulness for deliverance and support in all these distresses"—S. C. Meyer reminds us, the visions and revelations related in ch. 12. 1-4, are an *interruption* of his enumeration of his infirmities, which he resumes in ch. 12. 5. And perhaps eighteen centuries of Christianity have somewhat dimmed our perception of the immense difference between this vaunt and those customary among the inflated teachers of S. Paul's day. *They* enlarged their triumphs, their influence with the rich and great, the success of their oratory, the number of their disciples, and this with an arrogance which in our days would be justly contemptible. S. Paul, while he shows his sincerity by the fact that his life was exposed to danger, narrates nothing but his escape, a circumstance not likely in itself to raise his reputation among men who judged only according to outward appearance. Men should not so judge.

32. **The governor under Aretas**—"king of Arabia and Syria, of which Damascus was a chief city, willing to oblige the Jews, **kept the**

city—"setting guards at all the gates day and night"—WESLEY.

Aretas (see Josephus' *Antiquities*, xviii.) was the king of Arabia Petræa. His daughter had been divorced by Herod Antipas, in order that he might marry Herodias, "his brother Philip's wife" (see Matt. 14. 3-5). This and some disputes about the frontier led to war being proclaimed, and a battle was fought (A.D. 36) in which Herod's army was entirely destroyed. It is thought by some that Aretas profited by this circumstance to seize on Damascus, and that it was just at this juncture (A.D. 37) that S. Paul returned to Damascus from his stay in Arabia. Others, however, place this event about the year 39, after Herod Antipas had been banished to Gaul, and think that Aretas, taken into favour by Caligula, had obtained Damascus, among the various changes which the new emperor made in the arrangements of his eastern provinces.

33. **Through a window** — "of an house which stood on the city wall"—WESLEY.

"We have here another witness of the correctness of the Book of Acts. (Comp. Acts 9. 25.) The slight difference is easily explained by supposing that the Jews prompted and assisted Ethnarch to watch for S. Paul. The abrupt transition from this incident suggests that it was designed to be the beginning of a series of proofs of S. Paul's 'weaknesses,' a series commencing at the very commencement of his Christian course; but broken off suddenly to make way for the more startling matter of ch. 12. 2-4. S. Paul's furtive mode of escape (in the darkness of night, Acts 9. 24) proves the extreme peril and helplessness of his position. By narrating this incident he was therefore boasting in the things which belong to his weakness"—BEET.

CHAPTER XII.

1. **It is not expedient** — "unless on so pressing an occasion. **Visions** are seen; **revelations** heard"—WESLEY.

"The narrative of S. Paul's first great peril seemed to be the beginning of a series of similar adventures. But the series is suddenly broken off by another expression of reluctance to speak about himself. He writes under necessity. This reveals again his deep consciousness of the folly of boasting. **Needful**—in order to put his opponents to shame, and thus rescue the readers from their snares. (Comp. ver. 11; 11. 30.) **Not profitable**—as a general principle, neither for him who speaks nor those who hear"—BEET.

2. **I knew a man in Christ** — "that is, a Christian. It is plain, from vers. 6, 7, that he means himself, though in modesty he speaks as of a third person. **Whether in the body or out of the body I know not.** It is equally possible with God to present distant things to the imagination in the body, as if the soul were absent from it and present with them; or to transport both soul and body for what time He pleases to heaven; or to transport the soul only thither for a season, and in the meantime to preserve the body fit for its re-entrance. But since the apostle himself did not know whether his soul was in the body, or whether one or both were actually in heaven, it would be vain curiosity for us to attempt determining it. **The third heaven**—where God is; far above the aerial and the starry heaven. Some suppose it was here the apostle was let into the mystery of the future state of the Church, and received his orders to turn from the Jews and go to the Gentiles"—WESLEY.

"**Christ**—*i.e.* after his conversion, when he had become united to Christ. **Above fourteen years ago.** And yet, as Chrysostom and Calvin remark, he had kept silence about it all this time. The secret raptures of the soul should be matters between it and God, not subjects of boasting, save where necessity compels it. After all, the main point (ver. 6) is what a man *is*, not what he has seen, even of things beyond the sphere of sense. Whether this were the revelation spoken of in Gal. 1. 12; 2. 2, we cannot tell. S. Paul had many such revelations, and he gives here no distinct intimation of the time at which the vision occurred. **Whether out of the body.** The apostle here by implication acknowledges the possibility of consciousness and receptivity in a disembodied state"—ALFORD. "S. Paul shrunk from saying 'I was rapt,' which would have seemed like a boast. His personal will was for the time so annihilated that he speaks of himself as though he were another and not himself. **A man in Christ** might merely describe his Christian state; but in this context it expresses that his individuality was swallowed up in Christ; that it was the spirit of Christ in which he lived that rendered him capable of the translation and its experiences"—S. C. **I cannot tell.** "The *fact* of the vision was certain enough. He saw clearly what God gave him permission to see, but whether the soul was rapt from his body left without life, or whether body and soul were caught up together to the third heaven and to paradise, was known only to God"—LIAS.

3. **Yea, I knew such a man** — "that at another time"—WESLEY.

"**At the gates of paradise.** Before access to the Divine presence, he seems to pause with reverential awe, and restates his unconsciousness as to his embodied or disembodied state in the same language as before, substituting only 'apart from' for 'out of.' The repetition may imply that he conceived the possibility of his body having been left in the vestibule of paradise, so to speak, and that his spirit and soul alone were admitted"—S. C.

4. **He was caught up into paradise**—"the seat of happy spirits in their separate state, between death and the resurrection. **Things which it is not possible for man to utter**—

human language being incapable of expressing them. Here he anticipated the joyous rest of the righteous that die in the Lord. But this rapture did not precede, but follow after, his being caught up to the third heaven: a strong intimation that he must first discharge his mission, and then enter into glory. And beyond all doubt, such a foretaste of it served to strengthen him in all his after trials, when he could call to mind the very joy that was prepared for him"—WESLEY.

"He does not say what he saw, but only what he heard; but, as he is giving an account of a **vision**, and also speaking with reverential reticence, we are justified in inferring that he saw the things incorruptible, undefiled, which fade not away, reserved in heaven for the saints (1 Pet. 1. 4), and that he beheld the glorified Lord"—S. C. "**Unspeakable words**—*lit.* 'unspoken words,' which may in this case have been the fact, since, if S. Paul were out of the body, as he himself tells us he may have been, the words could not have been 'spoken,' in our sense of the word. But the epithet usually has the sense which the context attaches to it here, **words not to be uttered.** Calvin asks to what purpose then were they uttered to S. Paul, and replies that he needed such spiritual consolation to sustain him in the heavy load of afflictions and cares which was laid upon him. We may also hence learn, he continues, that there are depths in the counsels of God which we must not hope or even wish to penetrate while here on earth. Dean Stanley contrasts the reticence of S. Paul with the full details of his supposed visions given by Mahomet, and he might have added many others who have given detailed accounts of things seen in their ecstasies"—C. B. "**Not lawful for a man to utter**—Christian modesty forbids. There are transfiguration moments, bridal hours of the soul; and not easily forgiven are those who would utter the secrets of its high intercourse with its Lord. There is a certain spiritual indelicacy in persons who cannot perceive that not everything which is a matter of experience and knowledge is, therefore, a subject of conversation. Secret things belong to God"—ROBERTSON. "**Paradise**—probably a Persian word, but found in Hebrew. In Gen. 13. 10, the Jordan valley looks like 'the paradise of God'; and in chaps. 2 and 3 the 'garden of Eden' is constantly rendered 'paradise of pleasure.' To this last, Rev. 2. 7 evidently refers, and 2. Cor. 12. 4 and Luke 23. 43 suggest it. In Luke 23. 43 it is evidently the pleasant place where the souls of the departed righteous wait for the resurrection. The associations of the word suggest that Christ by His entrance made the dark Sheol or Hades (Hebrew and Greek names for the place of the dead) into a place of delight (Rev. 2. 7; comp. ch. 22. 2), and refers to the place of final glory, which will surround the palace and throne of God. It is practically the same as the New Jerusalem, which John saw coming down out of heaven from God; and which may therefore be supposed to be already existing in heaven. It is thus distinguished from the paradise into which at His death Christ entered. It is difficult to say whether S. Paul refers here to the happy place of the departed righteous, or to that more glorious place before the throne where we may conceive sinless spirits of other races already dwelling in glory, and which will in the great day extend its boundaries to earth, that it may be the final home of redeemed mankind"—BEET.

5. **Of such an one I will**—"I might, **glory; but I will not glory of myself**—as considered in myself"—WESLEY.

S. Paul desires to put the fact in the background that it is of himself he is speaking. (See next verse.) He even seems to make a distinction between himself as he is and the man once so highly glorified by God, and returns to a kind of boasting more in accordance with his own sense of propriety. So he expatiates on the thorn in the flesh as an instance of how human weakness does but serve to manifest the power of God.

6. **For if I should resolve to glory**—"referring to, **I might glory** of such a glorious revelation. **I should not be a fool**—that is, it could not justly be accounted folly to relate the naked truth. **But I forbear**—I speak sparingly of these things, for fear **anyone should think** too highly **of me.** O where is this fear now to be found? Who is afraid of this?"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul here identifies himself with the man who saw the visions. 'I shall not be foolish, even if I do boast, for I shall only be speaking the truth. But I refrain.' **Forbear.** (See ch. 1. 23; 9. 6; 13. 2, where the word is the same in the Greek; also 1 Cor. 7. 28, and Rom. 8. 32; 11. 21.) **Lest any man should think.** It is not visions or revelations, however exalted, for which a man ought to be esteemed, but his conduct and the message with which he is entrusted"—LIAS. "Whatever estimate his person or speech, as known to his readers, might occasion, he was content with it, and would not try to raise it by anything to which their eyes and ears could not bear testimony. He knew in fact that all personal defects were in accordance with God's will and served His purpose, as he goes on to show"—S. C.

7. **There was given me**—"by the wise and gracious providence of God—**a thorn in the flesh**—a visitation more painful than any thorn sticking in the flesh. **A messenger** or angel **of Satan to buffet me**—perhaps both visibly and invisibly; and the word in the original expresses the present, as well as the past, time. All kinds of affliction had befallen the apostle. Yet none of those did he deprecate. But here he speaks of one, as above all the rest, one that macerated him with weakness, and by the pain and ignominy of it prevented his being lifted

up more, or, at least, not less than the most vehement headache could have done, which many of the ancients say he laboured under. S. Paul seems to have had a fresh fear of these 'buffetings' every moment, when he so frequently represses himself in his boasting, though it was extorted from him by the utmost necessity"—WESLEY.

"That I be not beyond measure lifted up—kind foresight of God. That S. Paul found himself exposed to this danger, warns us of the spiritual peril which always accompanies special gifts. None but a great and humble man could have made such confessions"—BEET. **Thorn**—we should inquire not *what* the thorn was, but *why* it was sent. We should look for general rather than special truths in it. We are sure that it was a trial partaking of the nature of a thorn; and that the apostle rejoiced in it—not *as* a thorn, but because God's strength was given to support him under it. ROBERTSON says: "I infer they were secret trials, unknown to others. A thorn is a small, invisible cause of suffering; a pang so small as to be unsuspected; some secret trouble, unknown even to our most intimate friends. I infer that it is something evil, for he calls it a messenger of Satan to buffet him. We must not allow our understandings to be so perverted as to think that because pain can be blessed to us, it is in itself a blessed thing, and ought to be liked by a Christian. Very unreal habits of thought are thus fostered. The Christians rejoiced *in* tribulation—in God; but that in spite of, not because of, tribulation. And here, God does not command S. Paul to think the throb of his thorn enjoyable. He only bids him bear it. A thorn causes perpetual, unvarying, incessant pain. Let this peculiar characteristic be remembered, as distinguishing the thorn from ordinary sorrows. It is an ever-present *possibility* of pang."

8. **Concerning this.** "He had now forgot his being lifted up. **I besought the Lord thrice**—as our Lord besought His Father"—WESLEY.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice—*lit.* "concerning" this. For the word translated "besought" see ch. 1. 3; 8. 6, and ver. 18 of this chapter. With S. Paul's prayer here compare Matt. 26. 39–44, and the parallel passages in the other Gospels. It is not wrong to offer such petitions, or our Lord would not have done so. But humanity in its weakness often shrinks from trials which God in His wisdom knows to be best for it. The only requisite for such prayers is that they shall be offered in a spirit of submission to a higher will. Dean Stanley remarks on S. Paul's vivid sense of a personal Lord, to whom all difficulties may be taken, and who never fails to answer such appeals. **The Lord**—Jesus Christ. We may compare S. Paul's imitation of his Master with that of S. Stephen. (See Acts. 7. 59, and comp. Luke 23. 46.)

9. **But He said to me**—"in answer to my third request. **My grace is sufficient for thee**—how tender a repulse! We see there may be grace where there is the quickest sense of pain. **My strength is** more illustriously displayed by the *weakness* of the instrument. **Therefore will I glorify in my weakness rather** than my revelations, **that the strength of Christ may rest upon me.** The Greek word properly means, may 'cover me all over like a tent.' We ought most willingly to accept whatever tends to this end, however contrary to flesh and blood"—WESLEY.

Sufficient for thee, etc. "'My smile and my purpose to do thee good will afford everything needful for thy highest welfare, even in spite of this great affliction.' This implied refusal is at once justified by a great truth. *The* well-known *power*, with which Christ makes His people strong (Phil. 4. 30) to do and to dare and to suffer. **Weakness**—conspicuous contrast to **power. Accomplished**—attains its full goal, works out its full results, and thus reveals its full grandeur. (Same word in Rom. 2. 27; Gal. 5. 16; Luke 12. 50; 18. 31; 22. 37; John 19. 28, 30.) **The power** of Christ manifests to the full its irresistible energy, and attains its highest results by performing works of power with powerless instruments. For this reason Christ refused to remove the stake in the flesh which seemed to be to S. Paul an element of weakness. (Comp. ch. 4. 7; 1. 9.) Notice that 'the power' of Christ makes His *grace* sufficient for us. For He who smiles upon us is able to accomplish His kindly purpose"—BEET.

10. **Weaknesses**—"whether proceeding from Satan or men. **For when I am weak**—deeply conscious of my weakness—**then** does the strength of Christ rest upon me"—WESLEY.

"A final inference from the relation of his weakness to Christ's strength, and going beyond that of the last verse, by passing from a *feeling* of elation in weaknesses to a calm approval of them by the mind and judgment, and by specifying various extreme forms of them with a sense of triumph that in all the strength of grace conquers the feebleness of the flesh. He then worthily winds up his boasting by a noble Christian paradox, which identifies the times of his weakness precisely with those of his strength"—S. C.

11. **Though I am nothing**—"of myself"—WESLEY.

"The words are partly ironical—partly speak of an impatient consciousness that what he had been saying would seem to give colour to the opprobious epithets that had been flung at him"—ELLICOTT.

12. **Truly the signs**, etc. The passage is remarkable for using the word "signs," first, in the general sense, as "notes" or "tokens," and the more specifically for works of supernatural power; and it is one of those sentences in which S. Paul distinctly claims a super-

natural power for himself, and appeals to its exercise. (Comp. Rom. 15. 19—written, it will be remembered, shortly after this—and 1 Cor. 2. 4.)

13. **What is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches?** "His mind travels back to the insinuation that he cared less for them than he did for the churches of Macedonia, because he had maintained his independence, and had received no gifts from them. If they complained of this, they should, at least, remember that this was the only point of inferiority. They had experienced fully all the advantages that flowed from his special power as an apostle"—ELLICOTT.

14. **The third time**—"having been disappointed twice. **I seek not yours**—your goods—**but you**—your souls"—WESLEY.

"Already twice he has laboured among them without remuneration; and he is **in readiness to come a third time**, and do the same. **For I do not seek**, etc.—an abiding general purpose supporting the foregoing specific resolve. **Seek you.** (Comp. 1 Cor. 9. 19; Matt. 18. 15.) His converts saved are the eternal enrichment which S. Paul seeks"—BEET.

15. **I will gladly spend**—"all I have. **And be spent**—myself"—WESLEY.

"Thus S. Paul concludes his long boast by words of love, the greatest we can conceive, a love not destroyed but moved to greater sacrifice by the unloving spirit of those loved. Such is the love revealed in God's gift of His Son for rebellious man"—BEET.

16. "**But** some may object, though **I did not burden you**, though I did not take anything of you myself, yet **being crafty I caught you with guile**—I did secretly by my messengers what I would not do openly, or in person"—WESLEY.

Being crafty, etc. These words are frequently quoted, as though the practice here referred to were a defensible one. The next verse shows that S. Paul repudiates such an imputation with the utmost distinctness. WAITE says: "He had been charged with declining support himself, for the dishonest purpose of obtaining it more largely through his agents, and the imputation was connected with his endeavours to expedite the collection through Titus and others. For the sake of argument he allows the charge, in order to see how it tallies with facts. **But be it so; I did not become a burden to you**; yet (*per contra*), being a **crafty villain**, I caught you by guile." The original for "crafty villain" means strictly one who chooses with shrewd discernment the aptest means for attaining unprincipled ends.

17. "I answer this lying accusation by appealing to plain fact, **Did I make a gain of you by Titus**—or any other of my messengers? You know the contrary. It should be carefully observed that S. Paul does not allow, but absolutely denies, that **he had caught them with guile**; so that the common plea for guile, which has been often drawn from this text, is utterly without foundation"—WESLEY.

Did I take advantage of you? (R.V.). "He has in his mind, as far as we know, Timotheus, who had been sent before the First Epistle (1 Cor. 4. 17); Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who were the bearers of that Epistle (1 Cor. 16. 15); and Titus, who was sent to learn what its effect had been. Had any of these, he asks, been asking for money on his account?"—ELLICOTT. Both S. Paul and Titus were animated by the same spirit of disinterestedness, and had acted as followers of Christ.

18. **I desired Titus**—"to go to you"—WESLEY.

This was the testimony of a good conscience, and such blessedness with "the light of God's countenance from above, and faith's view of a sorrowless world beyond, put more joy into the heart than any outward thing can put of sorrow."

19. **Think ye that we again excuse ourselves**—"that I speak this for my own sake? No. I speak all this for your sakes"—WESLEY.

S. Paul was deeply conscious that he was striving to fulfil his great commission, and this raised him above all earthly circumstances, and enabled him to grapple with difficulties from which a timid man would have turned away.

21. **Who had sinned before**—"my last coming to Corinth"—WESLEY.

"Many of these Corinthian Christians did not sufficiently and deeply enough abhor their earlier heathen abominations; therefore he wished to inspire them with a feeling of sincere repentance, and to find it evinced by their conduct when he presented himself at Corinth"—OLSHAUSEN.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONCLUSION.—1. **I am coming this third time.** "He had been coming twice before, though he did not actually come"—WESLEY.

The apostle faithfully admonishes, and warns as to the result of continued neglect of duty. Whatever indulgence may have been shown in the past, he declares that all who are found in sin shall receive his condemnation. **Of two or three witnesses.** "So he calleth his threefold admonition. God's word neglected will one day be a swift witness against the contemners. Moses shall accuse men (John 5. 46); God's word lay hold on them (Zech. 1. 6), and stick in their hearts and flesh, as fire, throughout all eternity (Jer. 5. 14)"—TRAPP.

2. **All the rest**—"who have since then sinned in any of these kinds. **I will not spare**—I will severely punish them"—WESLEY.

"With what wisdom and caution the apostle proceeds in the executing and inflicting the severe censures of the Church: he uses admonitions before he proceeds to the sentence of excommunication"—BURKITT.

3. **Which to you-ward is not weak.** "There is still a touch of indignant sadness in the tone in which the words are uttered. Men will not be able to cast that reproach of weakness upon Him whose might they will feel all too keenly"—ELLICOTT.

4. **He was crucified through weakness**—"through the impotence of human nature. **We also are weak with Him**—we appear weak and despicable by partaking of the same sufferings for His sake. **But we shall live with Him**—being raised from the dead—**by the power of God in you**—by that Divine energy which is now in every believer (ver. 5)"—WESLEY.

"Proof of the power of Christ in S. Paul, in view of admitted human weakness. The crucifixion of Christ was a result of His human weakness. This involves, as does ch. 8. 9, the mystery of the Incarnation. And the dread reality of these words must not be set aside. We are here told expressly that Christ was crucified, because He had not power to save Himself. Yet He is unchangeably Divine, and had dwelt from eternity in infinite power. We must therefore conceive the Eternal Son as willingly taking upon Himself at His incarnation, in a mode to us inconceivable but Divine, for a time and for our salvation, real human weakness; and as being in His dying moments forsaken (Matt. 27. 46) by God, and powerless in the hands of His enemies. The ridicule of the Jews (Matt. 27. 42), 'Others He saved: Himself He cannot save,' was solemn truth. **But He lives** upon the throne. **By the power of God**—'who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory' (1 Pet. 1. 21). The resurrection of Christ is ever attributed to the Father's power. (Ch. 4. 14; 1 Cor. 15. 15; Rom. 4. 24; ch. 6. 4.) He who was so weak that He could not save Himself from the cross now lives by the outstretched arm of God. And the 'power' thus manifested is proof that (ver. 3) Christ is 'powerful' in His Church to save and to punish. For the power of the Father abides in those whom it rescues; even, we may reverently suppose, in the risen God-Man. (Comp. John 5. 26; 6. 57; Col. 1. 19.) Therefore the power of God which raised Christ is proof that Christ has power to inflict punishment in His Church"—BEET. **For though He was crucified through weakness.** Chrysostom observes that these words were a great difficulty to the weaker sort. But he explains them by John 11. 3, 4; Phil. 2. 27; 1 Tim. 5. 23, where the word in the original is the same as, or cognate to, that employed here. There is another reading here, which by omitting "though," or rather "if," in the original, strengthens the apostle's statement. There need be no difficulty. Our Lord assumed our human nature with all its infirmities (Heb. 2. 10-18; 4. 15; 5. 2, 3; see also ch. 8. 9, and Phil. 2. 7, 8), although they were the result of sin. He bore all those infirmities, death itself included. And then He shook them all off for ever when He rose again **by the power of God.**

5. **Prove yourselves**—"whether ye are such as can, or *such as cannot, bear the test*—this is the proper meaning of the word which we translate **reprobates. Know ye not yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?** All Christian believers know this, by the witness and by the fruit of His Spirit. Some translate the words 'Jesus Christ is among you,' that is, in the church of Corinth; and understand them of the miraculous gifts and the power of Christ which attended the censures of the apostle"—WESLEY.

Try your own selves (R.V.).

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. "The words rendered (1) 'examine' and (2) 'prove' have the sense (1) of 'testing' (the word is often translated 'tempt') and (2) subjecting to a process the result of which is satisfactory. See for (2) 1 Cor. 11. 28. The words 'yourselves are in each case emphatic. The connection with what has gone before would seem to be as follows. The apostle had been among the Corinthians in weakness. (1 Cor. 2. 3; comp. ch. 10. 1, 10.) He had boasted of nothing but his infirmity. (Ch. 11. 30; 12. 5, 9.) So that many of them had come to regard him with contempt. But the gospel, he says, is a power. He appeals to the testimony of their own Christian experience on the point, as in ch. 4. 2; 5. 11; 6. 4. 'Is it *not* a power?' he says. 'Look at yourselves. Do you not feel it to be so in your own hearts? Does not Jesus Christ dwell in you, at least in all who are not finally cast off by Him, and does He not make manifest His power in the subjugation of the natural man within you? Could this have taken place unless the gospel were a real power of God? And then to whom, humanly speaking, do you owe this power? Is it not to him of whom you are ready to believe that he is no true apostle of Christ?' **Whether ye be in the faith**—*i.e.* whether 'Christ be present and actively working within you, the certain result of all true faith'"—MEYER. "The subject-matter of our examination, **Whether ye be in the faith**, *i.e.* whether the faith of Christ be in you, whether the principle of faith be in your hearts, its power in your consciences, its practice in your lives, whether your faith be the parent and principle of obedience, working love, and working by love"—BURKITT.

6. **And I trust ye shall know**—"by proving yourselves, not by putting my authority to the proof"—WESLEY.

But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates—*i.e.* I trust that you will find that we have not lost this Divine power of Christ dwelling within us, but that you will find it as mighty to confront and to

subdue the obstinate resistance of evil, as it was to implant the first strivings after good.

7. **I pray God that ye may do no evil**—"to give me occasion of showing my apostolical power. I do not desire to **appear approved**—by miraculously punishing you. **But that ye may do that which is good, though we should be as reprobates**—having no occasion to give that proof of our apostleship"—WESLEY.

Honest (R.V. "honourable").

Now I pray to God that ye do no evil. "S. Paul's whole heart is set upon the desire that the power of Christ which dwells in the Christian body should be displayed in the victory of his converts over evil, and this not for any personal ends of his own—not even in order that he might manifest the high estimation in which God holds him—but simply for the sake of Him whose minister he is, and for their sake to whom he ministers Him. **Approved**—the opposite to 'reprobate,' or rather 'rejected'"—C. B.

8. **For we can do nothing against the truth**—"neither against that which is just and right, nor against those who walk according to the truth of the gospel"—WESLEY.

"The foregoing unselfish prayer traced to a necessity of S. Paul's nature. **We cannot**—because it would be contrary to inmost disposition. **The truth**—the word of God, which corresponds always with absolute reality. It is designed to mould men's conduct in correspondence with God's will, that thus they may 'do the truth.' Consequently, to lead men into sin, is to act **against the truth.** This, to S. Paul's renewed nature, was impossible"—BEET. Bishop Latimer tells of one, who fell away from the known truth, to mocking and scorning it; yet was afterwards touched in conscience for it. Beware of this sin, saith he; for I have known no more than this that repented. It is a very dangerous precipice.

9. **For we rejoice when we are weak**—"when we appear so, having no occasion to show our apostolic power. **And this we wish, even your perfection**—in the faith that worketh by love"—WESLEY.

This we also pray for, even your perfecting (R.V.). "As Christ's weakness, the breathing out the abundance of His life, conferred a higher power upon the world, so likewise S. Paul would be content to be weak, and breathe out his life, if his children in the Spirit are only strong"—OLSHAUSEN.

10. **According to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down** (R.V.). S. Paul shows his anxiety to employ his apostolic authority solely to edification.

11. **Be perfect**—"aspire to the highest degree of holiness. **Be of good comfort**—filled with Divine consolation. **Be of one mind**—desire, labour, pray for it, to the utmost degree that is possible"—WESLEY.

"**Finally, brethren, farewell.** The word (*lit.* 'rejoice') was the natural close of a Greek letter, and is therefore adequately represented by the English 'farewell,' if we only remember that it was used in all the fulness of its meaning. 'Rejoice—let that be our last word to you'"—ELLICOTT. **Be of one mind**—let there be unity of purpose (1 Cor. 1. 10), shows how greatly such a condition of experience was needed. **Be at peace**—same word in Rom. 12. 18. BEET says: "If we obey S. Paul's exhortation to peace, the external fountain of **peace**, and of **love** the source of peace, will dwell in us. (Comp. Rom. 15. 33; 1 Thess. 5. 23; 1 John 4. 7-13; John 14. 23.)"

13. **The grace**—"or favour—**of our Lord Jesus Christ**—by which alone we can come to the Father. **And the love of God**—manifested to you, and abiding in you. **And the communion**—or fellowship—**of the Holy Ghost**—in all His gifts and graces. It is with great reason that this comprehensive and instructive blessing is pronounced at the close of our solemn assemblies; and it is a very indecent thing to see so many quitting them, or getting into postures of remove, before this short sentence can be ended. How often have we heard this awful benediction pronounced! Let us study it more and more, that we may value it proportionably; that we may either deliver or receive it with a becoming reverence, with eyes and hearts lifted up to God, 'who giveth the blessing out of Sion, and life for evermore'"—WESLEY.

"Parting benediction—the most full in the New Testament, embracing conspicuously each Person of the Trinity. **All of you**—emphatic, including those now unrepentant. The smile which ever beams from the face of Christ, the eternal love which fills the heart of God, and the Holy Spirit who fills the hearts of the children of God with consciousness of His eternal love, are to be our companions along the pilgrimage of life. And, if so, the sunshine of Christ's smile, the unchanging love of God, and the guidance and strengthening of the Holy Spirit, will make our path, be it ever so rough, a path of peace and joy"—BEET. **All the saints salute you.** "Sanctity is no enemy to courtesy; it doth not remove it but rectify it"—TRAPP.

14. "**The grace of the Lord.** This is the fullest form of any of the benedictions given by S. Paul, and it comes fitly at the end of the harshest of his Epistles. It must be regarded as the overflowing of a loving heart, conscious of the severity of the language the apostle has been compelled to use, yet deeply penetrated with a sense of its necessity for the well-being of the flock. The benediction is invoked upon all, the slanderers and gainsayers, the seekers after worldly wisdom, the hearkeners to false doctrine, as well as the faithful and obedient disciples. In regard to its form, we may remark that it was the 'grace' or 'favour' of Jesus Christ in condescending to visit us,

through which we received the revelation of the love of God, and that it was through that love that we received the gift of the Holy Spirit, to dwell in our hearts by faith, and thus to knit us into one body in Christ"—C. B. "The words contain a prayer for the highest blessings and benefits of which the Corinthians could possibly be made partakers—all that love which doth or can flow from the Father; all that grace which was purchased by the Son; and all that fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit, and communication from Him, which might render them meet for the service of Christ on earth, and for the full and final enjoyment of Him in heaven"—WATSON. "A full text for the Holy Trinity. Here the apostle calls the Father God, the Son Lord, and the Spirit the Holy Ghost; and as he attributes love to the Father, grace to the Son, so fellowship to the Holy Ghost; so that we have no reason to doubt of the personality of either or any of them"—BURKITT.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

"THIS Epistle is not written, as most of S. Paul's are, to the Christians of a particular city, but to those of a whole country in Asia Minor, the metropolis of which was Ancyra. These readily embraced the gospel; but, after S. Paul had left them, certain men came among them, who (like those mentioned, Acts 15) taught that it was necessary to be circumcised, and to keep the Mosaic Law. They affirmed that all the other apostles taught thus; that S. Paul was inferior to them; and that even he sometimes practised and recommended the Law, though at other times he opposed it. The first part, therefore, of this Epistle is spent in vindicating himself and his doctrine; proving (1) that he had it immediately from Christ Himself, and that he was not inferior to the other apostles; (2) that it was the very same which the other apostles preached; and (3) that his practice was consistent with his doctrine.

"The second contains proofs drawn from the Old Testament, that the Law and all its ceremonies were abolished by Christ.

"The third contains practical inferences, closed with his usual benediction.

"To be a little more distinct:—

"THIS EPISTLE CONTAINS—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1–5.
II. The calling the Galatians back to the true gospel; wherein he
  1. Reproves them for leaving it, . . . ,, i. 6–10.
  2. Asserts the authority of the gospel he had preached, who,
    (1) Of a Persecutor was made an Apostle, by an immediate call from Heaven, . ,, i. 11–17.
    (2) Was no way inferior to S. Peter himself, ,, i. 18–ii. 21.
    (3) Defends Justification by Faith, and again reproves the Galatians, . . ,, iii. 1–iv. 11.
    (4) Explains the same thing by an allegory taken out of the Law itself, . . ,, iv. 12–31.
    (5) Exhorts them to maintain their liberty, Warns them not to abuse it, and admonishes them to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, . . ,, v. 1–12. ,, v. 13–vi. 10.
III. The Conclusion, ... ,, vi. 11–18."

—WESLEY

CHAPTER I.

1. Paul, an apostle. "Here it was necessary for S. Paul to assert his authority; otherwise he was very modest in the use of his title. He seldom mentions it when he mentions others in the salutations with himself, as in the Epistles to the Philippians and Thessalonians; or when he writes about secular affairs, as in that to Philemon. **Not of men**—not commissioned from them, but from God the Father. **Neither by man**—neither by any man as an instrument, but by Jesus Christ. **Who raised Him from the dead**—of which it was the peculiar business of an apostle to bear witness" —WESLEY.

Read the Introductory Note. This and the following chapter deal chiefly with the denial by the false teachers of S. Paul's apostolic authority. In the very first sentence of his letter he is careful to assert that authority, and to describe it as having come directly from God. The exact rendering is, **not through a man, but through Jesus Christ**—a clear indication of S. Paul's belief in the divinity of Christ. The Father is here alluded to, not in a general sense, but as the Father of Jesus Christ. The resurrection is mentioned here, because it was the *risen* Christ who called him to the apostleship.

2. And all the brethren—"who agree with me in what I now write"—WESLEY.

In other Epistles S. Paul has associated the names of fellow-workers with his own in the opening sentence. In this place no names are mentioned, and he adopts the first person singular as soon as possible. "S. Paul's authority has been challenged, and S. Paul alone answers the challenge"—LIGHTFOOT. The words, **and all the brethren**, must therefore be regarded as belonging exclusively to the greeting, and not to the exhortations which follow it.

3. See note on Col. 1. 2. "The words **to you** between **grace** and **peace**, detain our attention and mark off each as a distinct object of thought"—BEET.

4. That He might deliver us from the present evil world—"from the guilt, wickedness, and misery wherein it is involved, and from its vain and foolish customs and pleasures. **According to the will of God**—without any merit of ours. S. Paul begins most of his Epistles with thanksgiving; but, writing to the Galatians, he alters his style, and first sets down his main proposition, That by the merits of Christ alone, **giving Himself for our sins**, we are justified: neither does he term them, as he does others, either 'saints,' 'elect,' or 'churches of God'"—WESLEY.

The exact rendering is, **who surrendered Himself with regard to our sins, that He might rescue us out of this evil age which is setting in.** The early Christians were strongly impressed with a belief that the Second Coming was close at hand, and that an age of apostasy and extraordinary wickedness would precede it. Into such apostasy the Galatians were falling, and such is S. Paul's intense concern for their safety that he interrupts his formal greeting to give them a solemn warning. "See how he directs every word against self-righteousness!"—LUTHER. **According to the will of God.** (Comp. 2 Cor. 5. 19.) **God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.** So S. Paul had written a few months before. The thought never fails to fill him with holy gratitude. Hence he breaks forth into a doxology.

5. To whom be glory—"for this His gracious will"—WESLEY.

To S. Paul, the Father is the source of redemption. The unscriptural notion that the Father monopolises justice, and the Son mercy, is unknown to him. He here glorifies the Father who "so loved the world that He gave" the Son as a Saviour. Here the greeting ends. With great skill S. Paul has contrived to weave into it the two great propositions he is about to establish—his own apostolic authority, and the all-sufficient merits of Christ. In all his other letters he follows up the greeting by words commending the faith and good works of his readers. Here, however, he passes on immediately to dignified rebuke. He will only praise where praise is due.

6. I marvel that ye are removed so soon—"after my leaving you—**from Him who called you by the grace of Christ**—His gracious gospel and His gracious power"—WESLEY.

I marvel. The Greek word usually suggests surprise at something blameworthy. The literal translation is, **I marvel that ye are so quickly turning renegades.** The exact meaning is uncertain. It may be either, "I marvel that your apostasy is developing so fast," or else "I marvel that you are falling away so soon after my last visit (or after your conversion)." Their conversion had occurred only seven years before at most. He uses the present tense because the apostasy is developing even as he dictates the letter. **From Him**, etc.—that is, God. "The whole mode of setting forth the apostasy makes the readers sensible of its antagonism to God and salvation"—MEYER.

7. "Which, indeed, **is not** properly **another** gospel. For what ye have now received is no gospel at all: it is not glad, but heavy, tidings, as setting your acceptance with God upon terms impossible to be performed. **But there are some that trouble you.** The same word occurs in Acts 15. 24. **And would**—if they were able—**subvert** or overthrow **the gospel of Christ**—the better to effect which, they suggest that the other apostles, yea, and I myself, insist upon the observance of the Law" —WESLEY.

To another gospel. A somewhat misleading translation. (R.V. "To a different gospel") —different from the Pauline gospel of salvation by faith in Christ. **Which is not another.** He at once corrects himself. Truth is one. There cannot be two gospels. The false teaching is indeed "different" from the true gospel, but it is not "another" gospel. You Galatians should know there is only one gospel. My calling these new doctrines by that name was a mistake, **only** (R.V.) **there are some that trouble you,** by asserting that their "different" teaching is **another gospel, and would overthrow the** true **gospel,** by setting up their falsehoods in its stead.

8. **But if we**—"I and all the apostles—**or an angel from heaven**—if it were possible—**preach another gospel, let him be accursed** —cut off from Christ and God"—WESLEY.

Having now directly referred to the false teachers, S. Paul, that his readers may be alive to the immense gravity of the situation, thunders a twice-repeated anathema at those who have produced it. He takes the highest possible ground. His indignation is not on account of antagonism to himself, but antagonism to truth. Though he himself should fall away from it, that truth must still be supreme. In that case he invokes the curse even on his own head. **Even if we, or an angel out of heaven, preach a gospel unto you contrary to that we did preach unto you, let him be anathema.**

9. **As**—"he speaks upon mature deliberation; after pausing, it seems, between the two verses. **We**—I and the brethren who are with me—**have said before**—many times, in effect, if not in terms. **So I say**—all those brethren knew the truth of the gospel. S. Paul knew the Galatians had received the true gospel"—WESLEY.

As we said before (probably during the second visit to Galatia, when the danger was imminent), **so I say now again. If anyone is preaching any gospel to you, contrary to that which ye did receive**—whether it be I, my brethren, an angel, your new teachers, or anyone else—**let him be anathema.** This sentence contemplates the exclusion of the offenders from the covenants of grace, their loss of final salvation. FINDLAY adds: "But does the declaration preclude in such a case the possibility of repentance? We trow not. It declares the doom which is due to any, be he man or angel, who should do what these 'troublers' are doing. It is a general sentence, and has for the individuals concerned the effect of a warning, like the announcement made concerning the traitor at the Last Supper. However unlikely repentance might be in either instance, there is nothing to forbid it. So when S. Peter said to Simon Magus, 'Thy money perish with thee!' he nevertheless continued, 'Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee' (Acts 8. 20-22). To his worst opponents, on any sign of contrition, S. Paul, we may be sure, would have gladly said the same."

10. **For**—"he adds the reason why he speaks so confidently—**do I now satisfy men** —is this what I aim at in preaching or writing? **If I still**—since I was an apostle—**pleased men**—studied to please them; if this were my motive of action—nay, if I did, in fact, please the men who know not God—**I should not be the servant of Christ.** Hear this, all ye who vainly hope to keep in favour both with God and with the world!"—WESLEY.

For am I now persuading men or God? The emphasis is on the word **now.** The false teacher had accused S. Paul of time-serving, and of ingratiating himself with men. "After these anathemas, can such a charge be brought *now?*' Can there be any further doubt as to which I prefer—the favour of men, or the favour of God? Men-pleasers cannot be God-pleasers. **If I were still** (as before my conversion) **pleasing men, I should not be the servant of Christ.**

11. **But I certify you, brethren**—"he does not till now give them even this appellation. **That the gospel which was preached by me** among you **is not according to man**—not from man, not by man, not suited to the taste of man"—WESLEY.

For I make known to you, brethren (R.V.). This phrase calls attention to some important statement. The first great division of the Epistle is here formally introduced. By a short history of his conversion, and of his relations with the various apostles and churches, S. Paul is about to establish his own apostolic authority. "I assure you, brethren, the gospel you were taught by me is not of human devising. I did not myself receive it from man, but from Jesus Christ. I did not learn it as one learns a lesson by painful study. It flashed upon me as a revelation from Jesus Christ"—LIGHTFOOT.

12. **For neither did I receive it**—"at once —**nor was I taught it**—slowly and gradually, by any man—**but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.** Our Lord revealed to him at first His resurrection, ascension, and the calling of the Gentiles, and his own apostleship; and told him then there were other things for which He would appear to him"—WESLEY.

"My gospel originated with Christ Himself, and therefore it must be the true gospel, for He is the Truth. Nor can it have become contaminated with error by reaching me through human channels. I did not receive it or learn it from a human teacher, but by direct **revelation of Jesus Christ."** In all this S. Paul is demonstrating his complete independence of the earlier apostles. The false teachers have represented that his commission to teach is derived from and terminable by the elders at Jerusalem. He stoutly denies this. Not only

did he receive his apostleship directly from Christ, but even for his knowledge of the Christian religion he was indebted to no human instrument. The revelation, the conversion, the apostleship, were all directly from the risen Lord. S. Paul's "burning bush" was not at Jerusalem but on the way to Damascus.

13. **I persecuted the Church of God**—"that is, the believers in Christ"—WESLEY.

Having substituted the way to Damascus for Jerusalem, as his spiritual and apostolic birthplace, S. Paul recognises that some may deny the miraculous appearance of Christ which there took place. In proof of it he appeals to the sweeping change in his creed and conduct, which only such a miracle can explain.

14. "**Being zealous of the** unwritten **traditions**—over and above those written in the law"—WESLEY.

Ye did hear (when I was with you) **my manner of life formerly in Judaism, that beyond measure I kept persecuting the Church of God, and devastating it: and I kept advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age in my own race, being more thoroughly a zealot for the traditions of my fathers.**

Such is the exact translation. But "kept advancing in Judaism" might be even better rendered "went on keeping pace in Judaism." His devotion to Judaism increased, and kept pace with his growing hostility to Christianity. S. Paul recalls all these details, not to boast of his own zeal, but to call attention to the overwhelming power of the revelation of Christ in changing the greatest enemy of the faith into her chiefest apostle.

15. **But when it pleased God.** "He ascribes nothing to his own merits, endeavours, or sincerity. **Who separated me from my mother's womb**—set me apart for an apostle, as He did Jeremiah for a prophet. (Jer. 1. 5.) Such an unconditional predestination as this may consist both with God's justice and mercy. **And called me by His grace**—by His free and almighty love, to be both a Christian and an apostle"—WESLEY.

Amid all the persecutions, hardships, and misrepresentations he had to endure, S. Paul was continually upheld by this dignified conception of God's eternal purpose concerning him. Nor, indeed, has any great religious leader succeeded without such a conviction.

16. **To reveal His Son in me**—"by the powerful operation of His Spirit (2 Cor. 4. 6); as well as to me, by the heavenly vision. **That I might preach Him to others**—which I should have been ill qualified to do had I not first known Him myself. **I did not confer with flesh and blood**—being fully satisfied of the Divine will, and determined to obey, I took no counsel with any man, neither with my own reason nor inclination, which might have raised numberless objections"—WESLEY.

"**It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.** This is the essential matter in S. Paul's conversion, as in that of every Christian. The outward manifestation of Jesus Christ served in his case to bring about this result, and was necessary to qualify him for his extraordinary vocation. But the issue of the revelation was a Divine certainty within the breast of S. Paul himself, showing that not by words alone he learned the things concerning faith, but that he was also filled with the abundance of the Spirit, the revelation shining through his very soul; and that he had Christ speaking in himself"—FINDLAY.

An external manifestation of Christ was so made *to* him on the way to Damascus as to produce Christ *in* him. Or the words may mean that Christ was revealed to others in the changed life of S. Paul. The latter view, however, seems to obscure the next clause. God (1) revealed Christ to S. Paul (**it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me**), that (2) S. Paul might reveal Christ to others (*lit.* **set Him forth as good tidings among the Gentiles,** to whom S. Paul's mission especially was).

17. **Neither did I go up to Jerusalem**—"the residence of the apostles—**but I immediately went again into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.** He presupposes the journey to Damascus, in which he was converted, as being known to them all"—WESLEY.

Neither did I go up unto Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. He is still emphasising his independence of the earlier apostles. He has already said that his Christian life and apostleship did not originate with them; he now goes on to say that it was not even developed by them. The change in him was begun, continued, and ended by Christ alone. Instead of going up to the mother church at Jerusalem on his conversion, he went away from it, probably to the kingdom of Aretas, bordering Judea. There, like Moses in Midian, he was trained for his life's work.

18. **Then after three years**—"wherein I had given full proof of my apostleship—**I went to visit Peter** — to converse with him" — —WESLEY.

After three years from his conversion. Very likely one whole year and parts of two other years. **I went up to Jerusalem to make acquaintance with Cephas, and I remained with him fifteen days.** The Greek verb implies a desire to see a celebrity. S. Paul's motive was to secure S. Peter's friendship; not his apostolic sanction, as the false teachers affirm.

19. "**But other of the apostles I saw none, save James the brother**—that is, 'the kinsman'—**of the Lord.** Therefore when S. Barnabas is said to have 'brought him into the apostles' (Acts 9. 27), only S. Peter and S. James are meant"—WESLEY.

But no other apostle did I see, but only James the brother of the Lord. He mentions this to show that his visit to Jerusalem was of a private and unofficial nature. Far from going there to seek ordination from the apostolic college, he did not even see the other apostles. James, here called "the brother of the Lord,' to distinguish him from James the brother of John, was perhaps not fully recognised as an apostle at this date.

20. The private and official nature of his visit to Jerusalem is a supremely important part of his argument. Between this visit and the next elapsed fourteen years of apostolic work, such as even S. Paul's opponents would admit to be blessed of God. If, then, his assertions in vers. 18 and 19 be true, his argument is established, and his independent apostolic authority vindicated. Hence the earnest assurance **the things that I speak unto you, before God I lie not.**

21. **Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia**—regions far distant from Jerusalem, and thus making it impossible that he should be under the training of the apostles there. Indeed, so complete was his independence of the latter that:—

22. **I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judea**—"except to that of Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

And even in the Jerusalem church he was known only to S. Peter and S. James. In fact, the Judean churches knew nothing of him except from occasional tidings of his far-off labours. Indeed:—

23. **They only heard say, He that once persecuted us, now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc; and they glorified God in me**—"that is, on my account"—WESLEY.

"He does not say, 'They marvelled at me, they praised me, they were struck with admiration of me,' but he attributes all to grace"—CHRYSOSTOM.

CHAPTER II.

"S. Paul continues the historical proof of his full apostolic independence"—MEYER. In the previous chapter he has proved his independence by the fact that for many years he had no formal intercourse with the earlier apostles. In the present chapter he goes on to show that when such intercourse did take place he throughout posed and was recognised as a true apostle.

1. **Then fourteen years after**—"my first journey thither—**I went up again to Jerusalem.** This seems to be the journey mentioned (Acts 15), several passages here referring to that great council, wherein all the apostles showed that they were of the same judgment with him"—WESLEY.

He mentions the long period that intervened, a period full of fruitful missionary activity, as yet another proof that he was independent of the original apostles. **With Barnabas**—whose work had been chiefly among the Gentiles—**taking Titus also with me.** The question to be settled was, "Can an uncircumcised Gentile be a true Christian?" Titus, a noble specimen of Gentile Christianity, accompanied S. Paul and S. Barnabas as a living argument that he could.

2. **I went up**—"not by any command from them, but by an express **revelation** from God. **And laid before them** — the chief of the church in Jerusalem — **the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles** (Acts 15. 4), touching justification by faith alone; not that they might confirm me therein, but that I might remove prejudice from them. Yet not publicly at first, **but severally to those of eminence**—speaking to them one by one. **Lest I should run, or should have run, in vain**—lest I should lose the fruit either of my present or past labours. For they might have greatly hindered this, had they not been fully satisfied both with his mission and doctrine. The word 'run' beautifully expresses the swift progress of the gospel"—WESLEY.

"Arrived at Jerusalem, I set forth the principles of the gospel, as I had preached it and still preach it to the Gentiles—the doctrine of grace, the freedom from the Ceremonial Law. This explanation I gave in a private conference with the leading apostles of the circumcision. In all this I had one object in view; that the gospel might have free course among the Gentiles, that my past and present labours might not be thwarted by opposition or misunderstanding"—LIGHTFOOT.

3. **But neither was Titus, who was with me**—"when I conversed with them — **compelled to be circumcised**—a clear proof that none of the apostles insisted on the circumcising Gentile believers. The sense is, And it is true, some of those false brethren would fain have compelled Titus to be circumcised; but I utterly refused it"—WESLEY.

But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised (R.V.). The meaning is, "But far from proclaiming my gospel to be wrong, or myself to have run in vain, the council did not even insist finally upon the circumcision of the Greek Titus!" And if an uncircumcised Gentile was tolerated in an apostolic council, surely S. Paul had carried the day.

4. **Because of false brethren**—"who seem to have urged it. **Introduced unawares**—into some of those private conferences at Jerusalem. **Who had slipped in to spy out our liberty**—from the Ceremonial Law. **That they might,** if possible, **bring us into** that **bondage** again"—WESLEY.

Lit. **And** that **because of false brethren privately brought in, who came in privately to spy out our freedom which we have,** etc. This verse presents the reason why S. Paul held out against the circumcision of Titus.

Had the request been pressed, for example, only by such a man as S. Peter, who, at that time at least, adopted a liberal attitude to Gentile believers, S. Paul might have yielded, knowing that no disastrous use would have been made of the concession. But the request came from false brethren, with no lawful standing in the council, who would have promptly misrepresented S. Paul's action, and lost no time in substituting the bondage of Jewish ceremonialism for the "freedom" of the Gentile churches. "Because of the false brethren." S. Paul held out so stoutly, that Titus "was not compelled to be circumcised." The grammatical structure of these two verses in the Greek is broken and excited, as though, even as he dictates the account of it, S. Paul is passing again through that momentous struggle for Gentile liberty. FINDLAY says: "To know what S. Paul means by 'false brethren' we must turn to ch. 1. 6, 9; 3. 1; 4. 17; 5. 7–12; 6. 12–14 in this Epistle; and again to 2 Cor. 2. 17; 3. 1; 4. 2. They were men bearing the name of Christ, and professing faith in Him, but Pharisees at heart; self-seeking, rancorous, unscrupulous men, bent on exploiting the Pauline churches for their own advantage, and regarding Gentile converts to Christ as so many possible recruits for the ranks of the circumcision."

5. **To whom we did not yield by submission**—"although in love he would have yielded to any. With such wonderful prudence did the apostle use his Christian liberty! circumcising Timothy (Acts 16. 3) because of weak brethren, but not Titus, because of false brethren. **That the truth of the gospel**—that is, the true genuine gospel—**might continue with you**—with you Gentiles. So we defend, for your sakes, the privilege which you would give up"—WESLEY.

To whom, not even for an hour, did we yield by submission. S. Paul means that he and S. Barnabas maintained an uncompromising attitude throughout the whole debate. But this was not from obstinacy or pride; although it was pain to them, they held out **that the truth of the gospel might continue with** the Gentiles.

6. **And they who undoubtedly were something**—"above all others. **What they were**—how eminent soever. **It is no difference to me**—so that I should alter either my doctrine or my practice. **God accepteth no man's person**—for any eminence in gifts or outward prerogatives. In that conference **added nothing to me**—neither as to doctrine nor mission"—WESLEY.

But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth not man's person)—they, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me (R.V.). He adds yet another proof of his independent apostleship. "During my intercourse with the elder apostles, they taught me nothing I did not know before, they corrected nothing in my teaching, they added nothing to my authority; but, on the other hand, they cordially recognised my mission to the uncircumcision." The words in brackets strengthen the thought. Although the elder apostles were in great repute, through their connection with Christ during His earthly ministry, this did not alter the fact that they "imparted nothing to S. Paul."

7. **But when they saw**—"by the effects which I laid before them (ver. 8; Acts 15. 12). **That I was intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision**—that is, with the charge of preaching it to the uncircumcised heathens"—WESLEY.

Even as Peter with the gospel of **the circumcision.** Of course S. Peter had a mission to the Gentiles also, and there was nothing to hinder S. Paul from working among the Jews, but the primary sphere of activity is here thought of in each case. "Once for all this charge had devolved upon S. Paul. He is 'appointed herald and apostle' of Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all—teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (1 Tim. 2. 6, 7.) That office S. Paul still holds. He is the leader of Christian evangelism. Every new movement in heathen missionary enterprise looks to his teaching for guidance and inspiration"—FINDLAY.

8. **For He that wrought effectually in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision**—"to qualify him for, and support him in, the discharge of that office to the Jews—**wrought likewise effectually in** and by **me**—for and in the discharge of my office **toward the Gentiles**"—WESLEY.

For the very same proofs which confirmed S. Peter's call and apostleship confirmed S. Paul's also. Indisputable conversions had followed the preaching of both. Judging by their fruits, if S. Paul was no true apostle neither was S. Peter. The effectual working of God in both of them was conclusive. In spite of minor differences of opinion, the elder apostles could not doubt the direct call and full apostolic standing of the great preacher to the Gentiles. ELLICOTT says: "**In Peter** and **in me** would be better translated **for Peter** and **for me. He that wrought effectually for Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision the same wrought effectually for me toward the Gentiles.**"

9. **And when James**—"probably named first because he was bishop of the church in Jerusalem. **And Cephas**—speaking of him at Jerusalem he calls him by his Hebrew name. **And John.** Hence it appears that he also was at the council, though he is not particularly named in the Acts. **Who undoubtedly were pillars**—the principal supporters and defenders of the gospel. **Knew**—after they had heard the account I gave them—**the grace**—of apostleship—**which was given me, they**—in

the name of all—**gave to me and Barnabas**—my fellow-labourer—**the right hands of fellowship.** They gave us their hands in token of receiving us as their fellow-labourers, mutually agreeing **that we**—I and those in union with me—**should go to the Gentiles**—chiefly; **and they**—with those that were in union with them, chiefly **to the circumcision**—the Jews"—WESLEY.

Reputed to be pillars (R.V.). **S. James** was the eldest of the brethren of the Lord. Hence the position of honour assigned to him. **The right hands of fellowship** did not merely imply recognition as fellow-workers, but also acknowledgment of apostolic equality. FINDLAY'S comment on this verse is: "With **S. Peter** and **S. James** S. Paul had met before, and was to meet again. But, so far as we can learn, this was the only occasion on which his path crossed that of **S. John.** Nor is this apostle mentioned again in S. Paul's letters. . . . S. John was to be the heir of S. Paul's labours at Ephesus and in Asia Minor. And S. John's long life, touching the verge of the second century, his catholic position, his serene and lofty spirit, blending in itself and resolving into a higher unity the tendencies of S. James and S. Peter and S. Paul, give us the best assurance that in the apostolic age there was indeed 'one holy, catholic, apostolic Church.' S. Paul's fellowship with S. Peter and with S. James was cordial and endeared. But to hold the hand of S. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was yet higher satisfaction. The clasp symbolised a union between men most opposite in temperament and training, and brought to the knowledge of Christ in very different ways, but whose communion in Him was deep as the life eternal. S. Paul and S. John are the two master-minds of the New Testament. Of all men that ever lived, these two best understood Jesus Christ."

10. **Of the poor**—"the poor Christians in Judea, who had lost all they had for Christ's sake"—WESLEY.

I also was forward to do (R.V. "I was also zealous to do"). "Henceforth our spheres of labour were to be separate. One reservation, however, was made. They asked me to continue, as I had done hitherto, to provide for the wants of the poor brethren of Judea. Independently of their request, it was my own earnest desire"—LIGHTFOOT. And he did so. (Comp. Acts. 24. 17.)

11. **But**—"the argument here comes to the height. S. Paul reproves S. Peter himself. So far was he from receiving his doctrine from man, or from being inferior to the chief of the apostles—**when Peter**—afterwards—**came to Antioch**—then the chief of all the Gentile churches—**I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed**—for fear of man (ver. 12), for dissimulation (ver. 13), and for not walking uprightly (ver. 14)"—WESLEY.

I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned (R.V.). With this verse begins S. Paul's crowning argument. He has proved his independence (1) by showing that for many years he had no official intercourse with the apostles, and (2) by showing that when an official meeting did take place, the "pillars" fully recognised his status. Now he goes much further, and concludes his whole proof (3) by showing that his position was such that he had even publicly rebuked the chief of the apostles, S. Peter himself! Would a subordinate have been suffered to do this? Step by step this artless autobiography has advanced to the triumphant vindication of its author. In Syria and Cilicia—not an inferior! In Jerusalem—an admitted equal! In Antioch—more than an equal! This incident probably occurred soon after the council at Jerusalem. (Comp. Acts 15. 30–40.)

12. How fully this incident consists with what the Gospels tell us of S. Peter! With a few differences of detail it is the drama of the denial once more enacted. **Certain from James**—false brethren, who doubtless had credentials from S. James, which they deceitfully abused. **He did eat with the Gentiles.** The false brethren had been Pharisees (see Acts 15. 5), hence their attitude in this matter. **He gradually withdrew and separated himself.** The Greek words indicate "the cautious withdrawal of a timid person, who shrinks from observation"—LIGHTFOOT.

13. **And the other** believing **Jews**—"who were at Antioch—**dissembled with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation**—was borne away, as with a torrent, into the same ill-practice"—WESLEY.

The defection of a great leader like S. Peter inevitably affected many of the rank and file, and at this S. Paul scarcely wondered. But both surprise and pain are implied in the words **even Barnabas.** This was strange conduct after S. Barnabas had helped to fight against ceremoniation. No doubt it was one of the causes of the separation recorded in Acts 15. 39.

14. **I said to Cephas before them all.** "See Paul single against Peter and all the Jews! **If thou being a Jew**, yet **livest**, in thy ordinary conversation, **after the manner of the Gentiles**—not observing the Ceremonial Law, which thou knowest to be now abolished—**why compellest thou the Gentiles**—by withdrawing thyself and all the ministers from them, either **to judaise**, to keep the Ceremonial Law, or to be excluded from Church communion"—WESLEY.

S. Paul would not have rebuked a fellow-apostle publicly had not the fault been committed publicly. He asks S. Peter for an explanation of his extraordinary change of attitude: "How is it that thou (who though a Jew upon whom, if upon anyone, the Ceremonial Law is binding, dost cast aside that

Law, and dost live without its observances like the Gentiles)—how is it that thou dost act in a manner which will involve the forcing of the Gentiles to live under Jewish restrictions?" It is true that at the moment of S. Paul's rebuking S. Peter the latter is living **as a Jew**, and not **as a Gentile**: but S. Paul has in mind S. Peter's whole conduct since his vision. (See Acts 10.) "If the Law, which was enjoined upon Jews and not Gentiles, can be discarded by a Jew like yourself, can it not much more be ignored by Gentiles?"

15. **We.** "S. Paul, to spare S. Peter, drops the first person singular, and speaks in the plural number. In ver. 18 he speaks in the first person singular again by a figure; and without a figure (ver. 19, etc.). **Who are Jews by nature**—by birth, not proselytes only. **And not sinners of the Gentiles**—that is, not sinful Gentiles; not such gross, enormous, abandoned sinners, as the heathens generally were"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul here passes from the outward to the inward, from the circumstances of S. Peter's conduct to the inner world of spiritual consciousness, in which his offence finds its deeper condemnation. 'You and I,' he goes on to say, 'not Gentile sinners, but men of Jewish birth—yet for all that, knowing that there is no justification for man in works of Law, only through faith in Christ,—we, too, put our faith in Christ, in order to be justified by faith in Him, not by works of Law; for as the Scripture taught us, in that way no flesh will be justified"—FINDLAY.

"The first clause of this verse is concessive: 'We grant you that we were born Jews, and not Gentiles: members of the chosen race and not sinners.' The next clause explains why it was that, with all these privileges, the Christian, though thus born a Jew, transferred his allegiance from the Law to Christ. The reason was that the Law failed in the one great object—to justify us, or obtain our acquittal in the sight of God. **By nature**—*i.e.* by birth. The privileges of the Jew belonged to all Jews alike, simply by the mere fact that they were Jews. **Sinners**—the word was almost a synonym for 'heathen' in the mouth of a strict Jew. Hence there is a slight irony in its use by S. Paul"—ELLICOTT.

16. **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law**—"not even of the Moral, much less the Ceremonial Law. **But by the faith of Jesus Christ**—that is, by faith in Him. The name Jesus was first known by the Gentiles; the name Christ by the Jews. And they are not always placed promiscuously; but generally in a more solemn way of speaking the apostle says, Christ Jesus; in a more familiar, Jesus Christ. **Even we**—and how much more must the Gentiles, who have still less pretence to depend on their own works! **Have believed**—knowing there is no other way. **Because**—considering the demands of the Law, and the state of human nature, it is evident, that **by the works of the Law**—by such an obedience as it requires—**shall no flesh living**—no human creature, Jew or Gentile—**be justified.** Hitherto S. Paul had been considering that single question, 'Are Christians obliged to observe the Ceremonial Law?' But he here insensibly goes further, and, by citing this scripture, shows that what he spoke directly of the Ceremonial, included also the Moral, Law. For David undoubtedly did so, when he said (Ps. 143. 2), the place here referred to, 'In thy sight shall no man living be justified'; which the apostle likewise explains (Rom. 3. 19, 20), in such a manner as can agree to none but the Moral Law"—WESLEY.

Bishop LIGHTFOOT thus paraphrases vers. 15 and 16: "Only consider our own case. We were born to all the privileges of the Israelitish race: we were not **sinners** as we proudly call the Gentiles. What then? We saw that the observance of the Law would not justify any man, that faith in Jesus Christ was the only means of justification. Therefore we turned to a belief in Christ. Thus our Christian profession is itself an acknowledgment that such observances are worthless and void, because, as the Scripture declares, no flesh can be justified by works of Law." ELLICOTT'S comment is: "The inability of the Law to justify comes out in two ways—(1) The only way in which the Law could justify was through a complete obedience to its provisions. But it was impossible to render a *complete* obedience to it; and to offend in one point was 'to be guilty of all'; so that practically, as a matter of fact, no one was justified by it; (2) nor did it *help* men to justify themselves. It was something dead and lifeless—a mere written letter, possessing none of those 'means of grace' which are offered by Christianity. Christ Himself, through faith in Him, is the great means."

17. **But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are still found sinners**—"if we continue in sin, will it therefore follow that **Christ is the minister** or countenancer **of sin?**"—WESLEY.

But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners (R.V.). Notice most carefully the past tenses. This is a difficult verse. Possibly S. Paul here drops the narrative of his rebuke to S. Peter, although it is more probable that the words from this point to the end of the chapter formed part of that rebuke. He seems to be turning aside for a moment to answer a probable objection—"the ever-recurring objection that the gospel of Christ, which reveals the guilt of even the most moral men, is opposed to morality"—BEET. The whole thought may be thus paraphrased: "Though by nature we were not sinners of the Gentiles, it was needful, in order that we

might be justified in Christ, that we should see ourselves to be, like them, sinners in need of Christ. Christ enabled us to see ourselves in such a light. **We ourselves also were found sinners.** But in showing us that we *were* sinners, did Christ *make* us sinners? **Is Christ a minister of sin?**"

18. "By no means. **For if I build again**—by my sinful practice—**the things which I destroyed**—by my preaching, **I only make myself**—or show myself, not Christ, to be a **transgressor**; the whole blame lies on me, not Him or His gospel. As if he had said, The objection were just, if the gospel promised justification to men continuing in sin. But it does not. Therefore, if any who profess the gospel do not live according to it, they are sinners, it is certain, but not justified, and so the gospel is clear"—WESLEY.

Prove myself (R.V.). "Nothing of the kind! On the other hand, I should make myself a sinner, I should fall inevitably into condemnation, if I set up that abandoned Law again!"—FINDLAY. "By eating with the Gentiles, S. Peter was pulling down the barrier of Mosaic restrictions; by afterwards withdrawing from them he was building it again. This express and evident reference S. Paul courteously veils by using the first person, as though merely stating a general principle. **Transgressor.** If by formerly pulling down the restrictions of the Law, S. Peter had, as ver. 19 will show, been really carrying out the ultimate purpose of the Law, he is now, by maintaining the same restrictions, opposing the Law, and transgressing the limits it has marked out for its own operation. His own inconsistency condemns him"—BEET.

19. **For I through the Law**—"applied by the Spirit to my heart, and deeply convincing me of my utter sinfulness and helplessness—**am dead to the Law**—to all hope of justification from it—**that I may live to God**—not continue in sin. For this very end am I, in this sense, freed from the Law, that I may be freed from sin"—WESLEY.

"**Died to the Law that I might**, etc. (R.V.). (Comp. Rom. 7. 4, 'Put to death through the Law, through the body of Christ.') By His crucified body, S. Paul was removed completely from the jurisdiction of Law, so that God no longer treats him according to his previous obedience to a rule of conduct, as though such obedience were the means of obtaining His favour. This is another way of saying that by the death of Christ, God has reconciled the justification of sinners with His own justice. And this escape from the claims of the Law and separation from its rule was brought about **by means of Law.** For it was to satisfy these claims that Christ died, and the purpose of the Law was to force men to Christ, and by so doing place them beyond its own jurisdiction. Thus objectively and subjectively S. Paul's deliverance from the rule of law was brought about by the operation of Law. **That I may live for God**: God's purpose in liberating S. Paul from Law. This verse embodies in a few words the most distinctive teaching of S. Paul"—BEET.

20. "The apostle goes on to describe how he is freed from sin, how far he is from continuing therein. **I am crucified with Christ**—made conformable to His death; 'the body of sin is destroyed' (Rom. 6. 6). **And I**—as to my corrupt nature—**live no longer**—being **dead to sin. But Christ liveth in me**—is a fountain of life in my inmost soul, from which all my tempers, words, and actions flow. **And the life that I now live in the flesh**—even in this mortal body—**I live by faith in the Son of God**—I derive every moment from that supernatural principle; from a Divine evidence and conviction, that 'He loved me, and delivered up Himself for me'"—WESLEY.

I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God (R.V.). This verse is "the summit and marrow of Christianity"—BENGEL. **I have been crucified.** The tense in the Greek indicates the continuance of the experience. S. Paul "is deeply and gratefully conscious that his own life, both in its essence and its manifestations, is infinitely above himself who lives it; and it is a direct outflow of the immortal life of Christ, so that S. Paul's thoughts and words and acts have their true source not in him but in Christ. Thus S. Paul lives on earth *in* human *flesh* a life, not earthly but heavenly, not human but Divine; a life which is in some sense a continuation of Christ's life on earth. Notice that it is the crucified Saviour who lives in those who have shared His crucifixion. Only they whose former lives have come to an end upon the cross of Christ have Christ living in them. For union with Him implies (Rom. 6. 3) union with His death"—BEET. Observe how he corrects, so to speak, each preceding statement by a new one. **I have been crucified: yet I live: and yet no longer I**, etc. As we follow the words and clauses we are following the working of the apostle's mind as he dictated this letter, "My old life came to an end on the cross! But I have a new life. I live! And yet, in a sense, I do not live: for it is Christ that liveth in me! I am not thinking of my physical life—my life in the flesh—but of my spiritual life; and this spiritual life I live in the sphere and atmosphere of *faith*. Yes, **faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.**" On the latter words, comp. Rom. 8. 37; Eph. 5. 25. "**Loved me**, etc. He appropriates to himself," as Chrysostom observes, "the love which belongs equally to the whole world. For Christ is indeed the personal Friend of each man individually; and is as much to him 'as if He had died for him alone'"—LIGHTFOOT.

21. "Meantime **I do not make void**—in seeking to be justified by my own works—**the grace of God**—the free love of God in Christ Jesus. But they do who seek justification by the Law. **For if righteousness is by the Law**—if men might be justified by their obedience to the Law, moral or ceremonial—**then Christ died in vain**—without any necessity for it, since men might have been saved without His death; might, by their own obedience, have been both discharged from condemnation, and entitled to eternal life"—WESLEY.

"I will not stultify the grace of God. If righteousness can be won by Law, why, then, Christ died for nothing!"—FINDLAY.

CHAPTER III.

S. PAUL does not tell us what effect his rebuke had upon S. Peter. In the concluding words of the last chapter, the autobiographical modulates into the doctrinal. The vindication of apostolic authority has been crowned by an account of a rebuke administered to so important an apostle as S. Peter. But what was the rebuke about? Why, it was about that very false teaching which S. Paul is now going to denounce! Artless as it seems to be, it is impossible not to marvel at the astonishing skill with which S. Paul effects this easy transition from a defence of himself to a defence of his gospel. The great theological division of the Epistle begins here, and extends to ch. 5. 12. In the last verse of the preceding chapter he has said that such conduct as S. Peter's at Antioch implies principles which strip Christ's death of meaning. Throughout this long division of his letter he is going to show that "justification is by faith, apart from Law, and therefore from circumcision"—BEET.

1. **O thoughtless Galatians**—"he breaks in upon them with a beautiful abruptness. **Who hath bewitched you**—thus to contradict both your own reason and experience? **Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been as evidently set forth**—by our preaching, as if He had been **crucified among you**"—WESLEY.

Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified (R.V.). The error of S. Peter just criticised, as implying a denial of the efficacy of Christ's death, is the very error which the false teachers have sown in Galatia. The hollowness and the perils of it compel S. Paul to cry out in indignant surprise, **O senseless Galatians, who did fascinate you?** The latter verb alludes to the "evil eye," in which the ancients, like some moderns, believed. S. Paul compares the false teaching with an evil spell, and asks how men could have yielded to it, **before whose eyes Jesus Christ was placarded as crucified.**

2. **This only would I learn of you**—"that is, this one argument might convince you. **Did ye receive** the witness and the fruit of **the Spirit by** performing **the works of the Law, or by hearing of** and receiving **faith?**"—WESLEY.

The Judaisers are teaching that the Galatians cannot enjoy Christian privileges without circumcision and other **works of Law.** S. Paul adopts a very short and easy method with them. He appeals to experience. Before they had heard circumcision mentioned, all true believers in Galatia *had* enjoyed Christian privileges, to the extent even of receiving the Spirit. The false teaching is therefore condemned by facts. "See how well he handles the matter by means of experience"—LUTHER.

3. **Are ye so thoughtless**—"as not to consider what you have yourselves experienced? **Having begun in the Spirit**—having set out under the light and power of the Spirit by faith, do ye now, when ye ought to be more spiritual, and more acquainted with the power of faith, expect to be **made perfect by the flesh?** Do you think to complete either your justification or sanctification, by giving up that faith, and depending on the Law, which is a gross and carnal thing when opposed to the gospel?"—WESLEY.

Lit. **Are ye so senseless? Having begun by means of the Spirit, are ye now brought to maturity by means of the flesh? Having begun in the Spirit**—"begun your career as Christians in a manner so entirely spiritual—with the spiritual act of faith on your part, and with an answering gift of spiritual graces and powers. **Made perfect by the flesh.** Do you wish to finish and complete the career thus auspiciously begun under a system of things entirely different—a system carnal and material, narrow, slavish, and literal—the Law in place of the gospel? By 'the flesh' is here meant the Law, which, though described as spiritual in Rom. 7. 14, and though it really was spiritual in view of its origin, in another aspect—as imposing a system of literal obedience upon its adherents—was carnal, 'earthly,' rigid, petty, and low. It had none of that sublime expansiveness and aspiration which belongs to faith. It was a grievous reversing of the whole order of progress—to begin with faith, and, instead of completing with faith that which faith had begun, to fall back upon a condition of things which was shared with the Christian by the unemancipated Jew"—ELLICOTT.

4. **Have ye suffered**—"both from the zealous Jews and from the heathens—**so many things**—for adhering to the gospel—**in vain**—so as to lose all the blessings which ye might have obtained, by enduring to the end. **If it be yet in vain**—as if he had said, I hope better things, even that ye will endure to the end"—WESLEY.

We do not know of any persecutions which the Galatians were called upon to endure on account of Christianity. There are, of course, no punctuation marks in the Greek MSS., and perhaps it is best to substitute a mark of ex-

clamation for the mark of interrogation in the English versions. The sense will then be, **So much have ye suffered without benefit!** "You have endured the interference of these new teachers, with their useless and indeed harmful additions to your creed, and all that their interference has produced, without being any the better for it, the Law being powerless to benefit men who, like yourselves, have attained to the gospel. All these words and rites you have endured—in vain!" **If, indeed, it is only in vain.** S. Paul is not, after all, sure that the new teachers have merely done the Galatians no good. For all he knows they have done harm. Hence these words. Perhaps their endurance of the heresy has been "only in vain" or profitless; but who knows that it may not also have led them away from simple faith in Christ, and therefore from salvation? (It is right to remark that most expositors agree with Wesley in the very different interpretation given in his note above.)

5. "And at the present time, **Doth he that ministereth** the gift of **the Spirit to you, and worketh miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law**—that is, in confirmation of his preaching justification by works, or of his preaching justification by faith?"—WESLEY.

"This question implies that miracles were indisputably wrought in the apostolic churches. S. Paul asks, 'What is the immediate source from which you receive day by day the Holy Spirit, and from which proceeds power to work miracles? Is it works done in obedience to a rule of conduct or attention to, and belief of, a spoken word?' Answer is needless. They know that when most firmly they believe the gospel, then most richly does the Spirit animate and glorify their entire life, and then most mightily does the power of God endow them with supernatural capacities"—BEET.

6. "Doubtless in confirmation of that grand doctrine, that we are justified by faith, even **as Abraham was.** The apostle, both in this and in the Epistle to the Romans, makes great use of the instance of Abraham: the rather, because from Abraham the Jews drew their great argument, as they do this day, both for their own continuance in Judaism, and for denying the Gentiles to be the Church of God"—WESLEY.

"The answer to the question asked in the former verse is assumed, 'Surely of faith; and so it was with Abraham'"—LIGHTFOOT. S. Paul is here quoting Gen. 15. 6, according to the LXX. version. ELLICOTT says: "The argument is here very condensed. Ideas lie close together in the apostle's mind, which are some distance apart in ours. He asks whether, in bestowing the gifts of the Spirit upon the Christian Church, God made use of the medium of the Law or of faith. The answer he assumes to be faith; and his thoughts fly at once to that crucial instance of faith, the faith of Abraham."

7. **Know then that they who are partakers of his faith, these**—"and these only—**are the sons of Abraham,** and therefore heirs of the promises made to him"—WESLEY.

The constant boast of the Jews was, "We have Abraham to our father." This meant that they could trace their physical descent uninterruptedly from him. Hence they considered themselves the inheritors of the promise made to his seed. S. Paul meets and destroys the claim by substituting spiritual for physical kinship. By the very passage from Genesis, which was so popular in the Jewish schools, he shows that Abraham's faith was the means of his justification, and the occasion of the promises to him and to his sons. But who are his sons? Those who can prove descent from him "according to flesh," by reciting tedious genealogies? Certainly not. The supremely important thing is not to have Abraham's blood in the veins, but Abraham's faith in the heart. All men, be they Jews or Gentiles, who exercise the sublime faith of Abraham, but no others, are his seed. **They that are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.** How complete must have been the conversion of the ex-Pharisee for him to enunciate such a principle as this! Brought up to "have confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3. 4, 5, 6), he learns to despise mere flesh-and-blood lineage, and to look upon religion as purely a spiritual fact necessarily related in each individual case to personal faith in Christ—such personal faith as Abraham had in God.

8. **And the Scripture**—"that is, the Holy Spirit, who gave the Scripture—**foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles also by faith, declared before**—so great is the excellency and fulness of the Scripture, that all the things which ever can be controverted are therein both foreseen and determined. **In** or **through thee**—as the father of the Messiah—**shall all the nations be blessed**"—WESLEY.

S. Paul here seems to think of the Scripture as a person; and, expounded as it is to the Church in each generation by the Holy Spirit, we ought not to think of it only as a collection of ancient writings, but as the living voice of God. "The promise to Abraham was an anticipation of the gospel, not only as announcing the Messiah, but also as involving the doctrine of righteousness by faith"—LIGHTFOOT.

In thee. MEYER differs from Wesley's note above, and explains "'In thee,' that is, in the fact that thou art blessed (art justified) is involved (as a consequence) the blessedness of all the Gentiles, in so far as all the Gentiles are to attain justification by faith; and it is in the blessing of Abraham, the father of all the faithful (Rom. 4), that the connection between faith and justification is opened and instituted for all future time."

9. "**So then** all **they**, and they only, **who are of faith**—who truly believe—**are blessed**

with faithful Abraham—receive the blessing as he did, namely, by faith"—WESLEY.

"The general result from vers. 7 and 8. If, namely, **believers** are sons of Abraham (ver. 7), and if the Scripture, in its promise of blessing to Abraham, has had in view **faith** as the source of Divine justification for the Gentiles, **believers accordingly are those who are blessed with believing Abraham**"—MEYER.

10. "They only receive it. **For as many as are of the works of the Law**—as God deals with on that footing, only on the terms the Law proposes, **are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all the things which are written in the Law. Who continueth not in all the things**—so it requires what no man can perform, viz. perfect, uninterrupted, and perpetual obedience"—WESLEY.

"An argument from the contrary for the correctness of the result exhibited in ver. 9. For how entirely different is the position of those who are **workers of the Law**! These, as a whole, according to the Scripture, are under *a curse;* so that it cannot be supposed that they should *become blessed*"—MEYER. S. Paul is quoting Deut. 27. 26, which carefully read. It is the summing up of the curses on Mount Ebal. So comprehensive and searching were the requirements of the Law to which it refers, that no man had fully met them. None have continued **in all the things**. Hence all who rely on law-keeping for salvation are under a curse.

11. "**But that none is justified by** his obedience to **the Law in the sight of God**—whatever may be done in the sight of man, is further *evident* from the words of Habakkuk—**the just shall live by faith**—that is, the man who is accounted just or righteous before God, **shall** continue in a state of acceptance, life, and salvation, **by faith**. This is the way God has chosen"—WESLEY.

Bishop LIGHTFOOT thus paraphrases this and the foregoing verse: "On the other hand, all who depend on works of Law are under a curse. This the Scripture itself declares. It utters an anathema against all who fail to fulfil every single ordinance contained in the book of the Law. Again the same truth, that the Law does not justify in the sight of God, appears from another Scripture, which declares that the just shall live by faith."

12. **And the Law is not of faith**—"but quite opposite to it: it does not say, **Believe**; but **Do**"—WESLEY.

"Faith is not the starting-point of the Law. The Law does not take faith as its fundamental principle. On the other hand, it rightly enforces the performance of all its enactments"—LIGHTFOOT. **But he that**, etc. (quoted from Lev. 18. 5).

13. "**Christ**—Christ alone. The abruptness of the sentence shows a holy indignation at those who reject so great a blessing. **Hath redeemed us**—whether Jews or Gentiles, at an high price—**from the curse of the Law**—the curse of God, which the Law denounces against all transgressors of it. **Being made a curse for us**—taking the curse upon Himself, that we might be delivered from it, willingly submitting to that death which the Law pronounces peculiarly accursed"—WESLEY.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (R.V.). S. Paul has shown that **as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse** (ver. 10). He now shows how Christ has *bought us off* from this curse, by taking our place, and becoming **a curse for us**. Compare the latter words with 2 Cor. 5. 21, "made sin on our behalf." Both phrases are too profound for written exposition. The only school where their meaning and power may be even partially apprehended is at Calvary. We must gaze with faith and love upon the sacrificed Lamb of God if we would know what these things be. Light upon their infinite significance is only born of the darkness that was "over all the land until the ninth hour." **For it is written**, etc. The quotation is from Deut. 21. 23, according to the LXX. version.

14. **That the blessing of Abraham**—"the blessing promised to him—**might come on the Gentiles**—also. **That we**—who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles—**might receive the promise of the Spirit**—which includes all the other promises. **Through faith**—not by works; for faith looks wholly to the promise"—WESLEY.

"Thus the Law, the great barrier which excluded the Gentiles, is done away in Christ. By its removal the Gentiles are put on a level with us Jews; and, so united, we and they alike receive the promise in the gift of the Spirit through our faith"—LIGHTFOOT. "**The blessing of Abraham**—pronounced upon Abraham, and to be fulfilled in his seed. **Through Jesus Christ**—through the relation into which they enter with Christ by embracing Christianity. **We**—the apostle and his readers, whether Jews or Gentiles. **Receive the promise of the Spirit**—a special outpouring of the Spirit was to be one of the characteristics of the great messianic manifestation. (Comp. Joel 2. 28, 29; Acts 2. 16-21)"—ELLICOTT.

15. **I speak after the manner of men**—"I illustrate this by a familiar instance, taken from the practice of men. **Though it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be** once legally **confirmed, none**—no, not the covenanter himself, unless something unforeseen occur, which cannot be the case with God—**disannulleth, or addeth thereto**—any new conditions"—WESLEY.

S. Paul has been showing that the Law cannot justify (ver. 9, etc.). He is now going to show that neither can the Law hinder justification. He will establish this by showing the

subordination of the Law to the promise. His illustration, based on the sacredness of even human covenants, sounds a note of confidence at the very outset of his argument. His whole reasoning in this connection requires careful attention. "This is the central point of the argument with the Judaisers"—FINDLAY.

16. **Now the promises were made to Abraham and his seed.** "Several promises were made to Abraham; but the chief of all, and which was several times repeated, was that of the blessing through Christ. **He**—that is, God—**saith not, And to seeds, as of many**—as if the promise were made to several kinds of seed—**but as of one**—that is, one kind of seed, one posterity, one kind of sons. And to all these the blessing belonged by promise. **Which is Christ**—including all that believe in Him"—WESLEY.

The promises referred to are contained in Gen. 13. 15 and Gen. 17. 8. "S. Paul brings into view *the object of the covenant*, the person designated by it—**Christ**, its proper Heir. This consideration, though stated here parenthetically, lies at the basis of the settlement made with Abraham; its importance is made manifest by the after course of S. Paul's exposition"—FINDLAY.

17. **And this I say**—"what I mean is this. **The covenant which was before confirmed of God**—by the promise itself, by the repetition of it, and by a solemn oath, concerning the blessing all nations. **Through Christ, the Law which was four hundred and thirty years after**—counting from the time when the promise was first made to Abraham. (Gen. 12. 2, 3.) **Doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of no effect**—with regard to all nations, if only the Jewish were to receive it; yea, with regard to them also, if it was by works, so as to supersede it, and introduce another way of obtaining the blessing"—WESLEY.

Four hundred and thirty years. There are chronological difficulties connected with this passage, but they need not alarm us. They hold a false theory of inspiration who would wish S. Paul to turn aside from his argument in order to discuss an irrelevant detail of historical criticism. Whatever the exact interval may have been between the promise and the Law, S. Paul's reasoning remains valid. FINDLAY says: "The bearing of S. Paul's argument is now perfectly clear. He is using the promise to Abraham to overthrow the supremacy of the Mosaic Law. The promise was, he says, the prior settlement. No subsequent transaction could invalidate it, or disqualify those entitled under it to receive the inheritance. That testament lies at the foundation of the sacred history. The Jew least of all could deny this. How could such an instrument be set aside? Or what right has anyone to limit it by stipulations of a later date?"

18. **And again**—"this is a new argument. The former was drawn from the time, this from the nature, of the transaction. **If the** eternal **inheritance** be obtained **by** keeping **the Law, it is no more by** virtue of the free **promise**—these being just opposite to each other. But it is by promise. Therefore it is not by the Law"—WESLEY.

Bishop LIGHTFOOT thus admirably paraphrases this and the two preceding verses: "Now the promise of God was not given to Abraham alone, but to his seed. What is meant by 'his seed'? The form of expression denotes unity. It must have its fulfilment in some *one* person. This person is Christ. Thus it was unfulfilled when the Law came. Between the giving of the promise then and the fulfilment of it the Law intervened. And coming many hundred years after, it was plainly distinct from the promise, it did not interpret the terms of the promise. Thus the Law cannot set aside the promise. Yet this would be done in effect, if the inheritance could only be obtained by obedience to the Law: since the promise itself imposed no such condition."

19. **It**—"the Ceremonial Law—**was added**—to the promise—**because of transgressions.** Probably, the yoke of the Ceremonial Law was inflicted as a punishment for the national sin of idolatry (Ex. 32. 1), at least the more grievous parts of it; and the whole of it was a prophetic type of Christ. The Moral Law was added to the promise to discover and restrain transgressions, to convince men of their guilt, and need of the promise, and give some check to sin. And this Law passeth not away; but the Ceremonial Law was only introduced *till* Christ, **the seed to** or through **whom the promise was made, should come. And it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator**—it was not given to Israel, like the promise to Abraham, immediately from God Himself; but was conveyed by the ministry of angels to Moses, and delivered into his hand as a mediator between God and them to remind them of the great Mediator"—WESLEY.

What, then, is the Law? (R.V.). S. Paul's quick mind suggests to him the need of guarding what he has said from misapprehension. Reading the foregoing passage, some may think that he disparages the Law as useless or worse. He hastens to correct any such misunderstanding. The Law, he has shown, cannot save. The Law, he has also shown, cannot hinder salvation by making void the earlier promise. But the Law (like everything else originating with God) has a use and meaning after all. He will vindicate its use and meaning by answering the question, **What, then, is the Law?** But he will so answer as to keep in view its inferiority to the dispensation of grace. "In four points this inferiority is seen—(1) Instead of justify-

ing it condemns, instead of giving life it kills; it was added to reveal and multiply transgressions. (2) It was but temporary; when the seed came, to whom the promise was given, it was annulled. (3) It did not come direct from God to man. There was a double interposition, a twofold mediation between the giver and the recipient. There were the angels, who administered it as God's instruments; there was Moses (or the high-priest) who delivered it to man. (4) As follows from the idea of mediation, it was of the nature of a contract, depending for its fulfilment on the observance of its conditions by the two contracting parties. Not so the promise which, proceeding from the sole fiat of God, is unconditional and unchangeable"—LIGHTFOOT. On the adding of the Law **because of transgressions**, comp. ver. 22 below, and also Rom. 3. 20 and 5. 20. The later rabbis loved to speculate concerning the angels who assisted in the giving of the Law, and there are many to-day who seem to have nothing better to do than to weave useless fancies round such passages. The reticence of Scripture in such matters has surely only one lesson for us.

20. **Now the mediator is not a mediator of one.** "There must be two parties, or there can be no mediator between them; **but God** who made the free promise to Abraham **is** only **one** of the parties. The other, Abraham, was not present at the time of Moses. Therefore in the promise Moses had nothing to do. The Law, wherein he was concerned, was a transaction of quite another nature"—WESLEY.

More than four hundred interpretations of this verse have been put forward. We shall only expound the passage soundly by following S. Paul's thought through the preceding and following verses. For the moment he has suspended his full answer to the question, "What, then, is the Law?" Just at this stage, the subordination and inferiority of Law to promise dominates his mind. One aspect of this inferiority is the need for mediation. Now, mediation implies two parties. In the case of the Law it was a contract between God and the Jewish people. But a contract is only valid so long as both sides fulfil the agreed conditions. Bearing in mind, then, how extremely improbable it was that such conditions could be fulfilled by the Jews, we see how precarious it was, and how inferior to the promise! For God who gave the promise is One! In the Law there were two parties—the unchangeable God and weak and sinful men. The latter deprived the arrangement of all absoluteness and certainty, for their failure to obey the terms might invalidate it at any moment. But in the promise we see the unchangeable God only! Here, then, we have a blessed certainty—absolute and unconditional. There is no neutralising element of human weakness, but only the eternal "Father of Lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning."

21. "Will it follow from thence that **the Law is against**, opposite **to the promises of God?** By no means. They are well consistent. But yet the Law cannot give life, as the promise doth. **If there had been a Law which could have given life**—which could have entitled a sinner to life, God would have spared His own Son, and **righteousness**, or justification, with all the blessings consequent upon it, **would have been by** that **Law**"—WESLEY.

"Thus the Law differs widely from the promise. But does this difference imply antagonism? Did the Law interfere with the promise? Far otherwise. Indeed, we might imagine such a Law that it would take the place of the promise—would justify and give life. This was not the effect of the Law of Moses"—LIGHTFOOT.

22. **But,** "on the contrary, **the Scripture**, wherein that law is written, **hath concluded all under sin**—hath shut them up together (so the word properly signifies), as in a prison, under sentence of death, to the end **that** all being cut off from expecting justification by the Law, **the promise might be freely given to them that believe**"—WESLEY.

The answer to the question, What, then, is the **Law?** is here given. We have seen that the promise was made to Abraham and to his seed. We have further seen that Abraham's seed are those who have faith. But faith in what or whom? Faith in Christ as a Saviour from sin. But we must know we have sinned, before we can feel our need of, and repose faith in, a Saviour from sin. And here is the use of the Law. By its compendious precepts, which we have failed to obey, it shows us that we have "come short." "The Law came in beside, that the trespass might abound." (Rom. 5. 20.) The Law so confronts us with the damning fact of sin as to drive us to Christ for salvation.

23. **But before faith**—"that is, the gospel dispensation—**came, we were kept**—as in close custody—**under the Law**—the Mosaic dispensation. **Shut up unto the faith which was to be revealed**—reserved and prepared for the gospel dispensation"—WESLEY.

This verse is practically a repetition in other words of the statement in the previous verse, with the thought of the historical order of Promise, Law, and Faith (Abraham, Moses, Christ) more dominant. (See below.)

24. **Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster unto Christ**—"it was designed to train us up for Christ. And this it did both by its commands, which showed the need we had for His atonement; and its ceremonies, which all pointed us to Him"—WESLEY.

Schoolmaster is a misleading rendering. S. Paul's illustration is that of a pædagogus—generally a superior slave who had charge of children under seven years of age. Hence the

thought is not that of *teaching about* Christ, but *leading to* Christ. This is the best place for remarking an important consideration regarding S. Paul's treatment of the use of the Law in this chapter. He has omitted one very important use of the Law. We have seen that it was given to convince us of sin, but surely it was intended to restrain sin as well. "Thou shalt not steal" was spoken, not only that those who do steal may be aware they are sinners, but also that men might be dissuaded from stealing. And this applies to the whole of the Moral Law. As to the Ceremonial Law, it was partly typical and partly a concession to the ritualistic tendency of a very slightly developed religious community. All these aspects of the Law S. Paul here ignores. But he does so advisedly. "The immediate moral purpose of the Law, to hold men back from sin, which must have been in God's thought when giving it, is by S. Paul completely subordinated to its ultimate evangelical purpose. To him the Law is only a preparation for the gospel"—BEET.

25. **But faith**—"that is, the gospel dispensation—**being come, we are no longer under** that **schoolmaster**—the Mosaic dispensation"—WESLEY.

"Faith is the true emancipator of the human mind. It comes to take its place as mistress of the soul, queen in the realm of the heart; to be henceforth its spring of life, the norm and guiding principle of its activity. The Mosaic Law—a system of external, repressive ordinances—is no longer to be the basis of religion. Faith assumes its sovereignty, and claims its inheritance. Faith is come—for Christ is come, its author and finisher"—FINDLAY.

26. **For ye**—"Christians **are all** adult **sons of God**—and so need a schoolmaster no longer"—WESLEY.

In the previous verse he has written "we." But S. Paul is a Jew. He therefore changes "we" into "ye," in order to bring out emphatically the participation of Gentiles in the glorious privileges of the gospel. "Therefore, we no more need the pædagogus. The end being attained, what further need for the means?" Observe the stride S. Paul has here taken. In ver. 8 our faith is stated to make us sons of Abraham. Here, "through faith in Christ Jesus, we are all the sons of God!" The grand argument has at length been unfolded, and S. Paul can speak of us, not only as heirs of the promise, but as recipients of its fulfilment. Here, again, we have a verse which transcends exposition. That we should be **sons of God** is one of the most characteristic, and at the same time one of the most profound, doctrines of Christianity. The sublimest human philosophy derives its grandeur from a paraphrasing of this unsearchable idea. To S. Paul this was the ultimate idea. (Comp. ch. 4. 5, etc.) It is by reason of the vital union of believers with Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, that they are sons of God.

27. "**For as many of you as have** testified your faith by being **baptized** in the name of Christ, have **put on Christ**—have received Him as your righteousness, and are therefore sons of God through Him"—WESLEY.

The solemn rite of baptism accompanied the admission of the Galatian converts into the *body of Christ*. As many as expressed their faith in this way did put on Christ. Note that, although no support is given in this verse to high doctrines of baptismal regeneration, the duty of every believer to receive this holy sacrament is distinctly implied. **Put on Christ**. See concluding words of the note on previous verse. True believers in Christ have, as it were, "put on" like a garment His Sonship relation to the Father.

28. **There is neither Jew nor Greek**—"that is, there is no difference betweeen them; they are equally accepted through faith. **There is neither male nor female**—circumcision being laid aside, which was peculiar to males, and was designed to put a difference, during that dispensation, between Jews and Gentiles"—WESLEY.

The "chosen people" of Judaism has given place to the "universal brotherhood" of Christianity. Race distinctions, social distinctions, even sex distinctions, vanish in the infinitely glorious truth of the union of humanity with the Divine Being. **Ye are all one person in Christ**—a body whereof we are members and He the Head. One Spirit enables us, one Divine life fills us. Here is an echo of the Redeemer's prayer "that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and they in Me, that they may be perfected into one."

29. **If ye are Christ's**—"that is, believers in Him"—WESLEY.

S. Paul the mystic, again gives place to S. Paul the controversialist. Christ (ver. 16) has been shown to be Abraham's seed. And if the Galatians are **part of Christ** (so the Greek) they also are Abraham's seed, and hence are as much inheritors of the promise as the Judaisers themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Now**—"to illustrate by a plain similitude the pre-eminence of the Christian over the legal dispensation—**the heir, as long as he is a child**—as he is under age—**differeth nothing from a servant**—not being at liberty either to use or enjoy his estate. **Though he be lord**—proprietor **of it all**"—WESLEY.

Refer back to ver. 24. S. Paul has digressed for a moment in order to call attention to the changed position of affairs now that faith is come. He here returns to make good and explain his illustration of the pædagogus, whereby he has been showing the purpose of

the Law. FINDLAY says: "The difference between Judaism and Christianity, historically unfolded in ch. 3, is here restated in graphic summary. We see, first, **the heir of God in his minority**; and again, **the same heir in possession of his estate.**"

2. **But is under tutors**—"as to his person—**and stewards**—as to his substance"—WESLEY.

Tutors and governors (R.V. "Guardians and stewards"). The father in this illustration is evidently dead, and has left detailed instructions in his will as to his son's executors, and the age at which he shall be released from their control. The heavenly Father, of course, "ever liveth." But the absence of analogy in this minor point does not weaken the force of S. Paul's illustration. His illustrations, like Christ's parables, are seldom intended to go on "all fours."

3. **So we**—"the Church of God—**when we were children**—in our minority, under the legal dispensation—**were in bondage**—in a kind of servile state—**under the elements of the world**—under the typical observances of the Law, which were like the first elements of grammar, the A B C of children; and were of so gross a nature, as hardly to carry our thoughts beyond this world"—WESLEY.

He is speaking of both Jews and Gentiles. Before Christ came, man's knowledge of God was almost wholly through material objects; he spelt out a few truths, written in such alphabets as the holy things of the old covenant, or (in the case of the Gentiles) the physical phenomena around him. (Comp. Rom. 1. 20.) **Held in bondage**—an echo of ch. 3. 23. But it is fair to call attention also to the New Testament teaching that knowledge is liberty. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8. 32). Whence it follows, that *not* to know the truth, and to know only the rudiments of the world, was a state of "bondage."

4. **But when the fulness of the time**—"appointed by the Father (ver. 2). **Was come, God sent forth**—from His own bosom—**His Son**, miraculously **made** of the substance **of a woman. Made under the Law**—both under the precept, and under the curse, of it"—WESLEY.

When the long years of the world's minority were expired. Such is certainly the primary meaning. But there may be an added reference to the preparation in history for Christ. Every student knows that the state of religion, morals, philosophy, politics, at the close of the pre-Christian era, was such as to constitute a most striking "fulness of times." **Sent forth.** The Greek word means "sent out from Himself." **His Son.** The pre-existence is distinctively implied. **Born of a woman.** The God-Man's human life, and the source of it, are here indicated. **Under the Law.** The statement that He was born a Jew increases the historical definiteness of the verse, and serves a further purpose. (See below.)

5. **To redeem those under the Law**—"from the curse of it, and from that low, servile state. **That we**—Jews who believe—**might receive the adoption**—all the privileges **of** adult **sons**"—WESLEY.

"By being born a Jew, He took upon Himself the obligation to keep, in every sense, the Law of Moses; and accepted obedience to Law as the condition of the approval of God. **Those under Law**—the Jews. In a wide yet correct sense all men are under Law. Actually, those under obligation to keep the Law are also under its curse. For all men have broken the Law. From this curse Christ came to *buy* us *off* (same word in ch. 3. 13), by Himself enduring it. This purpose implies that Christ's assumed obligation to keep the Law, and therefore His perfect obedience, were needful for man's deliverance from the penalty of sin, *i.e.* needful to reconcile (Rom. 3. 26) His deliverance with God's justice. It thus involves the active obedience of Christ as an essential element of man's salvation. But this element S. Paul does not make prominent. He attributes salvation always to the death, never to the obedient life, of Christ"—BEET. **In order that we might receive the adoption of sons.** Why did God send forth His Son? "In order that" He might "redeem" us. Why did He "redeem" us? "In order that we might receive the adoption of sons." (See notes on ch. 3. 26 and 27.) Creation and redemption are summarised in the saying, "Now are we the sons of God."

6. **And because ye**—"Gentiles who believe—**are** also thus made His adult **sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts** likewise, **crying, Abba, Father**—enabling you to call upon God both with the confidence, and the tempers, of dutiful children. The Hebrew and Greek word are joined together, to express the joint cry of the Jews and Gentiles"—WESLEY.

"It must be true that **ye are the sons of God.** For otherwise, whence have ye the Spirit? It is **because ye are sons, that God,**" etc. **Spirit of His Son.** The discourses in S. John's Gospel, in which Christ promises to come again in the Paraclete, are the best commentary on this phrase. **Crying, Abba, Father.** While the Spirit is sent because we are sons, on the other hand we become aware of our sonship because the Spirit has been sent into our hearts. It is His voice which teaches us to call God our Father.

7. **Wherefore thou**—"who believest in Christ—**art no more a servant**—like those who are under the Law—**but a son**—of mature age. **And if a son, then an heir of** all the promises, and of the all-sufficient God Himself"—WESLEY.

From "ye" S. Paul changes to **thou**, ad-

dressing himself to each individual reader. The illustration of ver. 1 is still before his mind, but varied in one particular. He seems not to be thinking about an intestate father, whose property, according to Roman law, was shared by adopted equally with born sons. The thought therefore is, **Ye are no longer bondservants but adopted sons, and consequently heirs through God**, *i.e.* through what God has done for you. Since the early part of ch. 3. S. Paul has been developing an argument with regard to Christians in general. Here he reaches the close of it, and tells his readers that they are no longer bondservants but sons and heirs. But in the next verse he returns suddenly and sadly to the apostasy of his readers. He has been describing their ideal condition as believers. Now he must rebuke their real condition as apostates.

8. **Indeed then, when ye know not God, ye served them that by nature**—"that is, in reality—**are no gods**—and so were under a far worse bondage than even that of the Jews. For they did serve the true God, though in a low, slavish manner"—WESLEY.

Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them which by nature are no gods (R.V.). S. Paul would only look upon the gods of heathendom as demons. While they were idolaters and **knew not God** their state was indeed one of bondage, but how much worse is their state now! Not to have the light was wretchedness, but to reject it is sin!

9. **But now being known of God**—"as His beloved children—**how turn ye back to the weak and poor elements**—'weak,' utterly unable to purge your conscience from guilt, or to give that filial confidence in God: 'poor'—incapable of enriching the soul with such holiness and happiness as ye are heirs to. **Ye desire to be again in bondage**—though of another kind; now to these elements, as before to those idols"—WESLEY.

But now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God (R.V.). That they knew God is implied in ver. 6. The whole Epistle also implies that before the false teachers came they had by simple faith known "God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." S. Paul adds, "or rather," etc., in order that salvation may be seen as wholly of grace. He corrects by it the previous phrase which might savour of human merit. **How turn ye back again?** His exposition of the place and function of the Law has shown that it is powerless to save, and that the man under the Law is under bondage. He therefore describes the Galatian apostasy as a relapse from liberty to slavery.

10. **Ye observe days**—"Jewish Sabbaths—**and months**—new moons—**and times**—as that of the Passover, Pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles—**and years**—annual solemnities. It does not mean sabbatic years. These were not to be observed out of the land of Canaan"—WESLEY.

He brings forward these facts to confirm the charge of going back into the bondage of the Law. The Greek signifies, **Ye minutely observe.** TISCHENDORF and others translate this as a question—a sorrowful and reproachful, **Do you observe?** etc.

11. "The apostle here, dropping the argument, applies to the affections (vers. 11–20), and humbles himself to the Galatians, with an inexpressible tenderness"—WESLEY.

I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed labour upon you in vain (R.V.). He does not say "I am afraid lest," but "I am afraid of you, lest." Hence the meaning is not that he grieves over the trouble he has put himself to in vain; but that he grieves over the possibility of their not being saved after all. He is pitying them, not himself.

12. **Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am**—"meet me in mutual love—**for I am as you were**—I still love you as affectionately as ye once loved me. Why should I not? **Ye have not injured me at all**—I have received no personal injury from you"—WESLEY.

As ye are (R.V.). By observing **days and months and seasons and years**—the Galatians have fallen into that very ceremonialism which S. Paul escaped from at his conversion. The meaning here is therefore: "Become as I am—a man who has shaken off the bondage of ordinances. For I am as ye are—I have abandoned Judaism, born Jew as I am, and have placed myself on the same spiritual level as you born Gentiles. If I, for your sakes, could give up ordinances amid which I was bred and born, surely you, for my sake, will give up these ordinances which you have so lately received that you cannot yet be attached to them as I was. This is what I deserve from you; and, unless your attitude to me has changed, you will do what I ask. **Ye have not injured me at all** in the past, and surely will not do so now."

13. **I preached to you, notwithstanding infirmity of the flesh**—"that is, notwithstanding bodily weakness, and under great disadvantage from the despicableness of my outward appearance"—WESLEY.

Because of an infirmity (R.V.). S. Paul is here referring to some events known to his readers, but not known to us. It would seem that he had not intended to preach in Galatia, but being detained there by sickness he spent his compulsory leisure in setting forth Christ crucified.

14. **And ye did not slight my temptation**—"that is, ye did not slight or disdain me for my temptation, my 'thorn in the flesh'"—WESLEY.

That which was a temptation to you (R.V.). "Ye remember, when detained by sickness, I preached the gospel to you, what a hearty welcome ye gave me. My infirmity might

well have tempted you to reject my message. It was far otherwise. Ye did not spurn me, nor loathe me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself"—LIGHTFOOT.

15. **What was then the blessedness ye spake of**—"on which ye so congratulated one another"—WESLEY.

Where then is that gratulation of yourselves? for I bear you witness, that if possible ye would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me (R.V.).

16. **So, then, am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?** "You remember in what condition I first came to you; and I remember well the kindness that you lavished on me,—you would have given me your very 'eyes' if I had needed them! Alas, what has become of this delight and gratitude? Now, because I tell you the truth you seem to think I hate you"—FINDLAY.

17. **They**—"the judaising teachers who are come among you—**zealously affect you**—express an extraordinary regard for you. **But not well**—their zeal is not according to knowledge; neither have they a single eye to your spiritual advantage. **Yea, they would exclude you**—from me and from the blessings of the gospel. **That ye might affect**—love and esteem—**them**"—WESLEY.

Your false teachers are paying diligent court to you, but their motive is not *your* interest so much as their own. By winning you over to their side, they hope to cut you off from me, **in order that ye may seek them** as your spiritual advisers, which will flatter their own pride.

18. **In a good thing**—"in what is really worthy our zeal. True zeal is only fervent love"—WESLEY.

"Not that I am jealous of your making other friends in my absence; only let the friendship be honourable and sincere"—FINDLAY.

19. **My little children.** "He speaks as a parent, both with authority, and the most tender sympathy, toward weak and sickly children. **Of whom I travail in birth again**—as I did before (ver. 13) in vehement pain, sorrow, desire, prayer—**till Christ be formed in you**—till there be in you all the mind that was in Him"—WESLEY.

20. **I could wish to be present with you now**—"particularly in this exigency. **And to change**—variously to attemper. **My voice.** He writes with much softness; but he would speak with more. The voice may more easily be varied according to the occasion than a letter can. **For I stand in doubt of you**—so that I am at a loss how to speak at this distance"—WESLEY.

I am perplexed about you (R.V.).

"O my children! I am suffering a mother's pangs for you once more, longing to see Christ formed in you! Would that I could be with you and speak in some kinder tone! You perplex me, and I know not what to write"—FINDLAY.

21. **Do ye not hear the Law**—"regard what it says"—WESLEY.

The paragraph beginning with this verse and ending at ch. 5. 1 is a master-stroke of argument. His readers have been led away by teaching full of rabbinical lore and allegories. S. Paul will meet the false teachers on their own ground, and vanquish them with their own weapons. "Ye constantly appeal to the Law, the Law! To the Law we will go, and hear what it really says!"

23. **Was born after the flesh**—"in a natural way—**by promise**—through that supernatural strength which was given Abraham in consequence of the promise"—WESLEY.

(See under ver. 28.)

24. **Which things are an allegory.** "An allegory is a figurative speech, wherein one thing is expressed, and another intended. **For those** two sons **are** types of **the two covenants.** One covenant is that given **from Mount Sinai, which beareth children to bondage**—that is, all who are under this, the Jewish covenant, are in bondage. **Which** covenant **is** typified by **Agar**"—WESLEY.

(See under ver. 28.)

25. **For this is Mount Sinai in Arabia**—"that is, the type of Mount **Sinai. And answereth to**—resembles—**Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage**—like Agar, both to the Law and to the Romans"—WESLEY.

The exact translation is, **Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and stands in line with the Jerusalem that now is.** All the various persons and objects mentioned or implied in the allegory fall into two groups, as soldiers make up two opposing armies. Hagar, Ishmael, Sinai, the old covenant, and "the Jerusalem that now is," stand in one line; Sarah, Isaac, Mount Sion, the new covenant, and "the Jerusalem that is above" in the opposing line.

26. "**But** the other covenant is derived from **Jerusalem that is above**, which **is free**—like Sarah, from all inward and outward bondage, and **is the mother of us all**—that is, all who believe in Christ, are free citizens of the New Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

(See under ver. 28.)

27. **For it is written.** "Those words in the primary sense promise a flourishing state to Judea, after its desolation by the Chaldeans. **Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not.** Ye heathen nations, who were destitute, for many ages, of a seed to serve the Lord. **Break forth, and cry aloud for joy, thou that,** in former time, **travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she that hath an husband**—for ye that were so long utterly desolate shall at length bear more children than the Jewish Church, which was of old espoused to God"—WESLEY.

(See under next verse.)

28. **Now we**—"who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles—**are children of the promise**—not born in a natural way, but by the supernatural power of God. And as such we are heirs of the promise made to believing Abraham"—WESLEY.

The following is Bishop LIGHTFOOT'S paraphrase of vers. 21–28: "Ye who vaunt your submission to Law, listen while I read you a lesson out of the Law. The Scripture says that Abraham had two sons, the one the child of the bondwoman, the other the child of the free. The child of the bondwoman, we are there told, came into the world in the common course of nature; the child of the free was born in fulfilment of a promise. These things may be treated as an allegory. The two mothers represent two covenants. The one, Hagar, is the covenant given from Mount Sinai, whose children are born into slavery (for Sinai is in Arabia, the land of Hagar and the Hagarenes), and this covenant corresponds to the earthly Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children. The other answers to the heavenly Jerusalem, which is free. I mean the Church of Christ, our common mother. In her progeny is fulfilled the prophetic saying, which bids the barren and forsaken wife rejoice, because her offspring shall be far more numerous than her rival's, who claims the husband for herself." S. Paul has here crushed his opponents with their own engines. The story of Ishmael and Isaac, often used by the Jews as an illustration and proof of their claims, when studied in connection with what S. Paul has established, in ch. 3, is seen to bear an exactly opposite meaning. The Jews are the children of Hagar and of bondage, and only those who are **sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus** (ch. 3, 26), are children of promise and of freedom. The pet allegory of the Judaisers has become the very instrument of their discomfiture!

29. **But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so it is now also**—"and so it will be in all ages and nations, to the end of the world"—WESLEY.

Blow upon blow! "These Judaisers *must* be descendants of Hagar! By their fruits ye may know them. They persecute and treat as inferiors the spiritual children, just as Ishmael, Hagar's first-born, ridiculed Isaac, the child of promise." This persecution was no fancy, imagined for the sake of argument. S. Paul's very life had often been in danger from it.

30. **But what saith the Scripture**—"showing the consequence of this—**Cast out the bondwoman and her son**—who mocked Isaac. In like manner will God cast out all who seek to be justified by the Law, especially if they persecute them who are His children by faith"—WESLEY.

He deals one last blow with the allegory before casting it aside. And what a blow it is! As Ishmael and Isaac could not remain in the same house, the Law and the gospel cannot coexist. The false teachers know this, and bid the simple gospel depart, leaving their legalism in full possession. **But what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son**, and it has been proved that these represent *the Law*. It is the Law, then, which must go, and the gospel which must enjoy an unshared supremacy!

31. **So then**—"to sum up all—**we**—who believe—**are not children of the bondwoman**—have nothing to do with the servile Mosaic dispensation—**but of the free**—being free from the curse and the bond of that Law, and from the power of sin and Satan"—WESLEY.

"Remembering that we are children of the free woman, let us not act as bondslaves."

CHAPTER V.

1. **Stand fast therefore in the liberty**—"from the Ceremonial Law—**wherewith Christ hath made us**—and all believers—**free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of** legal **bondage**"—WESLEY.

With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage (R.V.). This verse belongs properly to the last chapter, forming the practical application of its concluding argument. They had been held, before their conversion, in the yoke of heathenism; now they were submitting to the yoke of legalism, although Christ had lived and died and risen again to free them from bondage in any form.

2. **If ye be circumcised**—"and seek to be justified thereby—**Christ**—the Christian institution—**will profit you nothing**—for you thereby disclaim Christ, and all the blessings which are through faith in Him"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul now in a warning tone reveals to them the fearful danger to which they are exposed. This he does by the address **Behold** (in the singular), exciting the special attention of every individual reader, and with the energetic defiant interposition of his personal authority. On such a footing Christ cannot be Christ, the Mediator of salvation. S. Paul's judgment presupposes that circumcision is adopted, not as a condition of a holy life, but as a *condition of salvation*, which was the question raised among the Galatians"—MEYER. **Will profit you nothing.** (See on ch. 1. 4.) The meaning is "will profit you nothing" at the general judgment (which the early Church expected soon to take place).

3. **I testify to every man**—"every Gentile—**that is circumcised.** He thereby makes himself **a debtor**—obliges himself, at the peril of his salvation, **to do the whole Law**"—WESLEY.

Observe the solemn *yea*. The argument is this, "Circumcision is the seal of the Law. He who willingly and deliberately undergoes circum-

cision enters upon a compact to fulfil the Law. To fulfil it, therefore, he is bound, and he cannot plead the grace of Christ, for he has entered on another mode of justification"—LIGHTFOOT.

4. Therefore **Christ is become of no effect to you**—"who seek to be **justified by the Law. Ye are fallen from grace**—ye renounce the new covenant. Ye disclaim the benefit of this gracious dispensation"—WESLEY.

Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the Law (R.V.). "Although actual justification in Law is impossible, the mere beginning of the fruitless process, as S. Paul's readers by their observance (ch. 4. 10) of days and seasons, had already begun it, had actually separated them from the influences proceeding from the cross of Christ"—BEET. "Whoever becomes righteous by obedience to the Law becomes so no longer by the grace of God, but by works according to desert (Rom. 4. 11, 16; 11. 6), so that thus his relation of grace towards God (which is *capable of being lost*) has *ceased*"—MEYER.

5. **For we**—"who believe in Christ, who are under the gospel dispensation—**through the Spirit**—without any of these cardinal ordinances—**wait for**—in sure confidence of attaining—**the hope of righteousness**—the righteousness we hope for, and full reward of it. This righteousness we receive of God through faith; and **by faith** we shall obtain the reward"—WESLEY.

We is very emphatic in the Greek, and means S. Paul and those like him. S. Paul is confident that these have not fallen from grace. Religion with them is **through the Spirit** and **by faith.** That of the Galatian apostates is of ordinances and carnal rites. And this difference is a further proof that the latter have fallen from grace. Their error has severed them from the Church as well as from Christ. Observe how in this verse and the next we have *hope, faith,* and *love.*

6. **For in Christ Jesus**—"according to the institution which He hath established, according to the tenor of the Christian covenant—**neither circumcision**—with the most punctual observance of the Law—**nor uncircumcision**—with the most exact heathen morality—**availeth anything**—toward present justification or eternal salvation. **But faith**—alone; even that faith **which worketh by love** all inward and outward holiness"—WESLEY.

Here we have again the old point that religion is a *spiritual* fact. The rites of the old dispensation had their place (see notes on ch. 3), but in Christ Jesus they are done away. The essential now is **faith working by love.** This latter phrase, when once grasped, does away with the apparent contradiction between S. Paul and S. James. We are saved by faith, not by works, but the only faith which *saves* is that which also *works by love.* This is the noblest conceivable teaching on the subject of righteous living. A man may live a life full of the actions commonly considered righteous, from no higher motive than the fear of future punishment, or the desire to gain the good opinion of others. Such a morality is as low as its aims. The "obedience from the heart" of Rom. 6. 17 is better than any sacrifice to fear or to self-love. BENGEL says of this phrase, "In these words lies the whole of Christianity."

7. **Ye did run well**—"in the race of faith. **Who hath hindered you** in your course, **that you should not** still **obey the truth?**"—WESLEY.

So there were backsliders even among the converts of a S. Paul!

8. "**This** your present **persuasion cometh not from God, who called you** to His kingdom and glory"—WESLEY.

This persuasion came not of Him that calleth you (R.V.). He "that calls," in the writings of S. Paul, always means God. "The call to leave your old belief is not a call from God."

9. **A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump**—"one troubler (ver. 10) troubles all"—WESLEY.

This proverb is also quoted in 1 Cor. 5. 6. "If the false apostles have, by means of their persuasion, succeeded in making even but a small beginning in the work of imparting to you erroneous doctrines or false principles, this will develop itself to the corruption of your whole Christian faith and life"—MEYER.

10. Yet **I have confidence that**—"after ye have read this—**ye will be otherwise minded**—than I am, and ye were. **But he that troubleth you**—it seems to have been one person chiefly who endeavoured to seduce them—**shall bear his judgment**—a heavy burden, already hanging over his head"—WESLEY.

"He has a confidence about them which he feels to be an outflow of Christian life, that, when they receive this letter, they will share his alarm about the influence of a little leaven, and will recognise in the teaching of the disturbers an influence to be feared. This reveals S. Paul's confidence that this letter will have its designed salutary effect. It is almost the only gleam of light in the Epistle"—BEET. **Shall bear his judgment.** The "his" seems to indicate that sentence, which, at the last judgment, will be the special portion of disturbers of the Church—his appropriate, well-deserved judgment. The words must not be taken as a threat of excommunication at the hands of S. Paul.

11. **But if I still preach circumcision**—"as that troubler seems to have affirmed, probably taking occasion from his having circumcised Timothy—**why do I still suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased**—the grand reason why the Jews were so offended at his preaching Christ crucified, and so bitterly persecuted him for it, was, that it implied the abolition of the Law. Yet S. Paul did not condemn the conforming, out of

condescension to the weakness of anyone, even to the Ceremonial Law; but he did absolutely condemn those who taught it as necessary to justification"—WESLEY.

"At this point the malicious charge of his enemies rises up before the apostle, 'Why, you do the same thing yourself; you caused Timothy to be circumcised.' To this he replies, 'What! do I, who have incurred the deadly hatred of the Judaisers, who am exposed to continual persecution from them, do *I* preach circumcision?"—LIGHTFOOT. S. Paul the logician is in evidence once more. "The charge that I myself favour circumcision is either true or false. If true, **why am I still persecuted**, as opposed to circumcision? If false, why is it made?"

12. **I would they were even cut off**——from your communion; cast out of your church, **that thus trouble you**"—WESLEY.

I would they would even mutilate themselves (R.V. *margin*)—as did the priests of Cybele. "A mere passing wish. S. Paul wishes for a moment that the disturbers would go so far as to join the ranks of the heathen devotees around them. He thus compared circumcision with idolatrous mutilation. And rightly; for although once commended by God as a sign of His covenant, yet to do it when no longer required, was but to imitate the needless self-inflictions of heathenism"—BEET.

13. **Ye have been called to liberty**—"from sin and misery, as well as from the Ceremonial Law; **only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh**—take not occasion from hence to gratify corrupt nature. **But by love serve one another**—and hereby show that Christ has made you free"—WESLEY.

"It is with justice that I speak so indignantly against these men; for **ye**, who are being worked upon by them to bring you under the bondage of the Law, have received God's call to the messianic kingdom for an object entirely different—in order that ye may be free"—MEYER. **Only**, etc. S. Paul concludes his long discourse on doctrine at this point, and with the same breath begins his discourse on morals. He was sensitive to the tendency, so often yielded to since his day, to pervert justification by faith into Antinomianism. (Comp. this and the following chapter with Rom. 6., where ethics follow doctrine in the same way.) He speaks of liberty, not licence.

14. **For all the Law is fulfilled in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**—"inasmuch as none can do this without loving God (1 John 4. 12); and the love of God and man includes all perfection"—WESLEY.

But through love be servants one to another (R.V.). "In a sense you ought to be in bondage after all—the willing service which each should feel himself *bound* to render to his brother." This and the foregoing verse are most beautifully expressed. His readers wished to be in **bondage** and to submit to the **Law**. The greater part of the Epistle has been devoted to warn them against the unchristian "bondage" of ceremonialism, and the abrogated "law" of rites. And now it is as though he says, "I have taken away 'the bondage' and the 'law' which would have destroyed your Christian life; but if you are so set upon being in 'bondage,' let it be the 'bondage' of mutual love; if you are so set upon obeying a 'law,' why the whole 'law' is obeyed in one word in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

15. **But if**—"on the contrary, in consequence of the divisions which those troublers have occasioned among you—**ye bite** one another by evil speaking—**and devour one another**—by railing and clamour—**take heed ye be not consumed one of another**—by bitterness, strife, and contention, our health and strength, both of body and soul, are consumed as well as our substance and reputation"—WESLEY.

"But if, instead of loving, ye contend with one another, like wild beasts, crying, 'The Church shall be this,' or 'The Church shall be that,' the Church will perish altogether, for she can only exist in an atmosphere of love."

16. **I say then.** "He now explains what he proposed (ver. 13). **Walk by the Spirit**—follow His guidance in all things—**and fulfil not**—in anything—**the desire of the flesh**—of corrupt nature"—WESLEY.

"After pointing to love as the disposition of heart from which flows human morality, in contrast to self-surrender to the flesh, which is ever a source of enmity, S. Paul now still further traces Christian morality to its Divine source, viz. the Spirit of God, whom he contrasts with the flesh"—BEET. To S. Paul the flesh and the Law appear nearly related. (Comp. his treatment of the subject in Romans.)

17. **For the flesh desireth against the Spirit**—"nature desires what is quite contrary to the Spirit of God. **But the Spirit against the flesh**—but the Holy Spirit on His part opposes your evil nature. **These are contrary to each other**—the flesh and the Spirit; there can be no agreement between them. **That ye may not do the things which ye would**—that being thus strengthened by the Spirit, ye may not fulfil the desire of the flesh, as otherwise ye would do"—WESLEY.

The rendering of the A.V., **so that ye cannot do**, etc., "is a serious mistranslation. For it implies that the readers were not able to do what their better judgment approved; whereas S. Paul speaks only of opposite tendencies, leaving open the possibility of successfully resisting them"—BEET. The last clause refers to the flesh and spirit. "If ye would do the good, the flesh opposes you; if ye would do the evil, the spirit opposes you."

18. **But if ye are led by the Spirit**—"of

liberty and love, unto all holiness—**ye are not under the Law**—not under the curse or bondage of it; not under the guilt or the power of sin"—WESLEY.

"If, however, of these two conflicting powers, the **Spirit** is that which rules you, in what blessed freedom ye are then"—MEYER. In the four following verses "the assertion just made by S. Paul that the readers, as led by the Spirit, would not be under the Law, he now illustrates more particularly by setting forth the entirely opposite moral states which are produced by the flesh and by the spirit respectively: the former exclude from Messiah's kingdom (are therefore abandoned to the curse of the Law), while against the latter there is no law"—MEYER.

19. **Now the works of the flesh**—"by which that inward principle is discovered—**are manifest**—plain and undeniable. 'Works' are mentioned in the plural because they are distinct from, and often inconsistent with, each other. But 'the fruit of the Spirit' is mentioned in the singular (ver. 22), as being all consistent and connected together. **Which are these.** He enumerates those 'works of the flesh' to which the Galatians were most inclined; and those parts of 'the fruit of the Spirit' of which they stood in the greatest need"—WESLEY.

This black list of the **works of the flesh** names fifteen sins, which may be arranged in four groups: (1) *Sensuality*—**fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness** (or "wantonness"—indecency which does not even hide itself). (2) *Idolatry*—**idolatry, sorcery.** (3) *Violations of brotherly love*—**enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings.** (4) *Intemperance*—**drunkenness, revellings.** "From early habit and constant association a Gentile church would be peculiarly exposed to sins of the first two classes. The third would be a probable consequence of their religious dissensions, inflaming the excitable temperament of a Celtic people. The fourth seems to be thrown in to give a sort of completeness to the list, though not unfitly addressed to a nation whose Gallic descent perhaps disposed them too easily to these excesses"—LIGHTFOOT.

20. **Idolatry, witchcraft.** "That this means witchcraft, strictly speaking (not poisoning), appears from its being joined with the worship of devil-gods, and not with murder. This is frequently and solemnly forbidden in the Old Testament. **Divisions**—in domestic or civil matters. **Heresies** are divisions in religious communities"—WESLEY.

21. **Revellings**—"luxurious entertainments. Some of the works here mentioned are wrought principally, if not entirely, in the mind; and yet they are called 'works of the flesh.' Hence it is clear, the apostle does not by 'the flesh' mean the body, or sensual appetites and inclinations only, but the corruption of human nature, as it spreads through all the powers of the soul, as well as all the members of the body. **Of which I tell you before**—before the event, I forewarn you"—WESLEY.

Revellings. The plural seems to describe the *habit* of excess. Let us remember that the glutton is as unmistakably a sinner as the drunkard. **And such like.** Even the horrible evils he has named are but a few samples of the hideous bulk of sin, **of the which**, etc. He tells them plainly, as he did when resident in Galatia, that **they which practise such things**, being manifestly without true saving "faith working through love," shall not **inherit the kingdom of God.**

22. **Love**—"the root of all the rest. **Gentleness**—toward all men; ignorant and wicked men in particular. **Goodness**—the Greek word means all that is benign, soft, winning, tender, either in temper or behaviour"—WESLEY.

"He has spoken of the **works of the flesh**, and now goes on to speak of the **fruit of the Spirit.** S. Paul only uses the word 'fruit' of what is good. The catalogue falls into three groups of three each. The first of these comprises Christian habits of mind in their more general aspect—**love, joy, peace**; the second gives special qualities affecting a man's intercourse with his neighbours, **longsuffering, kindness, beneficence**; while the third, again general in character like the first, exhibits the principles which guide a Christian's conduct, **honesty, gentleness, temperance**"—LIGHTFOOT.

23. **Meekness**—"holding all the affections and passions in even balance"—WESLEY.

Against such there is no law. "Since the Spirit produces as His fruit dispositions which the Law does not condemn, they who (ver. 18) **are led by the Spirit, are not under Law.** The Law is no longer a burden under which they groan. Just so, upright citizens think nothing of the criminal law; whereas, to those who break it or wish to break it, the same law is a terrible reality"—BEET.

24. **And they that are Christ's**—"true believers in Him—**have** thus **crucified the flesh**—nailed it, as it were, to a cross, whence it has no power to break loose, but is continually weaker and weaker. **With its affections and desires**—all its evil passions, appetites, and inclinations"—WESLEY.

"After S. Paul has in ver. 17 explained his exhortation given in ver. 16, and recommended compliance with it on account of its blessed results (vers. 18–23), he now shows how this compliance—**the walking in the Spirit**—has its ground and motive in the *specific nature of the Christian;* if the Christian has crucified his flesh, and consequently lives through the Spirit, his walk also must follow the Spirit"—MEYER.

25. **If we live by the Spirit**—"if we are

raised from the dead, and are alive to God, by the operation of His Spirit—**let us walk by the Spirit**—let us follow His guidance, in all our tempers, thoughts, words, and actions"—WESLEY.

"If the Christian has crucified his flesh it is no longer the ruling power of his life; which on the contrary proceeds now from **the Holy Spirit**, the power opposed to the flesh; and the obligation thence arising is, that the *conduct* also of the Christian should correspond to this principle of life (for otherwise what a self-contradiction he would exhibit)"—MEYER. On the whole passage (vers. 13-25) Dr. BEET says: "Notice the massive simplicity and grandeur of S. Paul's double foundation of Christian morality. He lays down first the one precept of love, in the very words of the ancient Law, a precept including all others. But even this, if it stood alone, would but reveal our inability to do what God requires, and thus condemn us. S. Paul therefore invokes the Spirit, the seed Divine, from which grows, by its unseen and mysterious vitality, the fruit of love and of all virtue. A specimen of the superstructure this foundation is capable of supporting, S. Paul will erect for us in the next section."

26. **Be not desirous of vain glory**—"of the praise or esteem of men. They who do not carefully and closely follow the Spirit, easily slide into this: the natural effects of which are, **provoking** to envy them that are beneath us, and **envying** them that are above us"—WESLEY.

This verse belongs more properly to the next chapter. (Comp. with ver. 15.) There were, no doubt, some unhappy personal animosities complicating the controversy in Galatia. These were known to S. Paul, and hence this exhortation. But though eighteen centuries have passed, other churches as well as the Galatian need to think upon such words as these.

CHAPTER VI.

1. **Brethren, if a man be overtaken in any fault**—"by surprise, ignorance, or stress of temptation—**ye who are spiritual**—who continue to live and walk by the Spirit—**restore such an one**—by reproof, instruction, or exhortation. Every one who can, ought to help herein; only **in the spirit of meekness.** This is essential to a spiritual man; and in this lies the whole force of the cure. **Considering thyself**—the plural is beautifully changed into the singular. Let each take heed to himself. **Lest thou also be tempted.** Temptation easily and swiftly passes from one to another; especially if a man endeavours to cure another without preserving his own meekness"—WESLEY.

"**Brethren.** A whole argument lies hidden under this one word"—BENGEL. "**In the spirit of meekness.** Never are we in greater peril of undue self-assertion, and therefore in greater need of 'meekness,' than in reproving others. For their fall invokes in us a sense of superiority"—BEET.

2. **Bear ye one another's burdens**—"sympathise with, and assist, each other, in all your weaknesses, grievances, trials. **And so fulfil the law of Christ.** 'The law of Christ' (an uncommon expression) is the law of love: this our Lord peculiarly recommends; this He makes the distinguishing mark of His disciples"—WESLEY.

"If you must needs impose **burdens** on yourselves, let them be the burdens of mutual sympathy. If you must needs observe **a law**, let it be the law of Christ"—LIGHTFOOT. (For "the law of Christ," see Matt. 22. 39.)

3. **If anyone think himself to be something**—"above his brethren, or by any strength of his own—**when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself**—he alone will bear their burdens, who knows himself to be **nothing**"—WESLEY.

The exhortation to **the spirit of meekness** still chiefly possesses the apostle's mind. The close relation of "meekness" to *unselfishness* will be apparent to all, and this gives the key to the order of thought in these verses. "Meekness" in ver. 1 suggests the mention of *unselfishness* in ver. 2, and this in its turn suggests the warning in ver. 3 to the man who is without true "meekness."

4. **But let every man try his own work**—"narrowly examine all he is, and all he doeth—**and then he shall have rejoicing in himself**—he will find in himself matter of rejoicing, if his works are right before God—**and not in another**—not in glorying over others"—WESLEY.

But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbour (R.V.). This verse, again, is suggested by the preceding verse. Instead of the empty conceit there deplored, S. Paul asks every man to examine his own life, in itself, and not in comparison with other lives. If the examination reveal a real progress in holiness, he will then glorify God for his own success, not for the failure of others. (Comp. Luke 18. 11, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men.")

5. **For everyone shall bear his own burden**—"in that day shall give an account of himself to God"—WESLEY.

In the Greek two different words are used for **burden.** That in ver. 2 suggests an *oppressive, heavy weight*, while that in ver. 5 means simply a *load*, such as the kit which each soldier has to carry. The former others may help us to bear; but the latter **each man shall bear** for himself. There is for each of us a rightly-calculated "load" of moral responsibility, which we cannot shift to the shoulders of another.

6. "**Let him that is taught impart to him**

that teacheth all such temporal **good things** as he stands in need of"—WESLEY.

The literal meaning is **let him go shares with.** "I spoke of bearing one another's burdens. There is one special application I would make of this rule. Provide for the temporal wants of your teachers in Christ"—LIGHTFOOT. MEYER prefers to interpret **all good things** in a wider sense than Wesley and Lightfoot. He takes it to mean, "Let the disciple make common cause with the teacher in all that is morally good."

7. **God is not mocked**—"although they attempt to mock Him, who think to reap otherwise than they sow"—WESLEY.

It is an important fact that these solemn and oft-quoted words were first written to confirm a command (according to the majority of scholars) on the subject of Christian giving. "What? you hold back? Nay, do not deceive yourselves. Your niggardliness will find you out. You cannot cheat God by your fair professions. You cannot mock *Him*"—LIGHTFOOT.

8. **For he that** now **soweth to the flesh**—"that follows the desires of corrupt nature—**shall** hereafter **of the flesh**—out of this very seed—**reap corruption**—death everlasting. **But he that soweth to the Spirit**—that follows His guidance in all his tempers and conversation—**shall of the Spirit**—by the free grace and power of God—**reap life everlasting**"—WESLEY.

In this verse and the latter part of the foregoing, we have (1) two kinds of seed—**selfishness** and **unselfishness**; (2) two kinds of soil—**the flesh, the Spirit**; (3) two kinds of harvest—**corruption** and **eternal life.** God's moral laws work themselves out as certainly as gravitation.

9. **But let us not be weary in well doing**—"let us persevere in sowing to the Spirit. **For in due season**—when the harvest is come—**we shall reap, if we faint not**"—WESLEY.

If we do not fail in **sowing unto the Spirit,** God will not fail to reward us with the harvest. If we go on sowing through all this life, we shall go on reaping through all eternity.

10. **Therefore as we have opportunity**—"at whatever time or place, and in whatever manner we can. The opportunity in general is our lifetime; but there are also many particular opportunities. Satan is quickened in doing hurt, by the shortness of the time. (Rev. 12. 12.) By the same consideration let us be quickened in doing good. **Let us do good**—in every possible kind, and in every possible degree. **Unto all men**—neighbours or strangers, good or evil, friends or enemies. **But especially to them who are of the household of faith**—for all believers are but one family"—WESLEY.

So then, as we have a seasonable time. The reference to the *season* of reaping in the previous verse suggests to S. Paul that there is also a *season* for sowing. It is only a short season even to our thought. But to the apostles, who expected the Second Coming to take place in their own day, it was even shorter. The word **as** in this case bears the sense of "while" as well as "inasmuch as."

11. **See with how large letters I have written unto you, with mine own hand** (R.V.). At this stage S. Paul takes the pen from his amanuensis, to whom he has been dictating the Epistle, and adds a concluding paragraph with his own hand. This was his custom, in order to authenticate his letters and guard against forgeries. The A.V. "how large a letter" is quite a wrong translation. The apostle traces the last words of his work in letters of unusual size, to call attention to the supreme importance of his counsels in this crisis of Galatian church life; just as in printed books to-day we use italics or large capitals when we wish to emphasise something. "I have written" (R.V.) is the *literal* translation, certainly, but misleads the English reader. In Greek a letter-writer always imagines himself in the situation of the reader, and therefore uses a past tense where we should use a present. Hence the true rendering into present-day English is "I write." The few sentences which follow form a rapid summary of the chief exhortations of the whole letter.

12. **As many as desire to make a fair appearance in the flesh**—"to preserve a fair character—**these constrain you**—both by their example and importunity—**to be circumcised**—not so much from a principle of conscience, as **lest they should suffer persecution**—from the unbelieving Jews. **For the cross of Christ**—for maintaining that faith in a crucified Saviour is alone sufficient for justification"—WESLEY.

The Jewish false teachers who had corrupted the Galatians were nominally Christians. As such they were liable to be persecuted by their fellow-countrymen as followers of the crucified Nazarene. But by a zealous championship of circumcision—the symbol of Jewish spiritual primacy—they hoped to secure the sympathies of the Jews, and thus escape all persecution. Hence self-interest really dictated all their high-sounding talk in Galatia.

13. **For neither they themselves keep the whole Law**—"so far are they from a real zeal for it. **But yet they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh**—that they may boast of you as their proselytes, and make a merit of this with the other Jews"—WESLEY.

This verse gives a further reason why the false teachers should not be listened to. Not only the selfishness of their motive, but the inconsistencies of their lives discredit what they have to say.

14. **But God forbid that I should glory**—"should boast of anything I have, am, or do; or rely on anything for my acceptance with God,

but what Christ hath done and suffered for me. **By** means of **which the world is crucified to me**—all the things and persons in it are to me as nothing. **And I unto the world**—I am dead to all worldly pursuits, cares, desires, and enjoyments"—WESLEY.

The self-seeking teachers just referred to wished to glory in the flesh of those they led astray. "But as for *me*," says S. Paul, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It was the shame of the cross, and the fear of being persecuted on account of it, which started the "false brethren" on the path of deceit and cowardice; but to S. Paul that same cross is the very thing in which he glories. And with reason. For on the cross the Saviour died. And on the cross, therefore, S. Paul, who as a believer was *in Christ*, also died; while at the same moment the world, which had been his master, died too.

15. **For neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision**—"neither of these is of any account—**but a new creation**—whereby all things in us become new"—WESLEY.

"It is a matter of indifference whether one is circumcised or uncircumcised; and the only matter of importance is that one should be created anew, transferred into a new spiritual condition of life"—MEYER. "That to S. Paul **circumcision is nothing**, proves how completely in his view the old covenant had passed away. Thus these words are a summing up, at the close of the Epistle, of its chief argument, which, by their similarity to ver. 6 at the close of that argument, they recall"—BEET.

16. **And as many as walk according to this rule**—"(1) glorying only in the cross of Christ; (2) being crucified to the world; and (3) created anew. **Peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel,** that is, the Church, **of God**—which consists of all those, and those only, of every nation and kindred, who walk by this rule"—WESLEY.

"The heart, full of the great truth in ver. 15, has now a wish of blessing for all who follow it in their conduct"—MEYER. What a fine touch is this reference to the **Israel of God**! The Epistle has defined the true Israel in the language of controversy, but takes leave of it in the language of prayers and blessing.

17. **From henceforth let none trouble me**—"by quarrels and disputes. **For I bear**—and afflictions should not be added to the afflicted—**in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus**—the scars, marks, and brands of my sufferings for Him"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul closes the Epistle, as he had begun it, with an uncompromising assertion of his office: 'Henceforth, let no man question my authority; let no man thwart or annoy me. Jesus is my Master, my Protector. His brand is stamped on my body. I bear this badge of an honourable servitude'"—LIGHTFOOT. "The advocates of circumcision point with pride to the circumcised bodies of their converts. S. Paul points to his own body, which bears marks of hardships endured for Christ, these hardships testifying the faithfulness of his service. This was no mere exaltation in the flesh; for these scars in the flesh had deep spiritual significance, inasmuch as they reveal the work in S. Paul's spirit of the Spirit of God. They place S. Paul and his career in significant contrast to his opponents. Than this silent comparison no appeal could be more forceful"—BEET.

18. **Grace . . . Spirit . . . Brethren.** This great vindication of salvation by grace, concludes with a prayer that such grace shall be given to those who read it. And after all that has been said about "the flesh," there is surely something significant in the phrase "with your spirit," rather than "with you"; while the unusual position of "brethren" in the Greek suggests special emphasis, and as BENGEL says, "the severity of the whole Epistle is softened by it." **Amen.** We do not know how this letter was received by the Galatian churches. But it is almost certain that the apostle's exhortations were obeyed, and this concluding prayer answered.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

"EPHESUS was the chief city of that part of Asia, which was a Roman province. Here S. Paul preached for three years (Acts 20. 31), and from hence the gospel was spread throughout the whole province (Acts 19. 10). At his taking leave of the Church there, he forewarned them both of great persecutions from without, and of divers heresies and schisms which would arise among themselves. And accordingly he writes this Epistle, nearly resembling that to the Colossians, written about the same time, to establish them in the doctrine he had delivered, to arm them against false teachers, and to build them up in love and holiness, both of heart and

conversation. He begins this, as most of his Epistles, with thanksgiving to God for their embracing and adhering to the gospel. He shows the inestimable blessings and advantages they received thereby, as far above all the Jewish privileges as all the wisdom and philosophy of the heathens. He proves that our Lord is the Head of the whole Church; of angels and spirits, the Church triumphant, and of Jews and Gentiles, now equally members of the Church militant. In the last three chapters he exhorts them to various duties, civil and religious, personal and relative, suitable to their Christian character, privileges, assistances, and obligations.

"IN THIS EPISTLE WE MAY OBSERVE—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1, 2.
II. The Doctrine pathetically explained, which contains—
1. Praise to God for the whole Gospel blessing, ,, ,, 3-14.
With thanksgiving and prayer for the saints, ,, ,, 15-ii. 10.
2. A more particular Admonition concerning their once miserable, but now happy, condition, ,, ii. 11-12.
A Prayer for their establishment, . . ,, iii. 1-19.
A Doxology, ... ,, ,, 20, 21.
III. The Exhortation, ...
1. General: to walk worthy of their calling, agreeably to—
(1) The unity of the Spirit, and the diversity of His gifts, ... ,, iv. 1-16.
(2) The difference between their former and their present state, . . . ,, ,, 17-24.
2. Particular:
To avoid—
(1) Lying, ch. iv. 25; (2) anger, ch. iv. 26, 27; (3) theft, ch. iv. 28; (4) corrupt communication, ch. iv. 29, 30; (5) bitterness, ch. iv. 31 – v. 2; (6) uncleanness, ch. v. 3-14; (7) drunkenness, ch. v. 15-21: with a commendation of the opposite virtues.
To do their duty as—
(1) Wives and husbands, ch. v. 22-33;
(2) children and parents, ch. vi. 1-4;
(3) servants and masters, ch. vi. 5-9.
3. Final:
To war the spiritual warfare, . . ,, vi. 10-20.
IV. The Conclusion, ... ,, ,, 21-24."

—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

1. By the will of God—"not by any merit of my own—**to the saints who are at Ephesus**—and in all the adjacent places. For this Epistle is not directed to the Ephesians only, but likewise to all the other churches of Asia"—WESLEY.

"Some very ancient authorities omit **at Ephesus**" (R.V. *margin*). There can be little doubt that this Epistle was not addressed to the Ephesians, in the same sense as the other Epistles were addressed to particular churches. It seems to have been a circular letter, composed for the edification of the Asian churches generally. The absence of greetings to Ephesian believers, although S. Paul had worked among them three years, makes it almost incredible that this Epistle should have been written for Ephesus alone; especially when we compare the long list of greetings in ch. 16 of the Epistle to Rome, which city S. Paul had not, up to that time, seen. The superscription "to the Ephesians" probably crept into the MSS. as soon as the writings of S. Paul began to be circulated in a complete form. Some heading was needed, and it was natural that the important church at Ephesus, fragrant

with so many memories of the great apostle's love and zeal, should furnish it. Translating the Greek without the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, we have **to the saints who are indeed faithful**, *i.e.* "full of faith." **In Christ Jesus.** This phrase is the key to the whole Epistle. Ephesians was written about five years after Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, and during the interval, much of it spent in imprisonment, S. Paul's grand conception of life, work, everything *in Christ*, became vastly clearer and stronger. In this Epistle he expresses it more than twenty times.

2. In the words **grace and peace**, the salutations of Greek and Jew are combined. By "grace," S. Paul means all that God does for and in us; by "peace" the spiritual condition resulting therefrom.

3. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us.** "God's blessing us is His bestowing all spiritual and heavenly blessings upon us. Our blessing God is the paying Him our solemn and grateful acknowledgments, both on account of His own essential blessedness, and of the blessings which He bestows upon us. He is **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ**, as man and Mediator: He is His **Father**, primarily, with respect to His Divine nature, as His Only-begotten Son; and, secondarily, with respect to His human nature, as that is personally united to the Divine. **With all spiritual blessings in heavenly things**—with all manner of spiritual blessings, which are heavenly in their nature, original, and tendency, and shall be completed in heaven; far different from the external privileges of the Jews, and the earthly blessings they expected from the Messiah"—WESLEY.

Read carefully (in R.V.) to the end of ver. 14. It will then be seen that the passage is really a great hymn of praise. This magnificent burst of thanksgiving consists of three stanzas, of unequal length, each one closing with the refrain **To the praise of His glory.** The first stanza or division (vers. 3–6) treats of the *past* — God's purpose of redeeming love **before the foundation of the world.** The second (vers. 7–12) treats of the *present*—the Christ sent forth in **the fulness of times, in whom we have redemption through His blood.** The third (vers. 13, 14) treats of the *future*—**our inheritance**, whereof **the Spirit of promise** is **an earnest.** It is improbable that this plan was present to the apostle's mind, but his thoughts naturally, though almost unconsciously, were expressed in the order above given. "**Blessed be God!** It is the perpetual strain of the Old Testament, from Melchizedek down to Daniel,—of David in his triumph, and Job in his misery. But not hitherto could men say, **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!**" —FINDLAY. **In the heavenly places** (R.V.). The meaning may be (1) the Divine purpose of redeeming love, which has brought us **spiritual blessings**, originated in "the heavenly places"; or (2) the "spiritual blessings" are such that we who receive them, although our flesh be still on the earth, are dwelling in "the heavenly places," and our "life is hid with Christ in God."

4. **As He hath chosen us**—"both Jews and Gentiles, whom He foreknew as believing in Christ (1 Pet. 1. 2)"—WESLEY.

Lit. **Did choose.** "Here is S. Paul's first chapter of Genesis. *In the beginning was the election of grace*"—FINDLAY. **Us**—"those who believe the gospel. Not that their foreseen faith in any way moved God to save them; but that, moved only by pity for lost man, God resolved to save men by means of the good news announced by Christ, and to save those who should believe it"—BEET. **Before the foundation of the world.** "Before God began to made the great platform on which had lived the successive generations of men, all future ages were present to His thought; and, in view of the sin and ruin which He foresaw, He resolved to save men; not all men indiscriminately, but those who should believe the gospel; and to place these in special relation to Himself as His own"—BEET. **That we should be holy and without blemish before Him.** The object of redemption is here stated. It is that we are to be holy, because God is holy; perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect. Redemption emphasises and makes possible God's eternal purpose concerning man. In creation God said "Let us *make*," and in redemption "Let us *renew* man after our image and likeness." No Christian can afford to rest complacently in the fact that some months or years ago he was converted. God's will concerning us is "our sanctification" (1 Thess. 4. 3), to which conversion is but a preliminary, though a necessary preliminary. God's eternal purpose is only realised in that believer **who is holy and without blemish before Him. In love.** As there is no punctuation in the Greek MSS., these words may belong either to the clause above expounded, or to the next verse. The latter seems the more probable.

5. **Having predestinated us to the adoption of sons**—"having foreordained that all who afterwards believed should enjoy the dignity of being sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ. **According to the good pleasure of His will**—according to His free, fixed, unalterable purpose, to confer this blessing on all those who should believe in Christ, and those only"—WESLEY.

Having in love foreordained us (R.V. *margin*). "**Love** was the disposition of God, in which He, through this our election, **predestined** us to sonship"—MEYER. The relation of Divine predestination to human free will is an enigma which defies all attempts to satisfactorily solve it. But the saying of S. Paul, in Rom. 8. 29, "Whom He did foreknow,

He also did predestinate," seems to indicate a line along which some reconciliation between these apparently contradictory ideas may be reached. Foreknowing all who would, as free agents, accept Christ, God predestinated these to salvation; and foreknowing all who would, as free agents, reject Christ, He predestinated these to condemnation. Thus viewed, predestination does not override human freedom. But difficult as it is to state them, it must not be forgotten that predestination and election in the Scriptures do after all stand for some very real and very glorious facts. **To the adoption of sons.** The "choosing" mentioned in the previous verse was unto holiness, while the "foreordaining" of this verse is unto sonship. But to S. Paul these two are one. Holiness, in the form of filial obedience, springs out of sonship, or the filial relation. (Carefully comp. Rom. 8. 29 on this point.)

6. **To the praise of the glory of His grace**—"His glorious, free love, without any desert on our part"—WESLEY.

The recognition and praise of the Divine grace is here described as the ultimate *aim* of redemption. In ver. 5 that grace has been described as the *source* of redemption. **Which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.** With this clause the second stanza of S. Paul's hymn of praise begins. He leaves the past for the present. **The Beloved.** "The Beloved Son" of God. "The Son, lovable in Himself, is essentially 'the Beloved'; we, unlovable in ourselves, are accepted because of and in the 'Beloved'; and if we are called 'beloved' in our turn, it is because God sees us in His Son"—A. MONOD.

7. **By whom we**—"who believe—**have**—from the moment we believe — **redemption**—from the guilt and power of sin—**through His blood** — through what He had done and suffered for us. **According to the riches of His grace**—according to the abundant overflowings of His free mercy and favour"—WESLEY.

"Redemption is *release by ransom*. The life-blood of Jesus Christ was the *price* that He paid in order to secure our lawful release from the penalties entailed by our trespasses"—FINDLAY. "These words assert, in the clearest manner, that our liberation from the penalty of bondage and sin comes through Christ's death upon the cross. The need for this costly means of redemption S. Paul expounds in Rom. 3. 26. Notice that liberation was wrought out for us *in* the personality of Christ, and is ours by inward union with Him; and that His violent death is the channel *through* which it comes forth from God to us"—BEET.

The forgiveness of our trespasses. "On rising from the dead our Saviour commissioned the apostles to "proclaim in His name repentance and remission of sins to all nations" (Luke 24. 47). It was thus He proposed to save the world. This proclamation is the 'good news' of the gospel. The announcement meets the first need of the serious and awakened human spirit. It answers the question which arises in the breast of every man who thinks earnestly about his personal relations to God, and to the laws of his being. We cannot wonder that S. Paul sets the remission of sins first amongst the bestowments of God's grace, and makes it the foundation of all the rest"—FINDLAY.

8. **In all wisdom**—"manifested by God in the whole scheme of our salvation. **And prudence** — which He hath wrought in us, that we may know and do all His acceptable and perfect will"—WESLEY.

There is much food for thought in the fact that S. Paul speaks of God's gifts of *pardon* and *wisdom* with the same breath. (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 30; Col. 1. 9; 1 Cor. 1. 5, etc.) The notion that growing wisdom implies declining spirituality, and that a cool head cannot coexist with a warm heart is quite alien to S. Paul's teaching.

9. **Having made known to us**—"by His word and by His Spirit—**the mystery of His will**—the gracious scheme of salvation by faith, which depends on His own sovereign will alone. This was but darkly discovered under the Law; is now totally hid from unbelievers; and has heights and depths which surpass all the knowledge even of true believers"—WESLEY.

This and the next verse form a parenthesis. **Mystery.** This word in the New Testament always implies something only to be learned by revelation. "God formed in Christ the purpose, by the dispensation of His grace, in due time to reunite the universe under the headship of Christ. This mysterious design, hitherto kept secret, He has 'made known unto us.' Its manifestation imparts a wisdom that surpasses all the wisdom of former ages. Such is the drift of this profound deliverance"—FINDLAY.

10. **That in the dispensation of the fulness of the times**—"in this last administration of God's fullest grace, which took place when the time appointed was fully come — **He might gather together into one in Christ**—might recapitulate, reunite, and place in order again under Christ, their common Head—**all things which are in heaven, and on earth**—all angels and men, whether living or dead, in the Lord"—WESLEY.

"For S. Paul, **the fulness of the times** had arrived. The Son of God was come; the kingdom of God was amongst men. It was the beginning of the end. It is a mistake to relegate this text to the dim and distant future, to some far-off consummation. We are in the midst of the Christian reconstruction of things, and are taking part in it. The decisive epoch fell when 'God sent forth His Son.' What S. Paul looks forward to is,

in a word, the organisation of the universe upon a Christian basis. This reconstitution of things is provided for, and is being effected 'in the Christ.' He is the rallying point of the forces of peace and blessing. The organic principle, the organising Head, the creative nucleus of the new creation is there. The potent germ of life eternal has been introduced into the world's chaos; and its victory over the elements of disorder and death is assured"—FINDLAY.

11. **Through whom we**—"Jews—**also have obtained an inheritance**—the glorious inheritance of the heavenly Canaan, to which, when believers, we were **predestinated, according to the purpose of Him that worketh all things after the counsel of His own will**—the unalterable decree, 'He that believeth shall be delivered'; which 'will' is not an arbitrary will, but flowing from the rectitude of His nature; else, what security would there be that it would be His 'will' to keep His word even with the elect?"—WESLEY.

In whom also we were made a heritage (R.V.). But the A.V. rendering is better. In ver. 5 it has been said that we were "foreordained unto adoption as sons." But sonship connotes an inheritance. (Comp. Rom. 8. 17, "If children, then heirs.") "But while in the parallel passage we are designated heirs *with* Christ we appear in this place, according to the tenor of the context, as heirs *in* Him. Christ is Himself the believer's wealth, both in possession and hope; all his desire is to gain Christ (Phil. 3. 8)"—FINDLAY. "In the all-controlling 'counsel of His will' God wrought throughout the course of history to convey this heritage to us. We are children of 'the fulness of the times,' heirs of all the past. For us God has been working from eternity. On us the ends of the world have come. Thus, from the summit of our exaltation in Christ, the apostle looks backward to the beginning of Divine history"—FINDLAY.

12. **That we**—"Jews—**who first believed**—before the Gentiles. So did some of them in every place. Here is another branch of the true gospel predestination: he that believes is not only elected to salvation (if he endures to the end), but is fore-appointed of God to walk in holiness, **to the praise of His glory**"—WESLEY.

To the end that we should be unto the praise of His glory (R.V.). The second stanza of the hymn closes with practically the same refrain as the first (ver. 6). "When the apostle reaches the 'heritage' conferred upon us in Christ (ver. 11), he is on the boundary between the present and the future. Into that future he now presses forward, gathering from it his crowning tribute 'to the praise of God's glory.' We shall find, however, that this heritage assumes a twofold character, as did the conception of the inheritance of the Lord in the Old Testament. If the saints have their heritage in Christ, partly possessed and partly to be possessed, God has likewise, and antecedently, His inheritance in them, of which He, too, has still to take full possession"—FINDLAY. "Up to this point S. Paul's words have been true alike of Jews and Gentiles. He now mentions the two great divisions of mankind which were ever present to his thought. In ver. 12 the Jews, and in vers. 13, 14 the Gentiles are specified"—BEET.

13. **In whom ye**—"Gentiles—**likewise believed, after ye had heard the gospel**—which God made the means **of your salvation; in whom after ye had believed**—probably some time after their first believing—**ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise**—holy both in His nature and in His operations, and promised to all the children of God. The sealing seems to imply—(1) a full impression of the image of God on their souls; (2) a full assurance of receiving all the promises, whether relating to time or eternity"—WESLEY.

In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation—in whom having also believed ye, etc. (R.V.). It will be noticed that in this (the correct) rendering the pronoun "ye" is left without its verb. "Apparently the construction of the sentence is broken off. But the irregularity throws into prominence the truth that the sealing afterwards mentioned was in Christ. S. Paul wishes to say that in Christ the Gentile Christians, **having heard the gospel**, and **having also believed** it, **were sealed**, etc. This surrender of grammar to emphasis is a conspicuous feature in S. Paul"—BEET. "A seal is a token of proprietorship put by the owner upon his property; or it is the authentication of some statement or engagement, the official stamp that gives it validity; or it is the pledge of inviolability, guarding a treasure from profane or injurious hands. There is the protecting seal, the ratifying seal, and the proprietary seal. The same seal may serve each or all of these purposes. Here the thought of possession predominates (comp. ver. 4); but it can scarcely be separated from the other two"—FINDLAY. "This verse is in close harmony with the constant teaching of S. Paul, that they who believe the gospel are justified, and adopted into the family of God, and receive the Holy Spirit, *e.g.* Gal. 2. 16; 3. 2, 26"—BEET.

14. "**Who**, thus sealing us, **is an earnest**—both a pledge and a foretaste of our inheritance. **Till the redemption of the purchased possession**—till the Church, which He has purchased with His own blood, shall be fully delivered from all sin and sorrow, and advanced to everlasting glory. **To the praise of His glory**—of His glorious wisdom, power, and mercy"—WESLEY.

Earnest. The Phœnician word *Arrhabon* (*lit.* "fastening penny") denotes "the part of

the price given by a purchaser in making a bargain, or of the wages given by the hirer concluding a contract of service, by way of assurance that the stipulated sum will be forthcoming"—FINDLAY. "In the reception of the Spirit the recipients have obtained the *guarantee*—as one receives earnest money as a guarantee of future payment—that they shall become actually partakers of the messianic blessedness. (Comp. Rom. 8. 15–17; Gal. 4. 6, 7)"—MEYER. **Redemption.** "The saints already 'have redemption,' in the radical sense of acceptance, rescue from condemnation into sonship. But they still look forward to redemption, in the developed sense of actual emancipation from the last effects of sin, which is to come when the body is glorified along with the spirit"—MOULE. **God's own possession** (R.V.). (Comp. Ex. 19. 5, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me.") At the close of his hymn of praise the idea of *God possessed by men* fades out of S. Paul's mind, and the idea of *men possessed by God* becomes dominant. The thought from ver. 3 onwards has mainly been that of Joshua 13. 33, "The Lord, the God of Israel, is our inheritance." It now gives place to the thought of 1 Kings 8. 51, "We are Thy people, Thine inheritance." And this second is greater and more ultimate than the first thought, by as much as God is greater and more ultimate than man. (Comp. Rom. 11. 36, "For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things"), on which verse Dr. POPE says: "This is a truth to be adored rather than discussed." **Unto the praise of His glory**—"nearly word for word as ver. 12. It is a third refrain closing the third part of S. Paul's hymn. Each refrain represents, as the final purpose of man's salvation in its various parts, an admiring recognition by God's creatures of His essential grandeur. (Comp. 1 Pet. 2. 9.) The threefold refrain makes this final purpose very conspicuous"—BEET.

15. **For this cause**, etc. "Only now, after the general ascription of praise to God for the Christian economy of salvation, which had since ver. 3 flowed forth from him in an enraptured stream, does S. Paul reach that with which on other occasions he is wont at once to begin—the thanksgiving to God for the Christian position of the readers, and intercession for them"—MEYER.

Since I heard of your faith and love—"that is, of their perseverance and increase herein"—WESLEY.

R.V. relegates the words **and love** to the margin. Their omission makes a difficulty for the expositor. The most plausible solution is that based on the fact that the Greek word means both "faith" and "faithfulness." Accepting this, "the passage may fairly be reproduced, **faith in the Lord Jesus, and faithfulness towards all the saints**"—BEET.

16. **I cease not**—"in all my solemn addresses to God—**to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers**—so he did of all the churches. (Col. 1. 9)"—WESLEY.

"The thanks were literally 'unceasing' in principle, and in practice came out on *every* fit occasion. How much of the apostle's work for his converts consisted in the holy labour of special intercessory prayer, with thanksgiving! The recorded prayers of S. Paul form in themselves one of the richest of Scripture studies. Most observable in them is their almost invariable intercessory direction. He thinks of others, not of self, upon his knees"—MOULE. The verses which follow contain "heads of prayer for true Christians"—BENGEL.

17. "**That the Father of** that infinite **glory** which shines in the face of **Christ**, from whom also we receive the glorious inheritance (ver. 18), **may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation**—the same who is the Spirit of promise is also, in the progress of the faithful, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, making them wise unto salvation, and revealing to them the deep things of God. He is here speaking of that wisdom and revelation which are common to all real Christians"—WESLEY.

"God is here invoked by a double title peculiar to this passage, as **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.** The former expression reminds us of the dependence of the Lord Jesus upon the eternal Father, and accentuates the Divine sovereignty, so conspicuous in the foregoing act of praise. The key to the designation, 'Father of glory,' is in Rom. 6. 4: 'Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father'"—FINDLAY. **May give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him**—*lit.* "the full knowledge." Such a full knowledge of the Father and the Son is described in John 17. 3 as "life eternal." Says ADOLPHE MONOD, echoing PASCAL, "Philosophy taking, as it must, man for its centre, says to him, *know thyself*. But the inspired Word, which alone can originate with God, is alone able to say to man, *know God*."

18. **The eyes of your understanding.** "It is with these alone that we discern the things of God—**being** first opened, and then **enlightened**—by His Spirit. **That ye may know what is the hope of His calling**—that ye may experimentally and delightfully know what are the blessings which God has called you to hope for by His word and His Spirit. **And what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**—what an immense treasure of blessedness He hath provided as an inheritance for holy souls"—WESLEY.

"Before expounding the ultimate aim of his prayer, viz. knowledge of three things per-

taining to the Christian life, S. Paul states conspicuously a condition on which alone this aim can be attained, viz. the entrance of light, ever the condition of knowledge, into the inmost chamber of our nature. This light he hopes for as a result of the gift of the Spirit of God, whose special work is to impart wisdom and to unveil mysteries. For He is the one principle of spiritual life. And, always, life is an essential condition of sight"—BEET. "Three things the apostle desires that his readers may see with the heart's enlightened eyes: the hope to which God calls them, the wealth that He possesses in them, and the power which He is prepared to exert upon them as believing men"—FINDLAY. **The hope of His calling.** To S. Paul this hope was to "gain Christ, and be found in Him." (Comp. Phil. 3. 8.) The hope of heaven, glorious as it is, perhaps fills a place disproportionately large in the thought of many Christians, and the definite expectation of gaining Christ, in this world as well as the next, is correspondingly weakened. **The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.** (See notes on ver. 14.) "So far as we can judge of His ways, the great God who made us cares comparatively little about the upholstery and machinery of the universe; but He cares immensely about men, about the character and destiny of men. There is nothing in all that physical science discloses for God to *love*, nothing kindred to Himself. The Creator rejoices in His works as at the beginning, the Lord of heaven and earth in His dominion. But these are not His 'inheritance.' That is in the love of His children, in the character and number of His saints.' *We* are to be the praise of His glory"—FINDLAY.

19. **And what the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe**—"both in quickening our dead souls, and preserving them in spiritual life. **According to the power which He exerted in Christ, raising Him from the dead**—by the very same almighty power whereby He raised Christ; for no less would suffice"—WESLEY.

"After the object of the hope there is now set forth also *that by which it is realised*, namely, the infinite power of God shown in the resurrection, etc., of Christ"—MEYER. This is the third thing S. Paul prays that his readers may know. The other two were, as in the opening hymn, our inheritance in God, and God's inheritance in us. But S. Paul's readers may understand his statements, and yet feel unable to believe them. In the presence of such tremendous truths their faith may stagger, and they may say, "How can these things be? By what power can such wonders be wrought?" Therefore the apostle prays that they may know **the surpassing greatness of His power.** Knowing this, they will say, "With God all things are possible." S. Paul urges his converts to judge the sufficiency of God's power to realise His whole plan of redemption by the standard of **(according to) that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places.** "Look at Jesus where He was—the poor, tortured, wounded body, slain by our sins, lying cold and still in Joseph's grave; then lift up your eyes and see Him where He is—enthroned in the worship and wonder of heaven! Measure by that distance, by the sweep and lift of that almighty arm, the strength of the forces engaged to your salvation, the might of the powers at work through the ages for the redemption of humanity"—FINDLAY.

20. **And He hath seated Him at His own right hand**—"that is, He hath exalted Him in His human nature, as a recompense for His sufferings, to a quiet, everlasting possession of all possible blessedness, majesty, and glory"—WESLEY.

On the passage reaching from this verse to ver. 23, FINDLAY remarks: "There are two steps indicated in Christ's exaltation: **He was raised from the death of the cross to new life amongst men**; and again from the world of men He was raised **to the throne of God in heaven.** In the enthronement of Jesus Christ at God's right hand (vers. 22, 23) further distinguish two separate acts: there was conferred on Him a *universal Lordship*; and He was made specifically *Head of the Church*, being given to her for her Lord and Life, He who contains the fulness of the Godhead." **At His right hand in the heavenlies**—"a region is spoken of, in which the glorified Lord locally is. Local conceptions, indeed, soon fail us in thoughts of the eternal world. But the fact of the Lord's veritable ascended *body* binds us to them in a real degree; for where body is in question there also is locality"—MOULE.

21. **Far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion**—"that is, God hath invested Him with uncontrollable authority over all demons in hell, all angels in heaven, and all the princes and potentates on earth. **And every name that is named.** We know the king is above all, though we cannot name all the officers of his court. So we know that Christ is above all, though we are not able to name all His subjects. **Not only in this world, but also in that which is to come**—the 'world' to come is so styled not because it does not yet exist, but because it is not visible. Principalities and powers are **named** now; but those also who are not even **named in this world**, but shall be revealed **in the world to come**, are all subject to Christ"—WESLEY.

From the Epistle to the Colossians we gather that the Asian churches were at this time in some danger of falling into the error of angel-

worship. Such a danger was no doubt present to the apostle's mind when he composed this passage. There are still Christians who waste much precious time in idle and even unseemly speculations on these matters. But all these speculations about the ranks and titles of angels, "S. Paul brushes away, without inquiring how much or how little truth there may be in them. His language shows a spirit of impatience with this elaborate angelology"—LIGHTFOOT. "S. Paul's faith saw the risen and rising One passing through and beyond and above successive ranks of angelic powers, until there was in heaven no grandeur which He had not left behind"—BEET.

22. **And He hath given Him to be Head over all things to the Church**—"an Head both of guidance and government, and likewise of life and influence, to the whole and every member of it. All these stand in the nearest union with Him, and have as continual and effectual a communication of activity, growth, and strength from Him, as the natural body from its head"—WESLEY.

And He put all things in subjection under His feet. "Further delineation of the exaltation of Christ. 'All things' keeps up the idea of universality already expressed by the words 'all' and 'every.' 'All things He subjected under His feet'; word for word as in 1 Cor. 15. 27, which is almost word for word from LXX. (Ps. 8. 6.) What the Psalmist asserts of man in poetic ideal S. Paul claims in each passage to have been fulfilled by Christ. And rightly. For as Son of Man, He is Heir of whatever belongs to man"—BEET.

And Him God gave, Head over all things, to the Church—"evidently in order that the Head of the universe may be also Head of the Church, thus making the universe an ally of the Church"—BEET. "At the topmost height of His glory, with thrones and princedoms beneath His feet, **Christ is given to the Church!** The Head over all things, the Lord of the created universe, He—and none less or lower—is the Head of redeemed humanity. For the Church **is His body** (this clause is interjected by way of explanation), she is the vessel of His Spirit, the organic instrument of His Divine-human life. As the spirit belongs to its body, by the like fitness the Christ in His surpassing glory is the possession of the community of believing men. The body claims its head, the wife her husband"—FINDLAY. "The Church in the later New Testament is represented passively as the temple of God, actively as the body or organ of Christ's manifestation: the former as the sphere of Divine worship and holy influence; the latter as the instrument of Christ's manifold operations on earth"—W. B. POPE.

23. **The fulness of Him that filleth all in all.** "It is hard to say in what sense this can be spoken of the Church; but the sense is easy and natural, if we refer it to Christ, **who is the fulness of the Father**"—WESLEY.

Most expositors understand this phrase to be a further description of the Church. Bishop LIGHTFOOT has tried to show that the Greek word here rendered "fulness" means "the filled condition of a thing," and further, that "the word had acquired a technical theological meaning in S. Paul's time, probably in the Palestinian schools of Jewish thought; a meaning connected especially with the eternally realised ideal of Godhead; the Divine fulness. This fulness resides (by the Father's will, yet necessarily) in the Eternal Son (Col. 1. 19); and the Son, incarnate, sacrificed, and risen, is so conjoined in spiritual union to His regenerate Church, that what is true of Him is true, within sacred limits, of her"—MOULE.

CHAPTER II.

1. **And He hath quickened you.** "In vers. 19 and 20 of the preceding chapter, S. Paul spoke of God's working in them by the same almighty power whereby He raised Christ from the dead. On the mention of this he, in the fulness of his heart, runs into a flow of thought concerning the glory of Christ's exaltation in the three following verses. He here resumes the thread of his discourse. **Who were dead**—not only diseased, but dead; absolutely void of all spiritual life, and as incapable of quickening yourselves as persons literally dead. **In trespasses and sins.** 'Sins' seem to be spoken chiefly of the Gentiles, who knew not God; 'trespasses' of the Jews, who had His Law, and yet regarded it not (ver. 5). The latter herein obeyed the flesh; the former, the prince of the power of the air"—WESLEY.

"After the apostle has previously spoken of the exceeding power of God in the case of believers, which may be recognised by virtue of what He has done in the case of Christ, whom He raised, exalted, etc., he wishes now, *in application of this to the readers*, to bring the latter to the consciousness that God has made ALSO THEM, when they were dead in their sins, to be alive, etc., with Christ, and thus has shown *also in their case* that exceeding power"—MEYER. **And you**—that is, his readers—**did He quicken**—"ideally, in their slain and risen Lord's triumph, actually in their spiritual regeneration; 'believing on His name,' they had definitely received 'eternal life.' The English reader will remember that in the R.V. 'to quicken' means seldom, if ever, to excite what already lives, but to bring from death to life"—MOULE. **When ye were dead.** He does not mean that their state resembled death; "nor only that they were in peril of death, but he signifies a real and present death"—CALVIN. **Through your trespasses and sins.** "Trespasses are moral falls—sins are moral failures"—BEET. **Through** your trespasses (R.V.) is a better translation than "in" (A.V.). We have here an echo of what

S. Paul wrote years before to the Romans, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6. 23).

2. **According to the course of this world.** "The word translated 'course' properly means 'a long series of times,' wherein one corrupt age follows another. **According to the prince of the power of the air**—the effect of which power all may perceive, though all do not understand the cause of it: a power unspeakably penetrating and widely diffused. **The spirit that now worketh**—with mighty power; and so he did, and doth in all ages —**in the sons of disobedience** — in all who do not believe and obey the gospel"—WESLEY.

MEYER says of this verse, "Shadows before the light which arises in ver. 4." **Wherein aforetime ye walked.** In the preceding verse S. Paul has asserted that his readers were "dead through sins." Yet here he goes on to say that they **walked in sins.** The latter explains the former. The pathway of sin they walked along led straight into the valley of the shadow of spiritual death. "**Of this world** — the whole realm of men and things around looked upon as existing in space, and as hostile to Christ. The **course** or **age**—the whole stream and tendency of things around, looked upon as moving forward in time. **According to the course,** etc. — carried along by the moving current of men and things around, all belonging to **this world.** The two words 'course' and 'world' represent the same idea in its reference to time and space respectively. **According to the ruler,** etc. — parallel with 'according to the course,' etc., and another view of the same truth. Steps guided by the current of things around are guided by the unseen *ruler* of that current. For the visible stream is animated and directed by an unseen spirit. The authority which directs the course of those who float down the stream of things around must be that of evil spirits. These were conceived, both by Jews and by others in the ancient world, as having their abode in the air. Apparently S. Paul accepted and used this common conception as sufficiently embodying a truth he wished to teach. His words remind us that all around are spiritual enemies as near as the air we breathe. Over these reigns a tremendous potentate. Along a path marked out by him, led by unseen powers who do his bidding, and by the current of things around, once walked the Christians to whom S. Paul now writes"—BEET.

3. "**Among whom we**—Jews—**also formerly had our conversation, doing the will of the flesh**—in gross, brutal sins—**and of the mind**—by spiritual, diabolical wickedness. In the former clause, 'flesh' denotes the whole evil nature; in the latter, the body opposed to the soul. **And were by nature**—that is, in our natural state—**children of wrath** — having the wrath of God abiding on us, **even as the Gentiles.** This expression, 'by nature,' occurs also, Gal. 4. 8; Rom. 2. 14; and thrice in the eleventh chapter. All these passages agree in expressing what belongs to the *nature* of the persons spoken of"—WESLEY.

"After the apostle has just depicted the pre-Christian corruption of the 'readers,' who were **Gentile-Christians,** the sinful corruptness of all — this basis for his enthusiastic certainty of the universality of the redemption—presents itself at the same time with such vividness before his mind, that he now also includes with the others the whole body *of the Jewish Christians* in the same state of corruption, and accordingly, on the resumption of the argument at ver. 4, he cannot again employ the second person introduced in ver. 1, but must change this into *us*"—MEYER. **Had our conversation.** The Greek word means "moved up and down," *i.e.* actively spent our lives. "**In the desires of the flesh, doing the resolves of the flesh**—the 'resolves' differ from the 'desires' of the flesh, as a definite wish differs from the general liking from which it springs—**and of the minds.** The plural number reminds us that whereas all men have one 'flesh,' they have many 'minds.' Moreover, our 'minds,' like our 'flesh,' have 'wills' of their own. The condemnation implied in this verse teaches that these 'wills' do not bow to the will of God, and that consequently they who *do* them come under the anger of God"—BEET. **And were by nature** — by reason of our possessing that sinful nature common to all men — **children of wrath** — the inevitable consequence of living as "sons of disobedience" (ver. 2). "How strange that men should argue that God's love forbids His wrath! It is, in truth, the cause of it. I could neither love nor fear a God who did not care enough about me to be angry with me when I sin. If my child does wilful wrong, if by some act of greed or passion he imperils his moral future, and destroys the peace of the house, shall I not be grieved with him with an anger proportioned to the love I bear him? How much more shall your heavenly Father —how much more justly and wisely and mercifully?"—FINDLAY.

4. "**Mercy** removes misery; **love** confers salvation"—WESLEY.

"The Divine counter-fact now comes in, brighter for the awful contrast" — MOULE. "**Mercy**—compassion of the helpless. It recalls the helplessness of those under the anger of God, and thus completes the picture given in vers. 1-3. **Because of His much love**—traces this mercy to its source in the central attribute of God"—BEET.

5. **He hath quickened us together with**

Christ—"in conformity to Him, and by virtue of our union with Him. **By grace ye are saved**—grace is both the beginning and end. The apostle speaks indifferently either in the first or second person; the Jews and the Gentiles being in the same circumstance, both by nature and by grace. This text lays the axe to the very root of spiritual pride, and all glorying in ourselves. Therefore S. Paul, foreseeing the backwardness of mankind to receive it, yet knowing the absolute necessity of its being received, again asserts the very same truth (ver. 8) in the very same words"—WESLEY.

He hath quickened us together with Christ. "This reverses all that is implied in the words **dead through trespasses.** We were once, in consequence of our sins, a spiritual corpse, given up to corruption utter and helpless, from which nothing could save us except the life-giving power of God. But God has pardoned our sins, and given back to us the eternal life for which we were created. This eternal life is already our assumed possession; and the witness of it is the Holy Spirit, the breath of immortality already moving our hearts with the pulse of Divine life, and prompting all Christian activities. **With Christ**—as in Col. 2. 13. Our new immortal life is an outflow of the life breathed on the first Easter morning into His sacred corpse. For, had He not risen, there had been no saving faith, no gospel, and no life eternal"—BEET. **By grace ye are saved.** (See under ver. 8.)

6. **And hath raised us up together**—"both Jews and Gentiles already in spirit; and ere long our bodies too will be raised. **And made us all sit together in heavenly places**—this is spoken by way of anticipation. Believers are not yet possessed of their seats in heaven; but each of them has a place prepared for him"—WESLEY.

"The words the apostle uses—**gave us life**—raised us up—**seated us in the heavenly places**—embrace the whole range of salvation. This comprehensive action of Divine grace upon believing men takes place by a constant and constantly deepening union of the soul with Christ"—FINDLAY. "The entire history of the Son of Man is reproduced in the man who believes in him, not by a simple moral analogy, but by a spiritual communication, which is the true secret of our justification, as well as of our sanctification, and indeed of our whole salvation"—ADOLPHE MONOD.

7. **The ages to come**—"that is, all succeeding ages"—WESLEY.

That in the ages to come—"throughout the eternal future—**He might show.** (Comp. vers. 6, 12, 14 in the previous chapter.) **Exceeding riches**—a phrase intensely Pauline—**in Christ Jesus**—vital union with the Lord is the never silent key-note of the passage"—MOULE.

8. **By grace ye are saved through faith.** "Grace, without any respect to human worthiness, confers the glorious gift. Faith, with an empty hand, and without any pretence to personal desert, receives the heavenly blessing. **And this is not of yourselves.** 'This' refers to the whole preceding clause. That 'ye are saved through faith' is **the gift of God**"—WESLEY.

"In order to justify and expound 'the riches of His grace' S. Paul now repeats a few words, which, in ver. 4, burst through the grammatical order of the sentence. **By grace,** *by the grace* of God, referring definitely to the grace mentioned in ver. 7. **Through faith**—added in order to give a more complete account of salvation. It embodies a thought ever present to S. Paul, and ever ready to find expression. **The favour** of God is the Divine source, and 'faith' is the human channel, of salvation"—BEET.

9. **Not by works.** "Neither this faith nor this salvation is owing to any works you ever did, will, or can do"—WESLEY.

These, and the preceding words, "are added as an emphatic exposition, negative and then positive, of the words, **by grace.** 'You are not the source of your own salvation; it is a gift, and **the gift is God's.** It is not from human works.' **Not from works, that no one may glory**—marked characteristics of S. Paul. (Rom. 4. 2, 6; 9. 11; 11. 6; 3. 27; 1 Cor. 1. 29; Gal. 6. 14.) From every side S. Paul shuts out, as his wont is, self-salvation"—BEET. "The apostle is everywhere jealous for the sovereign claim of God to the whole praise of our salvation"—MOULE.

10. **For we are His workmanship**—"which proves both that salvation is by faith, and that faith is the gift of God. **Created unto good works**—that afterwards we might give ourselves to them. **Which God had before prepared**—the occasions of them; so we must still ascribe the whole to God. **That we might walk in them**—though not to be justified by them"—WESLEY.

Lit. **His making.** "His" in the original is very emphatic: "Just *His* work and no other's are we"—MEYER. (Comp. Ps. 100. 3, "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.") "S. Paul was the last man in the world to undervalue human effort, or disparage good work of any sort. It is, in his view, the end aimed at in all that God bestows on His people, in all that He Himself works in them. Only let this end be sought in God's way and order. Man's doings must be the fruit and not the root of his salvation. 'Not *of* works,' but, *for* good works,' were believers chosen"—FINDLAY. "This little word *for* reconciles S. Paul and S. James better than all the commentators"—MONOD.

11. **Wherefore remember**—"such a remembrance strengthens faith and increases gratitude. **That ye being formerly Gentiles in the flesh** — neither circumcised in body nor in spirit. **Who were** accordingly **called the uncircumcision**—by way of reproach. **By that which is called the circumcision**—by those who call themselves the circumcised, and think this a proof that they are the people of God; and who indeed have that outward circumcision which is **performed by hands in the flesh**"—WESLEY.

"**Therefore**—because such exalted and unmerited benefits have been imparted to us (vers. 4–10). These benefits should move the reader to remember his former miserable heathen state, in order the more gratefully to appreciate by contrast with the past the value of his present state"—MEYER. **So-called circumcision.** In the picture he is now drawing of the former spiritual destitution of his readers, S. Paul is about to make prominent the fact that they were "outside the commonwealth of Israel." Before doing so, however, he carefully disclaims, in the present verse, all sympathy with the spiritual pride of the Jews in their attitude to the Gentiles. (Read Rom. ch. 2 and 3 for his meaning.)

12. **Were at that time without Christ**—"having no faith in, or knowledge of, Him. **Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel**—both as to their temporal privileges and spiritual blessings. **And strangers to the covenants of promise**—the great promise in both the Jewish and Christian covenant was the Messiah. **Having no hope**—because they had no promise whereon to ground their hope —**and** being **without God**—wholly ignorant of the true God, and so in effect atheists. Such in truth are, more or less, all men, in all ages, till they know God by the teaching of His own Spirit. **In the world**—the wide, vain world, wherein ye wandered up and down, unholy and unhappy"—WESLEY.

"**Separate from Christ** (R.V.). Destitute of all the spiritual blessings which flow from inward union with Him. This full sense is required by the very conspicuous contrast in ver. 13, **But now in Christ Jesus,** and by the contrast maintained throughout this chapter between past and present. But the words following show that this spiritual destitution is here looked upon in the light of the separation of the Gentiles from the nation to which the ancient promises were given. In those days they had not so much as heard the name of the promised Messiah"—BEET. "The only hope on earth worthy of the name rests upon the great **promise** given in outline to Israel. Consequently, they who have not this hope **have no hope**"—BEET. "When the apostle says **without God IN THE WORLD,** this qualification is both reproachful and sorrowful. To be without God in the world that He has made, where 'His eternal power and Godhead' have been visible from creation, argues a darkened and perverted heart"—FINDLAY. (Comp. Rom. 1. 18–23; John 1. 10, etc.)

13. **Far off**—"from God and His people. **Nigh**—intimately united to both"—WESLEY.

"**But now** — a conspicuous and favourite phrase of S. Paul's, recalling the contrast ever present to his mind of the past and the present —**become near**—to God and to the people of God. For distance from Israel and from God are the chief points of the description in ver. 12. And in vers. 14, 15, we have peace between Jews and Gentiles given as an explanation of this verse, and in vers. 16, 18 reconciliation and approach to God, through Christ. **In the blood of Christ**—more specific than 'in Christ.' It suggests the continued validity of the violent death of Christ as the means of salvation"—BEET.

14. **For He is our peace**—"not only as He purchased it, but as He is the very bond and centre of union. **He who hath made both** Jews and Gentiles **one** Church. The apostle describes (1) the conjunction of the Gentiles with Israel (vers. 14, 15); and (2) the conjunction of both with God (vers. 15–18). Each description is subdivided into two parts; and the former part of the one, concerning **abolishing the enmity,** answers the former part of the other; the latter part of the one, concerning the evangelical **decrees,** the latter part of the other. **And hath broken down the middle wall of partition**—alluding to that wall of old, which separated the court of Israel from the court of the Gentiles. Such a wall was the Ceremonial Law, which Christ had now taken away"—WESLEY.

"**He is**—each word very emphatic, pointing conspicuously to Him in whose blood the Gentiles have been brought near" — BEET. "**Peace**—the opposite of that *enmity* between Jew and Gentile mentioned in the next verse. **Who made both one.** (Comp. Gal. 3. 28, and especially Col. 3. 11.) **And brake down the middle wall.** It is possible that the phrase was immediately suggested by the demarcation between the court of the Gentiles and the inner area of the Temple"—MOULE.

15. "**Having abolished by His** sufferings in the **flesh the** cause of **enmity** between the Jews and Gentiles, **even the Law of** ceremonial **commandments through His decrees** — which offer mercy to all. (See Col. 2. 14.) **That He might form the two**—Jew and Gentile —**into one new man**—one mystical body"—WESLEY.

"**Having made of no effect** (as in Rom. 3. 3) **the enmity**—means by which Christ has broken down the barrier. Consequently, the enmity is that between Jew and Gentile; especially as the aim of its removal is **to create the two into one new man. In His flesh**—evidently our Lord's crucified flesh and blood (so ver. 16). **The law of commands in dogmas**—in apposition to 'the enmity.' By

rendering invalid 'the Law,' Christ brought to nothing 'the enmity'"—BEET. "**That He may create**, etc.—purpose for which Christ has set aside the Law and its decrees, viz. to unite by creative power into one new unity the two parts into which the Law divided mankind"—BEET. **So making peace**—between Jews and Gentiles.

16. **In one body**—"one Church—**having slain**—by His own death on the cross—**the enmity**—which had been between sinners and God"—WESLEY.

This is a "continuation of the sentence expressing the design. Christ has by His death done away with the Law, in order to make the Jew and Gentile into one new man (ver. 15), **and so to accomplish the reconciliation of both with God, that they should as one body be reconciled with God through the cross, after He has slain the enmity which hitherto existed between them**"—MEYER. "While writing about Christ's purpose to break down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, S. Paul remembers that this can only be done by breaking down another barrier, that between man and God. Now man can be reconciled to God only through the death of Christ. Consequently **thereby** or 'therein,' *i.e.* in the cross on which He died, Christ slew not only the enmity between man and God, but that between man and man, in order to bring in universal harmony"—BEET.

17. **And He came**—"after His resurrection—**and preached peace**—by His ministers and His Spirit—**to you**—Gentiles—**that were afar off**—at the utmost distance from God—**and to them that were nigh**—to the Jews, who were comparatively nigh, being His visible Church"—WESLEY.

Some expositors prefer to look upon this verse as meaning that Christ preached peace "on earth before His death"—BEET. "Christ is peace in *deed* (ver. 14) and *word* (ver. 17). He not only *is* peace, but He *proclaimed* it Himself at His appearing on earth"—HARLESS. **Peace.** S. Paul is still speaking of peace between man and man, though this, of course, implies peace between man and God.

18. **For through Him we both**—"Jews and Gentiles—**have access**—liberty of approaching, **by** the guidance and aid of **one Spirit to** God as our **Father.** Christ, the Spirit, and the Father, the Three-One God, stand frequently in the same order"—WESLEY.

"**Through Him**—the emphatic words of the verse. Christ took us by the hand and led us **to the Father. We both**—Jews and Gentiles, whose union in Christ is the dominant thought of this section. **In one Spirit**—the Divine Agent of all-abiding harmony of man and man. Notice here the relation of each Person of the Trinity to the work of salvation"—BEET. "Behold the secret of all true union! It is not by others coming to us, nor by our going over to them, but it is by both them and ourselves coming to Christ"—MONOD.

19. "**Therefore ye are no longer strangers, but citizens** of the heavenly Jerusalem; no longer **foreigners**, but received into the very **family of God**"—WESLEY.

This verse sums up what has been said from ver. 11 to this point. **Ye are no more strangers to the promises** (see ver. 12), **nor are ye merely foreign residents without civic rites.** On the other hand, "if ye are Christ's ye are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3. 29). "**The saints**—not angels, nor Jews, nor Christians then alive merely, but the saints of God in the widest sense—all members of the mystical body of Christ"—ALFORD. **Of the household of God**—"members of the family, kinsfolk. The idea is not of domestic *service*, but of the 'child at home.' In the deepest sense the Gentile believer, once 'far off' in both position and condition, is now *at home* with his living Father in Christ"—MOULE.

20. **And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.** "As the foundation sustains the building, so the word of God, declared by the apostles and prophets, sustains the faith of all believers. God laid the foundation by them, but **Christ Himself is the chief Corner-stone** of the foundation. Elsewhere He is termed the Foundation itself. (1 Cor. 3. 11)"—WESLEY.

From speaking of "God's household" S. Paul goes on to speak of **God's house**—the Church, which is God's temple. "**The foundation laid by the apostles and prophets** is the gospel of Christ which they have proclaimed, and by which they have established the churches"—MEYER. "**Prophets** conspicuously mentioned in 1 Cor. 12 as holding the second rank in the Church. As in the Old Testament they were men who spoke under special inspiration. Had the reference here been to the Old Testament prophets, the order would have been inverted, 'prophets and apostles.' **Corner-stone.** Christ is both the foundation underlying the entire building, and a conspicuous corner-stone, uniting its walls, and thus giving solidity to the whole"—BEET.

21. **On whom all the building fitly framed together**—"the whole fabric of the universal Church, rises up like a great pile of living materials. **Into an holy temple in the Lord**—dedicated to Christ, and inhabited by Him, in which He displays His presence, and is worshipped and glorified. What is the temple of Diana of the Ephesians, whom ye formerly worshipped, to this?"—WESLEY.

"**Each several building** (R.V. *margin*, 'Every building'). Various parts of the one great structure. Such were the various churches, Jewish or Gentile. Frequently a great building is begun at different points; and in the earlier stages its parts appear to be independent erections; but as it advances all are

united into one whole. So there were in S. Paul's day, as now, various churches. But to his eye they were parts of, and were advancing towards, one great temple. The separation was apparent and passing; the unity was real and abiding. **Being fitly joined together**—as a living body is united by its joints. **Is growing**—for the progress of the building is a development of its own inner life. This word supplements the metaphor of a building by that of a tree"—BEET. "The temple is essentially **holy**, for it belongs to God. **In the Lord**—notes a closer relation than the Old Testament phrase, 'holy to the Lord.' In virtue of their inward union with the one Master, the Jewish and Gentile churches are growing into one holy temple"—BEET.

22. **Ye also**—the readers of this Epistle. **Through the Spirit** (R.V. 'In the Spirit'). "The Holy Spirit is the supreme builder of the Church, as He is the supreme witness to Jesus Christ. (John 15. 26, 27.) The words 'in the Spirit,' closing the verse with solemn emphasis, denote not the mode of God's habitation—that is self-evident — but the agency engaged in building this new house of God"—FINDLAY.

CHAPTER III.

1. **For this cause**—"that ye may be so 'built together'—**I am a prisoner for you Gentiles**—for your advantage, and for asserting your right to these blessings. This it was which so enraged the Jews against him"—WESLEY.

Some expositors supply the word **am** after **I, Paul**, thus making the verse complete. Others, however, treat vers. 2–13 as a digression. S. Paul, they say, is about to offer a prayer for his readers, but breaks off, resuming his original intention at ver. 14. **On behalf of the Gentiles.** The persecutions which finally brought him to the imprisonment during which this letter was written were aroused by his unflinching championship of Gentile rights as against Jewish exclusiveness.

2. **The dispensation of the grace of God given me in your behalf**—"that is, the commission to dispense the gracious gospel; to you Gentiles in particular. This they had **heard** from his own mouth"—WESLEY.

The intricate sentence, extending from this point to the end of ver. 13, "resolves itself into a statement of *what God has wrought in the apostle* toward the accomplishment of His great plan. It thus completes the exposition already given of that which *God wrought in Christ for the Church*, and that which *He has wrought through Christ in Gentile believers* in fulfilment of the same end"—FINDLAY. **If so be that you have heard** (R.V.). Of course all S. Paul's readers were perfectly familiar with it. But, shrinking from any appearance of boastfulness, he refers to his commission in this delicate and characteristic way. "A natural and beautiful rhetoric prefers to treat it as if possibly obscure and forgotten"—MOULE.

3. **The mystery**—"of salvation by Christ alone, and that both to Jews and Gentiles. **As I wrote before**—namely, Eph. 1. 9, 10—the very words of which passage he here repeats"—WESLEY.

"Vers. 1–9 speak—(1) of the mystery itself—God's gracious intention to the human race unknown in earlier times, and (2) of the man to whom, above others, it was given to make known the secret"—FINDLAY. "The **mystery made known** (as in ch. 1. 9) to S. Paul was spiritual wealth, entrusted to him for distribution to others. It was therefore a stewardship. *Mystery* and *Revelation* are constant correlatives. (Rom. 16. 25; 1 Cor. 2. 7, 10.) For the secrets of God are known only by those for whom God lifts the veil which hides them from unaided human vision"—BEET. **In few words**—considering the grandeur of the theme.

4. **Whereby when ye read ye can perceive my understanding**, etc. **The mystery of Christ** (R.V.). "Christ Himself, His person and His whole work, connecting also the Gentiles with the people of God (ver. 6)"—MEYER.

5. **Which in other**—"in former—**ages was not** so clearly or fully **made known to the sons of men**—to any man, no, not to Ezekiel, so often styled 'son of man'; nor to any of the ancient prophets. Those here spoken of are New Testament prophets"—WESLEY.

"**Unto the sons of men**—a designedly large phrase; mankind in general, both inside and outside the Jewish pale. Outside, the secret was wholly unknown; inside, it was only dimly and sparingly intimated. That it was in *some measure* revealed is suggested by the phrase here, '**as it is now**,' etc. But the Old Testament hints were after all little more than prepared materials for New Testament revelation"—MOULE.

6. **That the Gentiles are joint-heirs**—"of God—**and of the same body**—under Christ the Head—**and joint-partakers of His promise**—the communion of the Holy Ghost"—WESLEY.

This verse more precisely specifies the contents of the **mystery.** The Greek is best rendered by the R.V., **Fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise.** How could the equal rights of Jews and Gentiles be more clearly put? **Through the gospel**—by personal faith in which each individual appropriates the above-named privileges.

7. **According to the gift of the grace of God**—"that is, the apostleship which He hath graciously given me, and which He hath qualified me for—**by the effectual working of His power**—in me and by me"—WESLEY.

"The appointment of S. Paul as a minister

of the gospel is traced to its source in the favour with which God smiled on him. And this **grace** was in harmony with the **working** or 'activity' **of His power.** Otherwise, the grace would have been ineffective"—BEET.

8. **Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.** "Here are the noblest strains of eloquence to paint the exceeding low opinion the apostle had of himself, and the fulness of unfathomable blessings which are treasured up in Christ"—WESLEY.

"The apostle now explains himself more fully on what had been said in ver. 7, and that entirely from the standpoint of the *humility* with which, in the deep feeling of his personal unworthiness, he looked forth upon the greatness and glory of his vocation. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 9)"—MEYER. **Less than the least.** The ground of this self-abasement was "not the consciousness of sin in general, in which respect S. Paul knew that he stood on the same level as any other, but *the deeply humbling consciousness of having persecuted Christ*, which, inextinguishable in him, so often accompanied his recalling of the grace of the apostolic office vouchsafed to him. (1 Cor. 15. 9; Phil. 3. 6; comp. 1 Tim. 1. 13.) **The unsearchable,** etc. By this is meant the whole Divine *fulness of* salvation of which Christ is the possessor and bestower, and which is of such a nature that the human intellect cannot explore it, so as to form an adequate conception of it"—MEYER.

9. **What is the fellowship of the mystery**—"what those mysterious blessings are whereof all believers jointly partake. **Which was,** in a great measure, **hidden from eternity by God, who,** to make way for the free exercise of His love, **created all things.** This is the foundation of all His dispensations"—WESLEY.

To make, etc.—*lit.* "to illuminate all." The same verb is used in 2 Tim. 1. 10, which compare. *All* Gentiles are meant. **The stewardship of the mystery.** (Comp. 1 Cor. 4. 1.) "**Hidden from the ages**—from the beginning of time, as in Col. 1. 26—**in God,** whose all-knowing mind is the treasury in which this wealth lay hidden. This suggests, as is clearly implied in ver. 10, that the mystery was not known even to angels. **Who created all things**—links together the purpose kept secret for ages with the creation of the universe. (So ch. 1. 4; Col. 1. 16, 17.) And this suggests that the world was created with a view to the realisation of this purpose"—BEET.

10. **That the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the Church**—"by what is done in the Church, which is the theatre of the Divine wisdom"—WESLEY.

To the intent, etc. This is a thought of great grandeur. (Comp. 1 Pet. 1. 12.) To the angels "pure and powerful, but still finite intelligences, the work of man's redemption is not only a touching interest, an object of benevolent attention; it is indescribably important, as a totally new and unique revelation of the mind and ways of their Lord, and perhaps (though here the hints of Scripture are few and dark) as indicating how their own bliss stands secure"—MOULE. **Manifold**—*lit.* "much variegated" or "many coloured." It points to the great variety of the Divine workings.

11. The unusually full title here given to the Redeemer seems to call attention to the *historical* accomplishment, by Jesus of Nazareth, of God's eternal purpose.

12. **By whom we have free access**—"such as those petitioners have, who are introduced to the royal presence by some distinguished favourite. **And boldness**—unrestrained liberty of speech, such as children use in addressing an indulgent father, when, without fear of offending, they disclose all their wants, and make known all their requests"—WESLEY.

Boldness and access in confidence (R.V.). "Freedom of *speech* (in prayer), of *status*, and of *feeling*"—BENGEL. **Through faith,** etc.—*lit.* **the faith of Him**—*i.e.* the faith of which He is the object. "Observe the persistent recurrence of the idea of faith. The entrance into oneness with Christ is, on our side, by faith (ch. 2. 8), and (here) the life lived in that sacred oneness is realised in the exercise of faith"—MOULE.

13. "The not fainting **is your glory**"—WESLEY.

Wherefore refers to all that S. Paul has said about his office. **I ask,** etc. Called, as he has asserted himself to be to so grand a mission, he feels confident that God will overrule His imprisonment for good, and therefore begs his readers not to be discouraged by it. (Comp. Phil. 1. 12.) **Which are your glory.** "S. Paul declares, conscious that his own brave perseverance is a manifestation of the grace of God, that his sufferings are an ornament to his readers"—BEET.

14, 15. **Of whom**—"the Father—**the whole family** of angels **in heaven,** saints in paradise, **and** believers on **earth is named.** Being the 'children of God' (a more honourable title than 'children of Abraham') and depending on him as the Father of the family"—WESLEY.

For this cause. S. Paul here resumes the prayer he had in his mind at ver. 1, repeating the opening words of that verse. "Addressing himself to God as the Father of angels and of men, the apostle asks that He will endow the readers in a manner corresponding to **the wealth of His glory**—in other words, that the gifts He bestows may be worthy of the universal Father, worthy of the august character in which God has now revealed Himself to mankind. According to this measure, S. Paul beseeches for the Church, in the first instance two gifts, which are after all one—viz. 'the inward strength of the Holy Spirit' (ver. 16)

and 'the permanent indwelling of Christ' (ver. 17). These gifts he asks on his readers' behalf, with a view to their gaining two further blessings which are also one—viz. 'the power to understand the Divine plan' (ver. 18) as it has been expounded in this letter, and so 'to know the love of Christ' (ver. 19). Still beyond these there rises in the distance a further end for man and the Church: *the reception of the entire fulness of God*"—FINDLAY. **Every family in heaven and on earth** (R.V.)—all angels, archangels, principalities, powers in heaven; with all Jews and Gentiles on earth, who are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. God is the Father of them all. Thus, in the Scriptures, the name "sons of God" is applied to both angels and men.

16. **The riches of His glory**—"the immense fulness of His glorious wisdom, power, and mercy—**the inner man**—the soul"—WESLEY. **According to**, etc.—"as He can do who is Lord of the resources of an eternal nature and heavenly kingdom. The glory of God is, in brief, Himself, as the infinite and holy One, with all results, for Himself, and His creatures, of His being such"—MOULE. "**Strengthened**—fitted for the intellectual and moral effort and work and battle of the Christian life; this strengthening is to come by contact **with** Divine **power** which enters into us and makes us strong. **Through His Spirit**—the Bearer of the presence and power of God. **The inward man**—that in man which is furthest removed from the outer world and its influence, the sacred chamber in which man's personality dwells alone"—BEET.

17. **Dwell**—"that is, constantly and sensibly abide"—WESLEY.

The Greek word means **make His home** in your hearts. **Hearts.** In the New Testament "heart" never means the affections only, but the sum total of affections—will, conscience, intellect, etc. It corresponds with "the inward man" of ver. 16. "Though all of us is a temple for Him, yet the heart is the choir where He properly sitteth"—BAYNE. **Through faith**—which his readers must have, if S. Paul's prayer is to be granted.

18. **That being rooted and grounded**—"that is, deeply fixed and firmly established—**in love. Ye may comprehend**—so far as a human mind is capable—**what is the breadth of the love of Christ**—embracing all mankind—**and length**—from everlasting to everlasting—**and depth**—not to be fathomed by any creature—**and height**—not to be reached by any enemy"—WESLEY.

Rooted and grounded. In this phrase are blended the metaphors of a tree and of a building. **In love.** These words are very emphatic in the Greek. **Ye may be able** (R.V. "Ye may be strong"). It suggests the greatness of the task of comprehending Christ. In the next verse S. Paul states that this task is for ever beyond our powers. **The breadth**, etc. "It stretches *wide* over all the whole world of the nations, east and west. In its **length** it reaches through all time to the end of things. In **depth** it penetrates to the region where the faithful sleep in death. (Comp. ch. 4. 9.) And it rises to heaven's **height**, where Christ lives"—HOFMANN. "**Wide** as the furthest limits of the inhabited world, **long** as the ages of eternity through which God's love to His people will endure, **deep** as the abyss of misery and ruin from which He has raised us, **high** as the throne of Christ in the heavens where He has placed us"—BERNARDINE À PICONIO. It is perhaps better, however, not to press the words too literally. The *incomprehensible vastness of God's love in Christ* is the apostle's thought.

19. **And to know.** "But the apostle corrects himself, and immediately observes, it cannot be fully known. This only we know, that the love of Christ **surpasses all knowledge. That ye may be filled**—which is the sum of all—**with all the fulness of God**—with all His light, love, wisdom, holiness, power, and glory—a perfection far beyond a bare freedom from sin"—WESLEY.

To know. The Greek word here employed "signifies knowledge in the acquisition rather than possession—**getting to know.** Hence it is rightly and often used of things Divine that 'we know in part,' our knowledge of which falls short of the reality, while it is growing up to it. Thus understood, the contradiction of the apostle's wish disappears. We know the unknowable, just as we 'clearly see the invisible things of God' (Rom. 1. 20)"—FINDLAY. **The fulness of God.** This phrase may refer either to the fulness of God Himself, or to the fulness of blessing He imparts to His children.

20. **Now to Him.** "This doxology is admirably adapted to strengthen our faith, that we may not stagger at the great things the apostle has been praying for, as if they were too much for God to give, or for us to expect from Him. **That is able.** Here is a most beautiful gradation. When He has given us **exceeding**, yea **abundant** blessings, still we may **ask** for more. And He 'is able' to do it. But we may **think** of more than we have asked. He is able to do this also. Yea, and above all this. **Above all we ask**—above all we can **think.** Nay, exceedingly abundantly above all that we can either ask or think"—WESLEY.

"That which is strictly speaking the prayer, the petition, is at an end; but the confidence in the Almighty who can still do far more, draws forth from the praying heart a right full and solemn ascription of praise"—MEYER. **Able.** The *ability* of God to more than fulfil His promise is a favourite thought in New Testament doxologies. (Comp. Rom. 16. 25; Acts 20. 32; Jude 24.) **Or think.** S. Paul's "thoughts go beyond his prayers. But God's ability to perform goes infinitely beyond both prayers and thoughts"—BEET.

21. **In the Church**—"on earth and in heaven"—WESLEY.

To Him be glory (R.V. "the glory")—the glory *due* to God. **In the Church and in Christ Jesus** (R.V.). "In the Bride and the Bridegroom, in the Redeemed and the Redeemer, in the many brethren and in the Firstborn, is this perfect glory to be paid to God"—FINDLAY. **Throughout**, etc.—*lit.* "Unto all the generations of the age of the ages."

CHAPTER IV.

1. **I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord**—"imprisoned for His sake and for your sakes; for the sake of the gospel which he had preached amongst them. This was therefore a powerful motive to them to comfort him under it by their obedience"—WESLEY.

The first three chapters of this Epistle have dealt with Christian doctrine; the last three deal mainly with Christian morals. And this is the true order. **Therefore**—in view of the high vocation of the Christian which he has described. **Beseech**—very pathetic, following as it does the phrase "prisoner in the Lord." **Ye were called** (R.V.)—at their conversion.

2. **With all lowliness**, etc. "Observe the moral lesson here. The first and most characteristic effect of the heights and depths of Divine privilege and spiritual experience just unfolded is to be the sincerest and most unselfish *humility*"—MOULE.

3. **Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit**—"that mutual union and harmony, which is a fruit of the Spirit. **The bond of peace** is love"—WESLEY.

Giving diligence. The word implies some difficulty in the task. **To keep.** God imparts it; it is our business so to live and act as to "keep" it. **Unity**—the oneness of those who are filled with the Spirit. **The bond of peace.** "Bind thyself to thy brother. Those who are bound together in love bear all burdens lightly. Bind thyself to him and bind him to thee. Both are in thy power; for whomsoever I will I may easily make my friend"—CHRYSOSTOM.

4. **There is one body**—"the universal Church, all believers throughout the world—**one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father**—the ever-blessed Trinity. **One hope**—of heaven"—WESLEY.

Vers. 4-6 are probably an early Christian hymn. They make mention of seven unities: one **body**, one **Spirit**, one **hope**; one **Lord**, one **faith**, one **baptism**; one **God and Father** of all. (Observe the Trinitarian cast of the passage, which is characteristic of this Epistle.) These unities are named to strengthen the exhortation to unity in ver. 3. **One body and one Spirit.** As in the human organism the animating life or spirit controls the most diverse organs and binds the most diverse materials as one body; so the Spirit of God lives in the various Christian communities, and animates them as the *one body of Christ*. **One hope.** Nothing holds men more firmly together than a common "hope."

5. "**One** outward **baptism**"—WESLEY.

"There are not several **Lords**, but **one**, who is Lord of all believers, even Christ; not several kinds of **faith**, but **one** faith, inasmuch as all place their confidence upon the atoning death of Christ; not several kinds of **baptism**, but **one** baptism, namely, into Christ (Rom. 6. 3; Gal. 3. 27; Acts 10. 48; 19. 5)."—MEYER.

6. **One God and Father of all**—"that believe. **Who is above all**—presiding over all His children, operating **through** them **all** by Christ, **and** dwelling in **all** by His Spirit"—WESLEY.

(Comp. 1 Cor. 12. 4-6 for the order, as here, of **Spirit, Lord, God.**) "As ever, S. Paul rises from the Son to the Father; and in the presence of the Father he lingers. For all unity in the creature has its source in this supreme unity"—BEET.

7. **According to the measure of the gift of Christ**—"according as Christ is pleased to give to each"—WESLEY.

In this verse S. Paul "passes from the unities of the Church to its diversities, from the common foundation of the Christian life to the variety presented in its superstructure"—FINDLAY. **Unto each one.** Not one was overlooked. "**Grace**—the undeserved favour of God, revealed in the gift of capacities for usefulness. We may cheerfully acquiesce in the absence of some gifts, which others have, knowing that other gifts have been chosen for us by the unerring wisdom of Christ"—BEET.

8. **Wherefore He saith**—"that is, in reference to which God saith by David, **Having ascended on high He led captivity captive**—He triumphed over all His enemies, Satan, sin, and death, which had before enslaved all the world; alluding to the custom of ancient conquerors, who led those they had conquered in chains after them. **And**, as they also used to give donations to the people, at their return from victory, so **He gave gifts to men**—both the ordinary and the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit"—WESLEY.

The quotation is from Ps. 68. 18. As often in S. Paul, the quotation is made very freely. For example, he alters "Thou didst take gifts" to **He gave gifts.** "And the alteration makes at once evident the connection between the quotation and the matter which S. Paul has now in hand. The 'gifts' received by the conqueror revealed the completeness of his victory; the '*gifts*' which the ascended Saviour **gave** to His servants on earth revealed the completion of His work for them"—BEET.

9. **Now this expression, He ascended, what is it, but that He descended**—"that

is, does it not imply that He descended first? Certainly it does, on the supposition of His being God. Otherwise it would not: since all the saints will ascend to heaven, though none of them descended thence. **Into the lower parts of the earth**—so the womb is called. (Ps. 139. 15; the grave, Ps. 63. 9)"—WESLEY.

"Inasmuch as the original dwelling-place of God, and of the Son of God, is the highest heaven, S. Paul justly points out that the ascent of Christ implies that He had already come down from heaven to save His people. Christ's return in triumph to the skies implies His previous incarnation"—BEET. **Lower parts of the earth.** "He descended into Hades." Some expositors (as Wesley above) understand this as the Virgin's womb. But, bearing in mind the very prominent place of Christ's death in S. Paul's thought, it is preferable to understand the *descent* as referring to the whole series of humiliations, from the incarnation to the crucifixion and descent into Hades.

10. **He that descended**—"that thus amazingly humbled Himself—**is the same that ascended**—that was so highly exalted. **That He might fill all things**—the whole Church, with His Spirit, presence, and operations"—WESLEY.

"His return to heaven marked the completion of the work for which He came to earth. And it was needful that His Spirit, driven through man's sin into exile from its body, should descend to the lowest depths reached by His servants, in order that from that depth He might raise them to be sharers of His throne. To this end He must needs claim for His own, by entering its gloomy chambers, even the realms of the dead. Therefore, in order that the whole universe might become 'the fulness of Him who fills all in all,' He both descended and rose"—BEET.

11. "**And** among other of His free gifts, **He gave some apostles**—His chief ministers and special witnesses, who saw Him after His resurrection, and received their commission directly from Him. **And some prophets, and some evangelists.** A prophet testifies of things to come; an evangelist of things past; and that chiefly by preaching the gospel before and after any of the apostles. All these were extraordinary officers—the ordinary were **some pastors**, watching over their several flocks; and **some teachers**, whether of the same or a lower order, to assist them as occasion might require"—WESLEY.

He gave. "He" is emphatic here—**some men to be apostles, and some prophets.** (Comp. 1 Cor. 12. 28.) **Evangelists** or "missionaries." **Pastors and teachers.** These words are so joined in the Greek as to imply that the two offices were practically one. The true "pastor" will always feed his flock on sound "teaching."

12. "In this verse is noted the office of ministers; in the next the aim of the saints; in vers. 14–16 the way of growing in grace. And each of these three has three parts standing in the same order- **For the perfecting the saints**—the completing them both in number, and their various gifts and graces; **for the work of the ministry**—the serving God and His Church in their various ministrations; **for the edifying of the body of Christ**—the building up this, His mystical body, in faith, love, holiness"—WESLEY.

This verse explains why Christ gave the gifts named in the previous verse—**for the full equipment of the saints, for the work of ministering**—the word being used in a wide sense, so as to include the religious activities of both clergy and laity; **for the building up of the body of Christ.** S. Paul often combines the metaphors of a building and a living thing in a single phrase.

13. "**Till all** and every one of us **come in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God** to an exact agreement in the Christian doctrine, and an experimental knowledge of Christ as 'the Son of God.' **To a perfect man**—to a state of spiritual manhood in understanding and strength—**to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**—to that maturity of age and spiritual stature in which we shall be full of Christ, so that He will be all in all"—WESLEY.

As ver. 12 gave the *reason* for the *gifts* of ver. 11, so this verse states the length of time during which the *gifts* will be exercised, viz. **till we all attain,** etc. "The aim of the Christian ministry is to make itself superfluous, to raise men beyond its need"—FINDLAY. **We all,** etc. "The mark at which the Church has to arrive is set forth in its *collective* and its *individual* aspects. We must all 'unitedly attain the oneness of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God,' and we must attain, each of us, 'a perfect manhood, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'"—FINDLAY. **Perfect man** (R.V. "Full-grown man"; comp. Phil. 3. 15; Col. 1. 28; 4. 12; 1 Cor. 2. 16; 14. 20.) **Unto the measure.** "In Jesus Christ humanity rose to its ideal stature; and we see what is the proper level of our nature, the dignity and worth to which we have to rise."—FINDLAY.

14. **Fluctuating to and fro**—"from within, even where there is no wind, **and carried about with every wind** from without, when we are assaulted by others who are unstable as the wind; **by the sleight of men**—by their cogging the dice; so the original implies"—WESLEY.

No longer babes—implies, that spiritual babyhood was actual and frequent among Christians in S. Paul's day. **Every wind,** etc. "The immature Christian is carried along by what he hears, good and bad. He is, therefore, at the mercy of every influence brought to bear upon him, and is borne hither and thither

in ceaseless and useless movement"—BEET. **In the sleight, or in the sport of men.** "These men *play* with religion, and with the welfare of Christian souls"—VON SODEN. **Wiles.** The word here means systematised, deliberate teaching of error.

15. **Into Him**—"into His image and Spirit, and into a full union with Him"—WESLEY.

The previous verse told S. Paul's readers what to avoid; this tells them what to pursue. He names **truth** and **love** as the antidotes to error and deceit; and counsels constant growth "up into Christ" instead of spiritual infancy.

16. **From whom the whole mystical body fitly joined together**—"all the parts being fitted for and adapted to each other, and most exactly harmonising with the whole. **And compacted**—knit and cemented together with the utmost firmness. **Maketh increase by that which every joint supplieth**—or by the mutual help of every joint. **According to the effectual working in the measure of every member**—according as every member in its measure effectually works for the support and growth of the whole. A beautiful allusion to the human body, composed of different joints and members, knit together by various ligaments, and furnished with vessels of communication from the head to every part"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Col. 2. 9.) **From whom.** "He is the vital source to which the whole complex organism wholly owes alike its *existence* and its *action*"—MOULE. Note in this verse the frequent Pauline paradox that the **increase** is *all from Christ*, and yet inexorably conditioned by the faith and due *working* of His people. **In love**—both the atmosphere and the hidden spring of the Christian life—"the encompassing element"—BEET; "the inmost condition"—MOULE.

17. **This therefore I say.** "He returns thither where he begun (ver. 1). **And testify in the Lord**—in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus. **In the vanity of their mind**—having lost the knowledge of the true God. (Rom. 1. 21.) This is the root of all evil walking"—WESLEY.

In the Lord—"as myself, being 'in Him,' and as to those who are in the same union. . . . The phrase 'in the Lord' occurs forty-five times in S. Paul; 'in Christ,' or closely kindred phrases, nearly eighty times"—MOULE. **Other Gentiles** (R.V. "The Gentiles")—for though his readers were Gentiles by physical descent, they had had a "new birth," and were so no longer. S. Paul now gives a description of the Gentiles of his day, laying his finger in turn upon their *mental*, *spiritual*, and *moral* deficiencies.

18. **Having their understanding darkened, through the ignorance that is in them**—"so that they are totally void of the light of God, neither have they any knowledge of His will. **Being alienated from the life of God**—utter strangers to the Divine, the spiritual life. **Through the hardness of their hearts**—callous and senseless. And where there is no sense, there can be no life"—WESLEY.

The vanity of their mind and **their darkened understanding** portray the mental state of the unregenerate Gentiles. (Comp. Rom. 1. 21.) The student of Europe's intellectual history feels that no words could more fitly describe S. Paul's epoch. **Alienated**, etc. He goes on to describe their *spiritual* condition. (Comp. ch. 2 of this Epistle.) **The life of God**—the life He gives and communicates to His own. This **alienation**, in accordance with John 17. 3, arose from **ignorance** of God, while the "ignorance" in its turn arose from **the hardening of their heart.** (Comp. the remarkable passage in Rom. 1. 18–32.)

19. **Who being past feeling.** "The original word is peculiarly significant. It properly means, 'past feeling pain.' Pain urges the sick to seek a remedy, which, where there is no pain, is little thought of. **Have given themselves up**—freely, of their own accord. **Lasciviousness** is but one branch of **uncleanness**, which implies impurity of every kind"—WESLEY.

S. Paul now passes to their *moral* condition. **They did give themselves over to wantonness.** Although fleshly impurity is principally meant, the idea of the word is properly a "throwing off of all restraint." The sensual vices of the heathen of S. Paul's day can scarcely be exaggerated.

20. **But ye have not so learned Christ**—"that is, ye cannot act thus, now ye know Him, since you know the Christian dispensation allows of no sin"—WESLEY.

But ye not so—"conspicuous and double contrast to the Gentiles. **Christ**—Himself, the matter of the knowledge they have acquired"—BEET.

21. **Seeing ye have heard Him**—"teaching you inwardly by His Spirit. **As the truth is in Jesus**—according to His own gospel"—WESLEY.

If so be that ye heard Him (R.V.). This difficult verse will be best understood in the light of the Note on the first verse of this Epistle. S. Paul probably wrote it for other Christian communities besides that at Ephesus, some of which were founded by missionaries of "John's baptism." From Acts 19. 1–7, it appears that these communities had not received the full and detailed instruction which S. Paul himself was wont to give. Hence this qualification of ver. 20. Further, there were Gnostic influences at work among the Asian churches, the tendency of which was to undervalue the historical Jesus, and to weave speculations concerning a shadowy Christ. (See Colossians and the notes.) Hence the use in this place of the name **Jesus** (the birth-name of the Holy Child), seldom used by S. Paul, and never without reason.

22. **The old man** — "that is, the whole body of sin. All sinful *desires* are **deceitful**; promising the happiness which they cannot give"—WESLEY.

The *teaching* of the previous verse is defined in this. **That ye put away** — as one lays aside garments—**as concerning your former manner of life.** "The clause means that the *putting off* concerned, had to do with a former life-course; it affected it by being the close of it"—MOULE. **The old man.** (See note on Col. 3. 9.) **Which is corrupt**, etc.—*lit.* "growing corrupt according to the desires of deceit" — "desires after the forbidden, full of *deceitful* promises of joy and gain. (See Gen. 3 for the great typical case)"—MOULE.

23. **The spirit of your mind**—"the very ground of your heart"—WESLEY.

Be renewed — not "renew yourselves" — LUTHER; but "become renewed" — MEYER, by submitting to the working of the Spirit. **Spirit of your mind** — "the Holy Spirit looked upon as enlightening the mind" — BEET.

24. **The new man** — "universal holiness. **After**—in the very image of God"—WESLEY.

The significance of the tenses in this and the two preceding verses cannot be fully brought out in an English translation. Their meaning is somewhat as follows, **Put off once for all** the old man—**go on being constantly renewed** in the Spirit of your mind; **put on once for all** the new man. **The new man.** (Comp. Col. 3. 10, 12, and especially Rom. 13. 14 and Gal. 3. 27.) **After God**—according with His nature and plan. **True holiness** (R.V. "Holiness of truth").

25. **Wherefore**—"seeing ye are thus created anew, walk accordingly, in every particular. **For we are members one of another**—to which intimate union all deceit is quite repugnant"—WESLEY.

He now proceeds to detailed moral precepts. Notice that he has first laid stress on the need of a changed heart and a new birth. **Falsehood.** The last word of the foregoing paragraph was *truth*. Hence the first vice S. Paul counsels his readers to avoid is "falsehood." **For we are members.** "If we are members of one body we have one interest. And where this is recognised falsehood is impossible. For it is only a cloak to hide our selfish disregard of the interests of others"—BEET.

26. **Be ye angry, and sin not**—"that is, if ye are angry, take heed ye sin not. Anger at sin is not evil; but we should feel only pity to the sinner. If we are angry at the person, as well as the fault, we sin. And how hardly do we avoid it! **Let not the sun go down upon your wrath**—reprove your brother, and be reconciled immediately. Lose not one day. A clear, express command. Reader, do you keep it?"—WESLEY.

Anger does not contradict sinlessness. God Himself is angry with the wicked every day. This verse is practically a quotation from Ps. 4. 4 in the LXX. version.

27. **Neither give place to the devil**—"by any delay"—WESLEY.

"Wherever the devil finds a heart shut, he finds a door open"—MONOD. "In an irritated frame of mind passion easily gains the ascendency over sobriety and watchfulness, and that physical condition is favourable to the devil for his work of seducing into everything that is opposed to God"—MEYER.

28. **But rather let him labour** — "lest idleness lead him to steal again. And whosoever has sinned in any kind ought the more zealously to practise the opposite virtue. **That he may have to give**—and so be no longer a burden and nuisance, but a blessing, to his neighbours"—WESLEY.

Let the stealer no more steal. S. Paul does not mention *restitution* in this place, but compare his treatment of the subject in the letter to Philemon, written about the same time. **To give** — so thorough did S. Paul expect their conversion to be; from *robbing* others they were to learn to **help** them.

29. **But that which is good**—"profitable to the speaker and hearers—**to the use of edifying** — to forward them in repentance, faith, or holiness. **That it may minister grace**—be a means of conveying more grace into their hearts. Hence we learn, what **discourse** is **corrupt**, as it were stinking in the nostrils of God; namely, all that is not **profitable**, not **edifying**, not apt to **minister grace to the hearers**"—WESLEY.

Corrupt speech. The Greek word means "worthless." **But such as is good for edifying as the need may be** (R.V.). The duty of believers as members one of another is still in S. Paul's mind.

30. **Grieve not the Holy Spirit**—"by any disobedience, particularly by corrupt discourse, or by any of the following sins. Do not force Him to withdraw from you, as a friend does whom you grieve by unkind behaviour. **The day of redemption**—that is, the day of judgment, in which our redemption will be completed"—WESLEY.

"**Grieve not**, etc.—a distinct indication of the personality of the blessed Spirit"—MOULE. This verse is a continuation of ver. 9. "Evil discourses are so opposed to the holy nature and aim of the Divine Spirit, who dwells in Christians, that He cannot fail to be grieved thereat. **In whom ye were sealed**, etc.—furnishes motive for the exhortation: for if ye have received so great a benefit, through the Holy Spirit, how wrong and ungrateful is it when you grieve Him"—MEYER.

31. **Let all bitterness**—"the height of settled anger, opposite to 'kindness' (ver. 32). **And wrath**—lasting displeasure towards the ignorant and them that are out of the way, opposite to 'tenderheartedness.' **And anger**

—the very first risings of disgust at those that injure you, opposite to 'forgiving one another.' **And clamour**—or bawling. 'I am not angry,' says one; 'but it is my way to speak so.' Then unlearn that way: it is the way to hell. **And evil speaking**—be it ever so mild and soft a tone, or with ever such professions of kindness. Here is a beautiful retrogradation, beginning with the highest, and descending to the lowest, degree of the want of love"—WESLEY.

All. Observe the comprehensiveness of these precepts. "**Bitterness** is malice sharpened to a point, and directed against the exasperating object. **Wrath**—the passionate outburst of resentment in rage. **Anger**—the settled indignation of the aggrieved soul. **Clamour** is the loud self-assertion of the angry man, who will make everyone hear his grievance; while the **railer** carries the war of the tongue into his enemies' camp, and vents his displeasure in abuse and insult"—FINDLAY. "**Malice** (or 'badness')—this last term is separated from the others as generic and inclusive"—BEET.

32. "**As God**, showing Himself **kind** and **tenderhearted** in the highest degree, **hath forgiven you**"—WESLEY.

"**Kindness** in act, **tenderheartedness** of feeling, are to take the place of malice with its brood of bitter passions. The men of the new life will be found **forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave** them. Here we touch the spring of Christian virtue, the master-motive in the apostle's theory of life. The cross of Jesus Christ is the centre of Pauline ethics, as of Pauline theology. The sacrifice of Calvary, while it is the ground of our salvation, supplies the standard and incentive of moral attainment. It makes life an *imitation of God*"—FINDLAY.

CHAPTER V.

1. **Be ye therefore followers**—"imitators **—of God**—in forgiving and loving"—WESLEY.

It is unfortunate that the chapter-division has been made at this point. This and the following verse continue the exhortation to "imitate God" of ver. 32 in the last chapter. "**We must be imitators of God.** And this because we are His **children,** objects of His tender **love.** For children are expected to bear their father's likeness; and loved ones are influenced by those who love them. **And** love is to be the encompassing element and directive principle of their steps in life—**walk in love**"—BEET.

2. "In ch. 4. 32; 5. 2, the Father's love and the Son's self-sacrifice are spoken of in terms precisely parallel.—Christ does not, by His sacrifice, persuade an angry Father to love His children; it is the Divine compassion in Christ that dictates and carries into effect the sacrifice. At the same time, it was 'an offering and a sacrifice to God.' God is love; but love is not everything in God. Justice is also Divine, and absolute in its own realm. Law can no more forego its rights than love forget its compassions. And the law of God imposing death as the penalty for sin, which shaped Christ's sacrifice, made it acceptable to God. Thus it was 'an odour of a sweet smell'"—FINDLAY.

3. "**But let not** any impure love **be even named** or heard of **among you**—keep at the utmost distance from it, **as becometh saints**"—WESLEY.

What a contrast after "the odour of a sweet smell"! No wonder S. Paul says, **let it not be even named among you.** (Comp. this verse with ch. 4. 19, noting the coupling in both passages of *covetousness* with fleshly sins.)

4. **Nor foolish talking**—"tittle-tattle, talking of nothing, the weather, fashions, meat, and drink. **Or jesting**—the word properly means 'wittiness, facetiousness,' esteemed by the heathens an half-virtue. But how frequently even this quenches the Spirit, those who are tender of conscience know. **Which are not convenient**—for a Christian; as neither increasing his faith nor holiness"—WESLEY.

Jesting here means immoral pleasantry. **Convenient** (R.V. "befitting"). (Comp. "as becometh saints," ver. 3.) **Giving of thanks.** (Comp. Phil. 4. 6; Col. 2. 7; 4. 2.)

5. A solemn reason for the commands of ver. 3. Breakers of those commands are shut out of heaven. Although the fear of exclusion from heaven is not the highest conceivable moral motive, there are cases in which it is the strongest, and we have the authority of both Christ and the apostles for employing it.

6. **Because of these things**—"as innocent as the heathens esteem them, and as those dealers in **vain words** would persuade you to think them"—WESLEY.

Let no man deceive you—as their heathen neighbours would certainly try to do. (Comp. Rom. 16. 18; 1 Cor. 3. 18; 2 Cor. 11. 3; Col. 2. 8; 2 Thess. 2. 3; Jas. 1. 26.) **With empty words**—words void of all truth—**for because of these things**—the vices before named—**the wrath of God** (comp. Rom. 1. 18) **cometh,** or "is coming," is even now on its way. (See last note on the fear of judgment as a deterrent to wrong-doing.)

7. **Partakers**—of their sin and of the consequent *wrath of God.*

8. **Ye were once darkness**—"total blindness and ignorance. **Walk as children of light**—suitably to your present knowledge"—WESLEY.

"Not merely 'in the dark.' So had the night of spiritual ignorance and sin penetrated them that they were, as it were, night itself, night embodied. **Light**—again not merely

'in the light.' The Divine Light of truth, holiness, and resulting joy, had now so penetrated them that they were, in a sense, light embodied; not seeing light only, but being light and emitting it. (Comp. Matt. 5. 14)"—MOULE.

9. **The fruit of the light**—"opposite to 'the unfruitful works of darkness' (ver. 11)—**is in**—that is, consists in—**goodness and righteousness and truth**—opposite to the sins spoken of in ch. 4. 25, etc."—WESLEY.

This verse is a parenthesis, giving both a definition of, and an incitement to, *walking in the light*. The A.V. renders **fruit of the Spirit**, as in Gal. 5. 22. But the older MSS. read **fruit of the light** (and so R.V.). "Right is the fruit of light"—FINDLAY. "**Goodness**—practical beneficence. **Righteousness**—conduct in agreement with the Law. **Truth**—moral agreement with the eternal realities"—BEET.

10. **Proving**, etc.—testing the rightness or wrongness of all that presents itself to be done, by the question, "Is it well-pleasing to God?"

11. **Reprove them**—"to avoid them is not enough"—WESLEY.

Lit. **Be not partakers with. Unfruitful**—in marked contrast to the "fruit of the light" (ver. 9). **Reprove** (R.V. *margin*, "convict," *i.e.* "prove to be wrong").

12. **In secret**—as flying the light. This verse is to be regarded as an emphatically-worded justification of the foregoing exhortation. The sins of those who still dwell in darkness are such that it is polluting to mention them, except when an opportunity of reproving them arises, and makes such mention inevitable.

13. "**But all things which are reproved, are** thereby dragged out into the light, and **made manifest**—shown in their proper colours, **by the light. For whatsoever doth make manifest is light**—that is, for nothing but light, yea, light from heaven, can make anything manifest"—WESLEY.

For everything that is made manifest is light (R.V.). "The drift of this somewhat difficult verse, suggested by the context, seems to be, 'You are light in the Lord; use this character upon the surrounding moral darkness, in order to the rescue of its victims, that they also may become light. Nothing but light will do this work; no conquest over darkness, literal or spiritual, is possible, except to light. And one evidence of this is that every such real conquest results in the subjects of darkness becoming now subjects of light, becoming lights.' More briefly, 'You are light; keep pure then, but shine far into the dark. And then other men, as already you, shall become light in the Lord'"—MOULE.

14. **Wherefore He**—"God—**saith**—in the general tenor of His word, to all who are still in darkness—**awake, thou that sleepest**—in ignorance of God and thyself, in stupid insensibility—**and arise from the dead**—from the death of sin—**and Christ shall give thee light**—knowledge, holiness, happiness"—WESLEY.

Not a quotation from the Old Testament but possibly from an early Christian hymn. "The lines are a free paraphrase from the Old Testament, formed by weaving together messianic passages—belonging to such a hymn as might be sung at baptisms in the Pauline churches"—FINDLAY. **Wherefore**—"because reproof is so necessary and salutary"—MEYER.

15. **Circumspectly**—"exactly, with the utmost accuracy, getting to the highest pitch of every point of holiness. **Not as fools**—who think not where they are going, or do not make the best of their way"—WESLEY.

Look therefore—"resumes, after the digression begun with 'rather even improve,' in ver. 11"—MEYER. "**Walk**—the seventh and last occurrence in the Epistle of this important metaphor. Observe how the illuminated Christian is **to keep his eyes open.** No guidance is promised to him which shall dispense with patient watchfulness"—MOULE.

16. "With all possible care **redeeming the time**—saving all you can for the best purposes; buying every possible moment out of the hands of sin and Satan; out of the hands of sloth, ease, pleasure, worldly business; the more diligently, because **the** present **are evil days**, days of the grossest ignorance, immorality, and profaneness"—WESLEY.

Lit. **Buying out the opportunity**—the price we have to pay being the watchfulness and circumspectness of ver. 15. (Comp. Col. 4. 5.) We are to be "like men expecting a siege, who strengthen their fortifications, and furbish their weapons, and practise their drill, and lay up stores of supplies that they may 'stand in the evil day'"—FINDLAY. **The days are evil**—so evil that during the next decade Rome was burnt, and many of the Christian companions of S. Paul put to death. The probability that the lives of some of his readers would be cut short by persecutors in these **evil days** was another reason why they should **redeem** every possible **opportunity.**

17. **What the will of the Lord is**—"in every time, place, and circumstance"—WESLEY.

Be not foolish, and without moral seriousness, but **understand what is the will of the Lord**, which must ever be the rule of your life. (Carefully comp. Rom. 12. 2.)

18. **Wherein is excess**—"that is, which leads to debauchery of every kind. **But be ye filled with the Spirit**—in all His graces, who

gives a more noble pleasure than wine can do" —WESLEY.

Be not drunken with wine—a thing utterly opposed to "the will of God" just mentioned; **but** instead of such debasing *physical* excitement—**be filled in spirit** (R.V. *margin*), "Be ye filled with the Spirit"—"a command to yield up ourselves entirely to God. It tells us that we must establish it in our minds as a law of our religion that our whole being must be pervaded by the spirit of consecration. Not as the distant issue of a life of struggles, or as the final baptism of the spirit of Christianity; but as the present gift, and, indeed, as one of the earliest gifts of our redemption"—POPE. S. Paul here recognises, and provides for, our natural craving for excitement. "Our nature craves excitement—some stimulus that shall set the pulses dancing, and thrill the jaded frame, and lift the spirit above the task-work of life, and the dreary and hard conditions which make up the daily lot of multitudes. It is this craving that gives to strong drink its cruel fascination"—FINDLAY. "Man loves to *feel* himself alive; he would fain live his life twice at once; and he would rather draw excitement from horrible things than have no excitement at all"—MONOD. S. Paul does not denounce the longing for occasional fuller and quicker life; nor does he deny that wine, for a season, satisfies this longing; but he forbids his readers to seek the ardours they crave in wine, because **therein is riot**—ribald songs and speech, immoral behaviour. If we must have moments of special enthusiasm and exaltation, let them come from *spiritual* joys, by our being **filled in Spirit** (or "with the Spirit").

19. **Speaking to each other**—"by the Spirit—**in the Psalms** of David—**and hymns**—of praise—**and spiritual songs**—on any Divine subject. **Singing with your hearts**—as well as your voice—**to the Lord**—Jesus, who searcheth the heart"—WESLEY.

S. Paul gives examples of the spiritual joys which are to supply the place of intoxication. **Psalms**, etc., instead of the indecent songs of the drinking bouts. In addition to the Hebrew psalms of praise, a small number of Christian hymns, antiphons, and doxologies had already come into use. The ecstasies enjoyed while joining in sacred music are well known, and the writer of this note has acquaintance with several cases in which converted drunkards have found it an adequate substitute for alcoholic excitements. S. Paul's precepts are here, as elsewhere, true to the facts of human nature, and the reverse of unpractical.

20. **Giving thanks**—"at all times and places. And **for all things**—prosperous or adverse, since all work together for good. **In the name of**, or through, **our Lord Jesus Christ**—by whom we receive all good things"—WESLEY.

Thanks always for all things. Observe the comprehensiveness of the expression, **subjecting yourselves**, etc.; sinking considerations of self-indulgence for the good of others, and for Christ's sake. Another very practical substitute for the pleasures of drunkenness. Many drunkards who have been induced to give up drink for a time, have forsworn it altogether on perceiving the vast increase of happiness their self-denial has brought to home and loved ones.

22. "In the following directions concerning relative duties, the inferiors are all along placed before the superiors, because the general proposition is concerning submission; and inferiors ought to do their duty, whatever their superiors do. **Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands**—unless where God forbids. Otherwise, in all indifferent things, the will of the husband is the law to the wife. **As unto the Lord.** The obedience a wife pays to her husband is at the same time paid to Christ Himself; he being **head of the wife, as Christ is Head of the Church**"—WESLEY.

The last paragraph (vers. 15–21) closed with a reference to "submission," and the **submission** of **wives** to their **own husbands** is now very naturally touched upon. **As unto the Lord.** "The wife must recognise that her position of subordination is ordained by Christ, and that in bowing to her husband she does but submit to her Master in heaven"—BEET.

23. **The head**—"the governor, guide, and guardian of the wife—**and He is the Saviour of the body**—the Church, from all sin and misery"—WESLEY.

"See 1 Cor. 11. 3. The husband and the wife are 'one flesh' (ver. 31), and the husband, in that sacred union, is the leader. So Christ and the Church are one, and Christ is the Leader"—MOULE. R.V. **Being Himself the Saviour of the body.** The reference is to Christ, and not the earthly husband. The *He* is emphatic. "Body"—the Church.

24. **In everything**—"which is not contrary to any command of God"—WESLEY.

The last clause of the preceding verse was inserted by S. Paul to guard the unique dignity and office of Christ as Head of the mystical body. Earthly husbands are indeed to some extent a type of Him in that relation, but not fully so. There is a difference. **He** is not only **the Head**, but also **the Saviour of the body.** But, having duly recognised this, the apostle reasserts the command of ver. 22. **Nevertheless** (R.V. "But"), *i.e.* "in spite of this difference," **as the Church**, etc. "The apostle has guarded the husband's headship from undue comparison with the Lord's, but now he enforces its true likeness to it"—MOULE. "**Their own**—for not only does the wife belong to the husband, but the husband to the wife"—MONOD.

25. **Even as Christ loved the Church.** "Here is the true model of conjugal affection. With this kind of affection, with this degree of

it, and to this end, should husbands love their wives"—WESLEY.

"The apostle, true to the spirit of the gospel, speaks to the wife of the authority of the husband, to the husband of devotion to the wife; each party is reminded not of rights, but of duties. In Christian domestic life, Jesus Christ is at once the starting-point and the goal of everything. We may even say that domestic life is the triumph of the Christian faith"—MONOD. "There are many who, out of doors, are civil and kind to all; when at home, toward their wives and children, whom they have no need to fear, they freely practise secret bitterness"—BENGEL. When the love of Christ to the Church is his standard a man will love his wife with "a love which is ready to undergo even death"—MEYER. For the love of Christ was unto death.

26. **That He might sanctify it through the word**—"the ordinary channel of all blessings. **Having cleansed it**—from the guilt and power of sin. **By the washing of water**—in baptism; if, with 'the outward and visible sign,' we receive the 'inward and spiritual grace'"—WESLEY.

Vers. 26 and 27 contain "a digression expounding the moral aim of Christ's self-surrender"—BEET. **It**, or "her" (a better translation). The pronoun is so placed in the Greek as to mean, "It was in 'her' interest that He did this, and so in the wife's interest the husband should be ready for sacrifice"—MOULE. **Washing of water**—*lit.* "bath of water." Perhaps "the bride's bath on the eve of marriage" (BEET) was in the apostle's mind. (Comp. next verse.) **By the word.** This phrase belongs to "sanctify her," and denotes the instrument by which the sanctification is effected.

27. **That He might present it**—"even in this world—**to Himself**—as His spouse—**a glorious Church**—all glorious within—**not having spot**—of impurity from any sin—**or wrinkle**—of deformity from any decay"—WESLEY.

That He might Himself present to Himself—gives a better idea of the original, and is "an emphatic assertion that the giver and receiver are the same. For the Bride has been rescued and purified by the self-surrender of the Bridegroom"—BEET. **Glorious.** (Comp. Rev. 19. 7, 8; 21. 11.) **Spot or wrinkle.** "Maintaining his metaphor, S. Paul describes moral imperfections as bodily blemishes"—BEET. Holy and **without blemish**—entirely His, and entirely beautiful.

28. **As their own bodies**—"that is, as themselves. **He that loveth his wife loveth himself**—which is not a sin but an indisputable duty"—WESLEY.

As their own bodies. "These words link together two closely-related metaphors—viz. the Church as the body (ver. 23) and as the bride (ver. 27) of Christ; and bring them to bear, thus linked together, upon the relation of husband and wife"—BEET. "From the duty of loving their wives **as their own bodies** results the proposition of conjugal ethics, that the love of one's own wife is love of oneself"—MEYER.

29. **His own flesh**—"that is, himself. **Nourisheth and cherisheth**—that is, feeds and clothes—**it**"—WESLEY.

This verse "assigns the reason of what immediately precedes. 'He who loves his own wife loves himself; for if he did not love her, he would hate **his own flesh**, which is so repugnant to nature that no one has ever yet done it but rather everyone does the opposite, as also **Christ**—and that gives to this natural relation the highest consecration—acts with regard to the Church, because this constitutes the members of His body"—MEYER.

30. **For we.** "The reason why Christ nourishes and cherishes the Church is, that close connection between them which is here expressed in the words of Moses, originally spoken concerning Eve. **Are members**—are as intimately united to Christ, in a spiritual sense, as if we were literally 'flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone'"—WESLEY.

Members—or "limbs"—**of His flesh**, etc., omitted by the Revisers.

31. **For this cause**—"because of this intimate union"—WESLEY.

"The Greek in this verse is practically identical with that of Gen. 2. 24. We may reverently infer that the apostle was guided to see in that verse a Divine parable of the coming forth of the Lord, the MAN of men, from the FATHER, and His present and eternal mystical union with the true Church, His Bride"—MOULE. In a former note attention has been called to the words "in Christ," which words express the dominant idea of this Epistle, and occur more than twenty times. The profound passage (vers. 22–33) is to be read with this fact in view. S. Paul, his mind full from the outset of *the life of the Church in Christ*, perceives how the marriage relation (with regard to which at ver. 22 he begins to give precepts) illustrates that truth, and sets forth anew the doctrine of union with Christ, under the metaphor of marriage.

32. **This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church.** "This revealed mystery, the union of bride and bridegroom, is great; but I say so in reference to the bridal of redemption to which our thought has been drawn"—MOULE. "When he speaks of 'this great mystery,' he means thereby not marriage itself, but *the saying of Adam about it.* The text was a standing problem to the Jewish interpreters. 'But for my part,' says the apostle, 'I refer it to Christ and to the Church'"—FINDLAY.

33. **Nevertheless**—although our thought has just been drawn to "Christ and the Church," see to it that **ye also severally love**, etc.

And let the wife, etc. "So careful is S. Paul to balance the duty of the husband by that of the wife"—BEET. Observe that though S. Paul does not denounce polygamy, the whole paragraph just closed presupposes monogamy. (Comp. S. Paul's attitude to slavery. He did not prohibit it, but enunciated principles which slowly but surely undermined it, and eventually swept it away.)

CHAPTER VI.

1. **Children, obey your parents.** "In all things lawful the will of the parent is a law to the child. **In the Lord**—for His sake—**for this is right**—manifestly just and reasonable"—WESLEY.

"This duty is also enforced in Scripture by a temporal promise. It derives a most influential and affecting illustration from the conduct of our Lord, who was Himself an instance of subjection to parents"—WATSON. **Obey**—a different word from that rendered "submit" (ver. 21), for the obedience of wives differs from that of children. **This is right**—in harmony with God's law.

2. **Honour**—"that is, love, reverence, obey, assist, in all things. The mother is particularly mentioned, as being more liable to be slighted than the father. **Which is the first commandment with a promise**—for the promise implied in the second commandment does not belong to the keeping that command in particular, but the whole Law"—WESLEY.

S. Paul is here reminding the children of one of their earliest lessons in religious matters—the ten commandments. From this quotation it follows that S. Paul considered the ancient Moral Law as still binding, though the Ceremonial Law had passed away.

3. **That thou mayest live long upon the earth.** "This is usually fulfilled to eminently dutiful children; and he who lives long and well has a long seed-time for the eternal harvest. But this promise in the Christian dispensation is to be understood chiefly in a more exalted and spiritual sense"—WESLEY.

"The promise is here quoted chiefly to remind the readers of the special honour given to the command by the promise attached to it"—BEET.

4. **And ye fathers**—"mothers are included; but fathers are named, as being more apt to be stern and severe. **Provoke not your children to wrath**—do not needlessly fret or exasperate them. **But bring them up**—with all tenderness and mildness—**in the instruction and discipline of the Lord**—both in Christian knowledge and practice"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Col. 3. 21.) In this passage (vers. 1-4), as in the preceding (on marriage) and following (on service), first the weaker and then the stronger are reminded of their duties one to another. **Nurture them.** Moral training rather than physical is implied in the word, but parental duty of course includes both. **Of the Lord.** "Correction and instruction should proceed from the Lord, and be directed by the Spirit of the Lord, in such a way that it is not so much the father who corrects his children and teaches them as the Lord through him"—MONOD.

5. **Your masters according to the flesh**—"according to the present state of things: afterward the servant is free from his master. **With fear and trembling**—a proverbial expression, implying the utmost care and diligence. **In singleness of heart**—with a single eye to the providence and will of God"—WESLEY.

The flesh. Those who owned slaves were masters of their bodies, but not of their souls. **Fear**, etc.—"an anxious desire to do right, and a consciousness of the spiritual peril of disobedience"—BEET. (Comp. 1 Cor. 2. 3; 2 Cor. 7. 15; Phil. 2. 12.) "**Singleness of heart**—the **fear and trembling** are to be genuine, and without duplicity"—MEYER.

6. **Not with eye-service**—"serving them better when under their eye than at other times—**but doing the will of God from the heart**—doing whatever you do as the will of God, and with your might"—WESLEY.

S. Paul means "the service which is rendered to the **eyes** of the master, but in which the aim is merely to acquire the *semblance* of fidelity, inasmuch as one makes himself noticeable when seen by the master, but is in reality not such, acting, on the contrary, otherwise when his back is turned. The **men** whom such slaves endeavour to please are just their **masters**, and the fault of this behaviour lies in the fact that such endeavour is not conditioned by the higher point of view of serving Christ, and doing the will of God, but has as its aim simply *human* approbation. Even of slaves Matt. 6. 24 holds good. (Comp. Gal. 1. 10)"—MEYER.

7. **Unto the Lord, and not to men**—"that is, rather than to men; and by making every action of common life a sacrifice to God, having an eye to Him in all things, even as if there were no other master"—WESLEY.

Work is to be done **with good will** or "gladness." And this will become easy when all things are done **as unto the Lord.**

8. **He shall receive the same**—"that is, a full and adequate recompense for it"—WESLEY.

The equality of all in Christ was a prominent thought with S. Paul at the time of writing this letter. (Comp. Col. 3. 11.) "In vers. 5-8 we read (1) that there must be a genuine 'care for' our work; (2) that the sense of Christ's lordship ensures 'honesty' in work; (3) that to carefulness and honesty we must even add 'heartiness'; (4) that there is to be the servant's 'anticipation of the final reward'"—FINDLAY.

9. **Do the same things to them**—"that is, act toward them from the same principle,

Forbearing threatening — behaving with gentleness and humanity, not in a harsh or domineering way"—WESLEY.

Nowadays we can scarcely appreciate the boldness of this precept. Slaves were for the most part regarded as made of different flesh and blood from free men. This is a practical law of conduct logically deduced from the Pauline gospel of salvation *for all*. **Threatening**—the Greek suggests "the too habitual threatening"—ELLICOTT. **Knowing**, etc. (See under foregoing verse, and comp. Col. 3. 25.)

10. **Brethren.** This is the only place in this Epistle where he uses this compellation. Soldiers frequently use it to each other in the field. **Be strong**—nothing less will suffice for such a fight; to be weak, and remain so, is the way to perish. **In the power of His might**—a very uncommon expression, plainly denoting what great assistance we need, as if 'His might' would not do, it must be the 'powerful exertion' of His might"—WESLEY.

Finally, or "from henceforth" (R.V. *margin*). **Brethren**, omit. **Be strong**—*lit.* "Be made strong"—**in the Lord**—in whom alone is our strength. "Wisely does the apostle, after the special injunctions to husbands and wives, etc., now in general enjoin it upon all together to be strong in the Lord"—JEROME.

11. **Put on the whole armour of God.** "The Greek word means a complete suit of armour. Believers are said to 'put on' the girdle, breastplate, shoes; to **take** the shield of faith, and sword of the Spirit. 'The whole armour'—as if the 'armour' would scarce do, it must be the 'whole' armour. This is repeated (ver. 13), because of the strength and subtlety of our adversaries, and because of an 'evil day' of sore trial being at hand"—WESLEY.

Whole armour, or "panoply"—"an entire and full suit of armour and weapons, described in detail in vers. 14-17. It is the entire provision **of God** to protect His servants, and to arm them for the battle of life. All this S. Paul bids his readers appropriate to themselves"—BEET. **That ye may be able to stand your ground**—maintain your Christian position, and hold the fortress for God. **Wiles**—"wily assaults"—LUTHER. The word means "stratagems." In the two most momentous temptations in history—the temptation of Eve and that of Christ—the tempter's method was *stratagem* and *wiliness*. **The devil**—in whose personality S. Paul emphatically believed. He is "the chief of the foes who are named in ver. 12"—BENGEL.

12. "**For our wrestling is not** only, not chiefly, **against flesh and blood**—weak men, or fleshly appetites—**but against principalities, against powers**—the mighty princes of all the infernal regions. And great is their power, and that likewise of those legions whom they command. **Against the rulers of the world.** Perhaps these 'principalities' and 'powers' remain mostly in the citadel of their kingdom of darkness. But there are other evil spirits who range abroad, to whom the provinces of the world are committed. **Of the darkness**—this is chiefly spiritual darkness—**of this age**—which prevails during the present state of things. **Against wicked spirits**—who continually oppose faith, love, holiness, either by force or fraud; and labour to infuse unbelief, pride, idolatry, malice, envy, anger, hatred. **In heavenly places**—which were once their abode, and which they still aspire to, as far as they are permitted"—WESLEY.

In a sense we do sometimes wrestle **against flesh and blood**, but the language of this passage is rhetorical, and **not**, as sometimes in English idiom, is used in the sense of "much more than." **Our wrestling is not against** men, **but against** spiritual foes. **Principalities and powers**—the fallen angels, here described as of different ranks, under the same titles as S. Paul elsewhere gives to the unfallen angels. **The world-rulers of this darkness** (R.V.). Evil spirits exercising some kind of rule over the world, so long as it is the scene of sin, and therefore of "darkness." **The spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places** (R.V.)—non-material beings, fighting on the side of wickedness. "Heavenly places," in the widest sense, *i.e.* "non-earthly places," The reference is not of course to those "heavenly places" where His own are to dwell with Christ, but to **the air** (comp. in R.V., Matt. 6. 26). As "flesh and blood" dwell on earth, so these "spiritual hosts" have their abode "in the air" or "heavens." In reading passages like this, of which there are several in the New Testament, we do well to be on our guard against idle and irreverent speculations concerning angelic beings, good and evil.

13. **In the evil day.** "The war is perpetual; but the fight is one day less, another more, violent. **The evil day** is either at the approach of death, or in life; may be longer or shorter; and admits of numberless varieties. **And having done all, to stand**—that ye may still keep on your armour, still 'stand' upon your guard, still watch and pray; and thus ye will be enabled to endure unto the end, and 'stand' with joy before the face of the Son of Man"—WESLEY.

Wherefore — "because we have to fight against *these* powers"—MEYER. **The evil day**—"the dark crisis of the campaign, whenever it may be"—MOULE. **And having accomplished all things**—needful for triumph. **To stand**—all the hosts of evil having been beaten back.

14. **Having your loins girt about**—"that ye may be ready for every motion—**with truth**—not only with the truths of the gospel, but with 'truth in the inward parts';—for without this all our knowledge of Divine truth—will prove but a poor girdle 'in the evil day.' So our Lord is described (Isa. 11. 5). And as a girded man is always ready to go on, so this

seems to intimate an obedient heart, a ready will. Our Lord adds to the loins girded, the lights burning (Luke 12. 35); showing that watching and ready obedience are the inseparable companions of faith and love. **And having on the breastplate of righteousness**—the righteousness of a spotless purity, in which Christ will present us faultless before God, through the merit of His own blood. With this 'breastplate' our Lord is described. (Isa. 59. 17.) In the breast is the seat of conscience, which is guarded by righteousness. No armour for the back is mentioned. We are always to face our enemies"—WESLEY.

Stand, or "stand forth"—MEYER. **Having girded.** "It was the girdle which produced the free bearing and movement and the necessary attitude of the warrior"—MEYER. **Truth.** Here again, as several times already in this Epistle, S. Paul emphasises the importance of a firm grasp on Christian "truth." **Breastplate**—protecting the heart—**of righteousness.** Although this phrase includes the idea of righteous living, its chief reference is to "the righteousness which is of God by faith." Satan is described in Scripture as the accuser, and this breastplate shields us from the blows of his accusations. "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

15. **And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel**—"let this be always ready to direct and confirm you in every step. This part of the armour, for the feet, is needful, considering what a journey we have to go; what a race to run. Our feet must be so shod, that our footsteps slip not. To order our life and conversation aright, we are 'prepared' by the gospel blessing, the peace and love of God ruling in the heart. (Col. 3. 14, 15.) By this only can we tread the rough ways, surmount our difficulties, and hold out to the end"—WESLEY.

The **girdle** and **breastplate** are for *safety*. But the warrior also needs *readiness*, to which this verse refers. **Preparation.** This word may be translated "equipment." **Gospel of peace.** Many explanations have been given of this reference to "peace" in a description of *war*. Evidently S. Paul had in his mind Isa. 52. 7, which passage colours his phraseology here. But some commentators take S. Paul to mean "readiness to preach peace to others." FINDLAY connects this with the Christian warfare, thus: "Attack is often the best mode of defence. We keep our faith by spreading it. We defend ourselves from our opponents by converting them to the gospel, which breathes everywhere reconciliation and fraternity. God's peacemakers are His mightiest warriors."

16. "**Above** or 'over' **all**—as a sort of universal covering to every other part of the armour itself, continually exercise a strong and lively **faith.** This you may use as a **shield**, which will **quench all the fiery darts**, the furious temptations, violent and sudden injections **of the devil**"—WESLEY.

The Greek word rendered **shield** denotes a large shield, four feet by two and a half, and covered with leather. **Fiery darts**—arrows with burning tow near the barb, used by the ancients, especially in naval warfare. **Faith**—"that faith whereby we resolutely rely on God, and His word, for deliverance from temptation"—MONOD. **The devil**—"the great general of the besieging host"—MOULE.

17. "**And take for an helmet** the hope **of salvation.** (1 Thess. 5. 8.) The head is that part which is most carefully to be defended. One stroke here may prove fatal. The armour for this is 'the hope of salvation.' The lowest degree of this hope is a confidence that God will work the whole work of faith in us; the highest is a full assurance of future glory, added to the experimental knowledge of pardoning love. Armed with this 'helmet,' the hope of the joy set before him, Christ 'endured the cross, and despised the shame' (Heb. 12. 2). **And the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.** This Satan cannot withstand, when it is edged and wielded by faith. Till now our armour has been only defensive. But we are to attack Satan, as well as secure ourselves; the shield in one hand and the sword in the other. Whoever fights with the powers of hell will need both. He that is covered with armour from head to foot, and neglects this, will be foiled after all. This whole description shows us how great a thing it is to be a Christian. The want of any one thing makes him incomplete. Though he has his loins girt with truth, righteousness for a breastplate, his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit; yet one thing he wants after all. What is that? It follows"—WESLEY.

Take—the original word means "accept from the hands of another." **Of salvation.** "The warrior's head rising above his shield was frequently open to attack. The arrow might shoot over the shield's edge, and inflict a mortal blow. Our faith, at the best, has its deficiencies and its limits; but God's salvation reaches beyond our highest confidence in Him"—FINDLAY. **The sword of the Spirit.** "Either as given by the Spirit, like 'panoply of God,' or used by the Spirit"—BEET. **Which is the word of God.** For an illustration of the use of the written word as a "sword" against Satan, compare Christ's use of it at His temptation.

18. **Praying always**—"at all times, and on every occasion, in the midst of all employments, inwardly praying without ceasing. **By the Spirit**—through the influence of the Holy Spirit—**with all prayer**—with all sort of prayer,—public, private, mental, vocal. Some are careful in respect of one kind of prayer, and negligent in others. If we would have the petitions we ask, let us use all. Some there

are who use only mental prayer or ejaculations, and think they are in a state of grace, and use a way of worship, far superior to any other: but such only fancy themselves to be above what is really above them; it requiring far more grace to be enabled to pour out a fervent and continued prayer than to offer up mental aspirations. **And supplication**—repeating and urging our prayer, as Christ did in the garden. **And watching**—inwardly attending on God, to know His will, to gain power to do it, and to attain to the blessings we desire. **With all perseverance**—continuing to the end in this holy exercise. **And supplication for all the saints**—wrestling in fervent, continued intercession for others, especially for the faithful, that they may do all the will of God, and be steadfast to the end. Perhaps we receive few answers to prayer, because we do not intercede enough for others"—WESLEY.

Although we cannot always be on our knees, there is a sense in which we may be **praying always.** Prayer is to be the constant attitude of the soul. **All prayer; at all seasons; all perseverance; all saints.** Observe the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the exhortation, characteristic of S. Paul. **Watching,** or "keeping awake." The same Greek word is used in Mark 13. 33, Luke 21. 36. **For all saints.** "Let our prayers at least be catholic. At the throne of grace let us forget our sectarian divisions. Having access in one Spirit to the Father, let us realise in His presence our communion with all His children" —FINDLAY.

19. **By the opening my mouth**—"removing every inward and every outward hindrance"—WESLEY.

Lit. **And on behalf of me**—for his appeal to Cæsar was about to be heard, and as at this time more depended upon S. Paul than upon any other man in Christendom, there was urgent need that prayer should ascend for his release. **That utterance may be given unto me.** (Comp. Matt. 10. 18–20.) Observe that S. Paul is not thinking about his personal welfare in asking his readers to pray for him; he is concerned solely for the success of the gospel. **Mystery**—S. Paul has now used this word six times in the present Epistle.

20. **An ambassador in bonds.** "The ambassadors of men usually appear in great pomp. How differently does the ambassador of Christ appear!"—WESLEY.

Bonds. (Comp. Phil. 1. 13.) The reference here to his bondage is a pathetic touch, calculated to produce in his readers a greater readiness to pray for him. (Comp. the similar touches in Philemon.) Prisoners in S. Paul's position were often "coupled by a slight chain round the right wrist to the left of a soldier, and thus shackled. If they could afford it, they were at liberty to hire a lodging for themselves, without the walls, but within the prescribed limits"—LEWIN.

21. **Ye also**—"as well as others"—WESLEY. (See the notes on Col. 4. 7.) **In the Lord.** The last occurrence in the present Epistle of this oft-repeated phrase.

22. **That he might comfort your hearts**—"by relating the supports I find from God, and the success of the gospel"—WESLEY.

Our affairs—concerning which his readers were very anxious, especially as reliable information was so difficult to obtain.

23. **Peace.** "This verse recapitulates the whole Epistle"—WESLEY.

"Grace and peace were the first words of the Epistle—the apostle's salutation to all his churches. In **peace and grace** he breathes out his final blessing"—FINDLAY. **To the brethren**—"noting their close relation to each other and to S. Paul. This suggests the addition **and love**—*i.e.* one to another"—BEET.

24. **In sincerity** — "or in incorruption; without corrupting his genuine gospel, without any mixture of corrupt affections. And that with continuance, till grace issue in glory" —WESLEY.

Incorruptness—same word in 1 Cor. 15. 42, of the resurrection-body. The Church, the body of Christ, is to be characterised by a like "incorruption." This word stands "as the crown and climax of this glorious Epistle"—ALFORD.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

"PHILIPPI was so called from Philip, king of Macedonia, who much enlarged and beautified it. Afterwards it became a Roman colony, and the chief city of that part of Macedonia. Hither S. Paul was sent by a vision to preach; and here, not long after his coming, he was shamefully entreated. Nevertheless many were converted by him, during the short time of his abode there; by whose liberality he was more assisted than by any other church of his

planting. And they had now sent large assistance to him by Epaphroditus; by whom he returns them this Epistle.

"IT CONTAINS SIX PARTS—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1, 2.
II. Thanksgiving and Prayers for them, ... ,, ,, 3–11.
III. He relates his present state and good hope, . . . ,, ,, 12–24.
Whence he exhorts them—
1. While he remains with them to walk worthy of the gospel, Chaps. i. 25–30.—ii. 1–16.
2. Though he should be killed, to rejoice with him, . Chap. ii. 17, 18.
And promises—
1. To certify them of all things by Timotheus, . . ,, ,, 19–24.
2. In the meantime to send Epaphroditus, . . ,, ,, 25–30.
IV. He exhorts them to rejoice, ... ,, iii. 1–3.
Admonishing them to beware of false teachers, and to imitate the true, ... ,, ,, 2–21.
Commending concord, ... ,, iv. 1–3.
He again exhorts them to joy and meekness, . . ,, ,, 4–7.
And to whatsoever things are excellent, . . ,, ,, 8–9.
V. He accepts of their liberality, ... ,, ,, 10–20.
VI. The Conclusion, ... ,, ,, 21–23."
—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Servants.** "S. Paul, writing familiarly to the Philippians, does not style himself an apostle. And under the common title of 'servants,' he tenderly and modestly joins with himself his son **Timotheus**, who had come to Philippi not long after S. Paul had received him. (Acts 16. 3, 12.) **To all the saints.** The apostolic Epistles were sent more directly to the churches than to the pastors of them. **With the bishops and deacons.** The former properly took care of the internal state, the latter of the externals, of the Church (1 Tim. 3. 2–8); although these were not wholly confined to the one, neither those to the other. The word 'bishops' here includes all the presbyters at Philippi, as well as the ruling presbyters; the names bishop and presbyter, or elder, being promiscuously used in the first ages"—WESLEY.

Paul and Timothy — but from ver. 3 onward the singular number is used, and S. Paul alone speaks. **Christ Jesus** — named twice in the very first verse of the Epistle. The sublime Pauline conception expressed by the words "in Christ Jesus" is abundantly present in this letter, as in that to the Ephesians, written about the same time. **Bishops** or "overseers"; the fact that there were several "bishops" in one town conclusively shows that the episcopate in apostolic times was widely different from the diocesan episcopate for which Divine right and apostolic origin are so loudly claimed. **Bishops and deacons**—these officers are named after *the saints*. "The shepherd who rules goes behind the flocks"—CORNELIUS A LAPIDE.

2. Word for word as in Rom. 1. 7; 1 Cor. 1. 3; 2 Cor. 1. 2; Philem. 3. (Comp. also Gal. 1. 3; Eph. 1. 2.)

3. **Every remembrance.** A better translation is "my whole recollection of you," *i.e.* the picture of the Philippian church which S. Paul had in his mind was an entirely gratifying picture. The Philippian saints held a very high place in the apostle's regard.

4. **With joy** — "after the Epistle to the Ephesians, wherein love reigns, follows this, wherein there is perpetual mention of joy. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy.' And joy peculiarly enlivens prayer. The sum of the whole Epistle is, I rejoice. Rejoice ye"—WESLEY. (After BENGEL.)

"This joy explains his thanks. And it becomes, even in his prison at Rome, the keynote of the Epistle"—BEET. "Negatively expressed, the sense up to this point is, 'I never make my intercessory prayer for you all, without always in it associating thanks towards my God with my entire remembrance of you'"—MEYER.

5. "The sense is, **I thank God for your fellowship** with us **in** all the blessings of **the gospel**, which I have done **from the first day** of your receiving it **until now**"—WESLEY.

BEET takes another view. **Fellowship**—"a disposition to share with others' effort, toil, peril, enjoyment, or material good, either by receiving from them a share of their good or ill, or by giving to them a share of ours.

And their brotherhood had been constant throughout their entire Christian course—**from the first day until now.** Constancy is the great test of personal worth. A fellow-worker always ready to co-operate is beyond price."

6. **Being persuaded.** "The grounds of which persuasion are set down in the following verse. **That He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it until the day of Christ**—that He who having justified, hath begun to sanctify you, will carry on this work, till it issue in glory"—WESLEY.

Being confident (R.V.). **This very thing**—an emphatic phrase occurring about ten times in S. Paul's writings. **The day of Jesus Christ.** S. Paul refers to this great "day" about twenty times altogether. To him, in common with all the early Christians, the second coming of Christ (which they expected to take place very soon) was a frequent and influential thought. Observe that we have here "Jesus Christ," and not "Christ Jesus." S. Paul uses the former phrase seventy-eight, and the latter eighty-seven times. The point is not to be unduly pressed; but he often seems to prefer the latter when our Lord is thought of chiefly as the Second Person in the Eternal Trinity; and the former when the Incarnate Saviour, manifested in history as Jesus of Nazareth, is prominent in his mind. And so in this passage. It is the "Son of Man" (Matt. 25. 31). Who shall "come in His glory." Note further that while **the day of Jesus Christ** has been chiefly referred to by later preachers and writers to awaken the unconverted, it was used by S. Paul to warn and encourage Christians also.

7. **As it is right for me to think this of you.** "Why? He does not say, 'Because of an eternal decree,' or 'Because a saint must persevere,' but, **because I have you in my heart, who were all partakers of my grace**—that is, because 'ye were all' ('for which I have you in my heart,' I bear you the most grateful and tender affection) 'partakers of my grace'—that is, sharers in the afflictions which God vouchsafed me as a *grace* or favour (vers. 29, 30); **both in my bonds, and** when I was called forth to answer for myself, and to **confirm the gospel.** It is not improbable that, after they had endured that 'great trial of affliction,' God had sealed them unto full victory, of which the apostle had a prophetic sight"—WESLEY.

"Such feelings are especially right for him, **because** of the intimacy of affectionate intercourse, which has brought him into living contact with the glow of their spiritual life"—MOULE. **I have you in my heart** (R.V. *margin*, "Ye have me in your heart"). If this reading be adopted, the meaning will be, "My heart ought to be full of you, because your hearts are full of me." **My bonds.** "Within the narrow limits of S. Paul's prison walls, his readers are ever with him. Thoughts of them dispel in part the gloom of his dungeon, and strengthen his defence of the gospel"—BEET. **Ye all are partakers with me of grace.** Therefore the "confidence" expressed concerning the Philippians in vers. 6 is justified. S. Paul knew what grace could do for him; and if his readers were **partakers** of it, it would do the same for them.

8. **I long for you with the bowels of Jesus Christ.** "In Paul, not Paul lives, but Jesus Christ. Therefore he longs for them 'with the bowels,' the tenderness, not of Paul, but of Jesus Christ"—BENGEL and WESLEY.

For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus (R.V.). "Long after you." The Greek word is expressive of tender yearning. **Bowels**—perhaps "heart" is the best English rendering; the "bowels" were thought to be "the seat of heartfelt love" (MEYER), and of the affections generally.

9. **And this I pray, that your love**—"which they had already shown—**may abound yet more and more.** The fire which burned in the apostle never says, It is enough. **In knowledge and in all spiritual sense**—which is the ground of all spiritual knowledge. We must be inwardly *sensible* of Divine peace, joy, love; otherwise, we cannot *know* what they are"—WESLEY.

The prayer mentioned in ver. 4 is now more fully described. **Your love.** Many expositors think that love to S. Paul is meant; but in view of the words **in knowledge**, etc., it seems more likely to mean Christian love to God and man in its widest sense. MEYER interprets, "your love one to another." **Knowledge** "denotes a sound knowledge of theoretical and practical truth; **discernment**—a sensitively correct moral perception of the true nature, good or bad, of each circumstance, case, or object, which experience may present"—ELLICOTT.

10. **That ye may try**—"by that spiritual sense—**the things that are excellent**—not only good, but the very best; the superior excellence of which is hardly discerned, but by the adult Christian. **That ye may be** inwardly **sincere**—having a single eye to the very best things, and a pure heart. **And** outwardly **without offence**—holy, unblamable in all things"—WESLEY.

Prove the things that differ (R.V. *margin*). CONYBEARE, **Teaching you to distinguish good from evil.** But the meaning, even if these translations be adopted, is the same. S. Paul takes it for granted that a Christian man, on distinguishing good from bad, will reject the bad and "approve the things that are excellent." **Sincere.** The derivation of the Greek word is doubtful. It is commonly supposed to be from words meaning "sunlight," and "to examine"; hence "found pure when examined by the sun's light"; others suppose

it to mean "sifted and cleansed by rapid movement"—GRIMM-THAYER. "It is the winnowed, the unmingled"—TRENCH. **Without offence**—"practical proof of the **sincereness** in reference to intercourse with others"—MEYER. **The day of Christ.** "The recurrence of this thought proves its firm hold on the mind of S. Paul"—BEET.

11. **Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.** "Here are three properties of that sincerity which is acceptable to God—(1) It must bear fruits, 'the fruits of righteousness,' all inward and outward holinesss, all good tempers, words, and works; and so abundantly, that we may be 'filled' with them. (2) The branch and the fruits must derive both their virtue and their very being from the all-supporting, all-supplying root, **Jesus Christ.** (3) As all these flow from the grace of Christ, so they must issue in **the glory and praise of God**"—WESLEY.

Not only are we to be **void of offence,** and **sincere** (both of which words set forth the Christian character on the *negative* side, see note above), but we are to **bear fruit.** We are to be empty of sin, and **filled with the fruit of righteousness. Righteousness**—"right doing, conformity with the moral standard"—BEET. **Unto the glory,** etc. "For how far the fruitfulness tends to the honour of God, comp. John 15. 8; see Eph. 1. 6–14. God's **glory** is His majesty in itself; **praise** is the praise of that majesty"—MEYER.

12. **The things concerning me**—"my sufferings—**have fallen out rather to the furtherance,** than, as you feared, the hindrance, **of the gospel**"—WESLEY.

From this point to ver. 26 S. Paul describes his own circumstances. The Philippians had no doubt wondered how God could leave His most zealous and successful apostle in captivity, thus arresting the spread of the gospel, and this would be a trial of faith to them. They had further grieved over the hardships and sufferings their old friend was called to endure. In this passage S. Paul comforts them by omitting all reference to the sufferings, and by stating that the captivity, instead of hindering, has **fallen out unto the furtherance of the gospel.** One illustration of the truth of his words is the present Epistle, which the Church could ill spare, and which would never have been written but for his imprisonment at Rome.

13. **My bonds in Christ**—"endured for His sake—**have been made manifest**—much taken notice of—**in the whole palace**—of the Roman emperor"—WESLEY.

Made manifest in Christ. He means that those around him did not mistake him for an ordinary prisoner awaiting trial, but realised that he was "an ambassador in chains of the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6. 20). **Palace** (R.V. "Prætorian guard"; *margin,* "Prætorium"). "Prætorian guard" seems the best rendering. As one soldier after another took his turn in guarding S. Paul, the number of those to whom he made known Christ increased till *throughout the whole Prætorian guard* his **bonds in Christ became manifest. And to all the rest** (R.V.)—the Roman public as distingnished from the guard.

14. **And many**—"who were before afraid—**trusting in the Lord through my bonds**—when they observed my constancy, and safety notwithstanding, are more bold"—WESLEY.

Most of the brethren (R.V.)—not all. (See vers. 15–17.) "Through S. Paul's imprisonment most of the Christians around reposed new trust in Christ; for they saw in S. Paul, as they had never seen before, the presence, power, and sufficient grace of Christ"—BEET. **To speak the word.** This verse implies that not only church officers, but **the brethren** in general were expected to engage in active endeavours to spread the faith.

15, 16. **Some indeed preach Christ out of contention**—"envying S. Paul's success, and striving to hurt him thereby—**not sincerely**—from a real desire to glorify God—**but supposing**—though they were disappointed—**to add** more **affliction to my bonds**—by enraging the Romans against me"—WESLEY.

Most of the brethren (ver. 14) are doing good work from right motives, but there are exceptions. "This is not the case with all; some preach from bad motives. The mention of **speaking the word** brings to the apostle's mind all who were doing so; he pauses then to allude to all, specifying under the **some indeed** his Judaising opponents, while in **some also** he reverts to the sounder majority mentioned in ver. 14"—ELLICOTT. On these Judaising opponents see the notes on Galatians in this Commentary. **Envy**—"moved by vexation at S. Paul's success. **Strife**—active opposition a natural result of envy"—BEET. **Contention**—the word means "factiousness" or "partisanship." **Not sincerely,** or "not purely." **Thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds** (R.V.)—"thinking to make my chains gall me"—LIGHTFOOT. "There were many ways of injuring the apostle, unknown to us, who are unacquainted with the circumstances of the times"—CALVIN. But the chief sting of their cruelty probably lay in their mingling error with gospel truth when S. Paul's **bonds** prevented him from vigorously combating such error.

17. **But the others out of love**—"to Christ and me—**knowing**—not barely, supposing—**that I am set**—*lit.* 'I lie'; yet still going forward in his work. He remained at Rome as an ambassador in a place where he is employed on an important embassy"—WESLEY.

"**Knowing that I lie in prison,** etc."—

LUTHER. But the nature of S. Paul's confinement would scarcely justify such a phrase. Much better is MEYER'S view: "**Knowing that I am destined**, am ordained of God, **for the defence of the gospel**—a destination which they on their parts, in consequence of their love to me, feel themselves impelled to subserve. They labour sympathetically hand in hand with me."

18. **In pretence**—"under colour of propagating the gospel. **In truth**—with a real design so to do"—WESLEY.

The verse means: What does it matter? So long as the gospel is proclaimed, whether from pure motives or impure, I find and will continue to find in such proclamation a ground of joy. Note that S. Paul does not rejoice in the impure motives of his adversaries; but in the bare fact that more ears are hearing the name of Christ. "Let then the word be preached, and let it be heard; be it sincerely or be it pretendedly, so it be done, it is to him, and should be to us, matter (not only of contentment, but also) of rejoicing"—ANDREWS. "His joy reminds us that very imperfect teaching may be better than no teaching, and warns us not to despise imperfect forms of Christianity"—BEET.

19. **This shall turn to my salvation**—"shall procure for me a higher degree of glory. **Through your prayer**—obtaining for me a larger **supply of the Spirit**"—WESLEY.

"**My salvation**—not 'my deliverance from captivity'"—CHRYSOSTOM, etc., but "it will be salutary for me"—MEYER. He means that the attempt "to raise up affliction" for him, forced him to depend more upon God, and resulted in such an increase of faith in God that he was able to joy in tribulation (see last verse). Hence the whole matter has been a source of spiritual blessing to him, and will therefore make still more certain his "salvation." **Spirit of Jesus Christ**—the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Son (John 15. 26).

20. **As always**—"since my call to the apostleship. **In my body**—however it may be disposed of. How that might be he did not yet know. For the apostles did not know all things; particularly in things pertaining to themselves, they had room to exercise faith and patience"—WESLEY.

Earnest expectation—"*lit.* 'waiting with outstretched head,' one forcible word in the Greek"—MOULE. **That in nothing shall I be put to shame**—"that in no respect will a result ensue tending to my shame—a result which would expose me to the reproach of having failed to fulfil my destiny"—MEYER. **Christ shall be magnified**, etc. "A tremendous alternative overhanging S. Paul's bodily life cannot be overlooked in this eager glance into the future. In any case 'Christ will be magnified.' But S. Paul knows not whether it will be **through** the continued preservation of his body in **life**, or **through** his **death**"—BEET.

21. **To me to live is Christ**—"to know, to love, to follow Christ, is my life, my glory, my joy"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Gal. 2. 20.) This verse "confirms the preceding assertion by showing the real nature of 'life' and 'death' according to the apostle's present mode of regarding them"—ELLICOTT. **To me**—emphatic in the original. "In *my* view and definition of the term, **Life** is but another name for Christ"—PEILE. **And to die is gain**—"inasmuch as by death I attain to Christ"—MEYER. And "shall be with him more intimately"—CHRYSOSTOM.

22. "Here he begins to treat of the former clause of the preceding verse. Of the latter he treats in ch. 2. 17. **But if I am to live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour**—this is the fruit of my living longer, that I can labour more. Glorious labour! desirable fruit! In this view long life is indeed a blessing. **And what I should choose I know not**—that is, if it were left to my choice"—WESLEY.

But if to live in the flesh—if this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wot not (R.V. *margin*, "I do not make known"). On this difficult passage ELLICOTT says: "'The connection seems to be as follows: In ver. 21 the apostle had spoken of life and death from a strictly *personal* point of view; in this aspect death was gain. The thought, however, of his *official* labours reminds him that his life bears blessing and fruitfulness to others; so he pauses; 'the hope of the conversion of many having presented itself to him, he stops and hesitates.'" VERNON BARTLET suggests the paraphrase, "But if (still) to live in the flesh (be my lot) this (means) for me fruitful work; and what my choice is to be, I declare not explicitly. For I am hemmed in on both sides, my own desire being," etc.

23. **To depart**—"out of bonds, flesh, the world—**and to be with Christ**—in a nearer and fuller union. It is better 'to depart'; it is far better to be with Christ"—WESLEY.

But I am in a strait betwixt the two—*i.e.* between life and death. "The apostle asks which is most worth his while, to live or to die. The same question is often presented to ourselves, and perhaps our reply has been that of the apostle. But may we not have made it with a far different import? Life and death have seemed to us like two evils, and we knew not which was the less. To the apostle they seem like two immense blessings, and he knows not which is the better"—MONOD. **Having my desire to depart**. The word implies the striking of a camp, or the unmooring of a ship. Hence CHRYSOSTOM paraphrases the passage, "migration from earth to heaven." BENGEL says that to **depart** was

never undesirable for the saints, but **to be with Christ** is characteristic of the New Testament. "Christianity does not tell us of the splendours of the invisible world; but it does far better when it informs us that to loosen from the shore of mortality is to be with Christ"—ISAAC TAYLOR. "The man who views the prospect thus has just said that to him to live is Christ. Death is 'gain' for him, therefore, not as mere escape or release, but as a glorious augmentation; it is 'Christ' still, only very far more of Christ"—MOULE.

24. *Lit.* **To abide by the flesh**—"to hold fast to its conditions of trial for the sake of the Lord and His flock. Desire, and the sense of betterness, lie on the side of death; obligation, in view of the claims of others, lies on the side of life"—MOULE.

25. **I know**—"by a prophetic notice given him while he was writing this—**that I shall continue** some time longer **with you**—and doubtless he did see them after this confinement"—WESLEY.

And having this confidence—that "to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake—**I know that I shall abide.** Observe the sublime faith in God's wisdom, goodness, and power, implied in this statement. 'What is best will happen!' **Abide with you all.** The Greek verb means 'abide by,' and gives the idea of association in life and work. **Progress and joy of faith**—probably 'progress' in the Christian life, and the 'joy' which always accompanies growth, both progress and joy being derived from 'faith,' the unique condition of Christian life"—BEET.

26. **That your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again** (R.V.). "S. Paul's presence once more at Philippi after his imprisonment will give to the Christians there in his person an increased confidence and exaltation in Christ. Thus will his continued life increase his readers' faith in God, and consequently their joy and their spiritual growth"—BEET.

27. **Only**—"be careful for this, and nothing else. **Stand fast in one spirit**—with the most perfect unanimity. **Striving together**—with united strength and endeavours—**for the faith of the gospel**—for all the blessings revealed and promised therein"—WESLEY.

Only let your manner of life, etc. (R.V.). The Greek verb is derived from the word meaning "city," and may be rendered, "Let your life of Christian citizenship be worthy of the gospel." **That whether I come**—as in vers. 25, 26, he wrote he surely would—**or be absent**—which, for a time at least, he must be—**I may hear of your state** during my absence. The structure of the sentence is not strictly grammatical, but the meaning is quite clear: "If **present**, let me **see**, and if **absent**, let me **hear** that **ye stand fast.**" **In one spirit.** (Comp. Acts 4. 32.) "The practical community of spirit"—DE WETTE. **With one soul striving together.** The Greek word is that from which our word "athlete" is derived. **For the faith**—for its spread among men.

28. **Which**—"namely, their being adversaries to the word of God, and to you the messengers of God—**is an evident token**—that they are on the high road to **perdition**; and you, in the way of **salvation**"—WESLEY.

And in nothing affrighted by the adversaries—the open and avowed opponents of the Philippians in their "contending for the faith." **Which is for them an evident token of perdition.** "The fearlessness of the persecuted will be to their enemies a proof that eternal ruin awaits them. For it will reveal supernatural help given to the persecuted, and thus prove that God is with them, and that consequently their opponents are fighting against God"—BEET. "Whenever the persecutors fail to triumph over the persecuted, the plotters over the plotted-against, the tyrants over the tyrannised, is it not thence plain that they will perish?"—CHRYSOSTOM. **But of your salvation**—for the God who is *against* them, is *for* you. **And that from God**—"refers not immediately to the word 'salvation,' but to the whole previous idea of opposition met in a way to encourage faith. God Himself has ordained the circumstances, and given the union and courage"—MOULE.

29. **For to you it is given**—"as a token of God's love, and of your being in the way of salvation"—WESLEY.

The "token" of the last verse was "truly not a human but a Divine token"—VAN HENGEL. In proof of this, S. Paul mentions that it was God who caused his readers to **believe on** Christ, thereby separating them from unbelievers; and that it was God who permitted them **to suffer in His behalf** at the hands of unbelievers, that the victory over persecution might be a "token" to them of the final victory over all evil which will ensure eternal **salvation.**

30. "**Having the same** kind of **conflict** with your adversaries, **which ye saw in me**—when I was with you (Acts 16. 12, 19, etc.)"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul's intention in thus speaking is to bring home to them the high dignity and distinction of suffering for Christ, which is involved in the consciousness of fellowship in conflict with the apostle"—MEYER. "He does not say 'ye heard,' but **ye saw**, for he sustained a conflict even in Philippi"—CHRYSOSTOM. "One of the probable recipients of this letter, the jailor, had not only *seen* but inflicted other sufferings in the dungeon."—MOULE.

CHAPTER II.

1. **If there be therefore any consolation**—"in the grace of Christ. **If any comfort**—in the love of God. **If any fellowship of the Holy Ghost; if any bowels of mercies**—

resulting therefrom; any tender affection towards each other"—WESLEY.

In ver. 30 of the previous chapter he has spoken of his readers as sharing his "conflict"; he now urges them to "fulfil his joy" (see next verse), and they are to do this by cultivating that unity which he has mentioned in ver. 27. BEET thus paraphrases the verse: "If there is anything in Christ moving you to yield to my request, if my sufferings claim that consolation which love is ever ready to give, if the Holy Spirit whom ye have received as the animating principle of a new life is a spirit of brotherhood, if in your hearts suffering can evoke tenderness and pity," etc.

2. **Think the same thing**—"seeing Christ is your common Head. **Having the same love**—to God, your common Father. **Being of one soul**—animated with the same affections and tempers, as ye have all drank into one Spirit. **Of one mind**—tenderly rejoicing and grieving together"—WESLEY.

Fulfil ye my joy. "If the readers will yield to S. Paul's request, nothing will be wanting to make him 'full of joy.' We have here again the golden thread of 'joy' which runs through and illumines this Epistle"—BEET. **Of the same mind.** The weak point of the Philippian Christians was a lack of unity. **Having the same love**—"alike loving and being loved"—CHRYSOSTOM. **Of one accord, of one mind,** or "with accordant souls minding the one thing"—like sympathies, and cordial co-operation in all good things are meant; not necessarily identity of opinions.

3. **Do nothing through contention**—"which is inconsistent with your thinking the same thing—**or vain glory**—desire of praise, which is directly opposite to the love of God. **But esteem each the others better than themselves**—(for every one knows more evil of himself than he can of another). Which is a glorious fruit of the Spirit, and an admirable help to the continuing 'of one soul'"—WESLEY.

Lit. **Nothing through faction,** without a verb, and in structure like a motto. **Lowliness of mind**—"essentially a *Christian* grace. The world's 'poor-spirited' and the Lord's 'poor in spirit' are phrases used in very different tones"—MOULE. **Each counting other better than himself.** The lowly man is "so conscious of his dependence on God, and of his own imperfections and nothingness, that his own gifts only remind him that others must have gifts also, while his sense of his own utter nothingness suggests to him that these gifts may well be superior to his own, and higher in nature and degree"—ELLICOTT.

4. **Aim not everyone at his own things**—"only—if so, ye have not bowels of mercies"—WESLEY.

From humility S. Paul goes on to speak of unselfishness. (Comp. Gal. 6. 1. 2, where the same virtues are associated.) **But also.** The "also" sanctions some reasonable amount of attention to one's own interest. Indeed, the Christian teaching everywhere recognises the true egoism as well as the true altruism.

5. **Have this mind,** etc. From this point to ver. 11, S. Paul presents the great renunciation of Christ as the supreme example of that unselfishness to which he has exhorted the Philippians in ver. 4. There are no greater writings in the whole of the sacred canon than those of S. Paul; and there is no greater passage in the Pauline writings than that on the threshold of which we here stand. And let us remember that this great theological passage occurs as an illustration and confirmation of a moral precept. There is a modern demand for the severance of Christian morality from Christian theology; many persons regarding them as really distinct, and affecting to "hold to the one and despise the other." As MOULE well says: "Such a theory rends asunder the teaching of the New Testament, as to its most characteristic and vital elements." **Christ Jesus.** See under ch. 1. 6 of this Epistle. The self-limitation of the Eternal Son occupies S. Paul's mind, and dictates the order of the names.

6. "**Who being in the** essential **form**—the incommunicable nature—**of God**—from eternity, as He was afterwards in the form of man; real God, as real man. **Counted it no act of robbery**—that is the precise meaning of the words, no invasion of another's prerogative, but His own strict and unquestionable right—**to be equal with God.** The word here translated 'equal,' occurs in the adjective form five or six times in the New Testament. (Comp. Matt. 20. 12; Luke 6. 34; John 5. 18; Acts 11. 17; Rev. 21. 16.) In all which places it expresses not a bare resemblance, but a real and proper *equality*. It here implies both the fulness and the supreme height of the Godhead, to which are opposed, He 'emptied' and He 'humbled Himself'"—WESLEY.

Who being (R.V. *margin*, "being originally." The usage of the Greek word scarcely supports this rendering, but the eternal preexistence of the Son is taught in other passages—*e.g.* John 1. 1.) **In the form of God.** Some have attempted to dilute these words into a merely Arian statement concerning Christ. But the use of the same phrase in the next verse, "the form of a servant," together with the undoubted meaning of the Greek word, forbid such a treatment. The phrase "does express as much as 'God of God' and 'Son of God'"—ELLICOTT. **The form** "is the utterance of the inner life" (TRENCH) of whatever exists. "Though **form** is not the same as 'essence,' yet the possession of the 'form' involves participation in the 'essence' also"—LIGHTFOOT. **Counted it not a prize** (R.V. *margin*, "a thing to be grasped")—"to be on an equality with God" (R.V.). Owing to the difficulty of determining the exact meaning of the Greek word here rendered "prize" (an

exceedingly rare word found only once in the Bible and once in Greek secular writings), no paraphrase of this verse can be offered with entire confidence in its accuracy. The A.V., translating the word as **robbery**, seems to mean, "In subsisting as the equal of God, Christ was aware that He was enjoying His just and rightful dignity; and yet," etc. MOULE paraphrases: "He dealt with His true and rightful equality, not as a thing held anxiously, and not only for Himself, as the gains of force or fraud are held, but as a thing in regard of which a most gracious sacrifice and surrender was possible for us and our salvation." ELLICOTT: "He did not deem the being on an equality with God a thing to be seized on, a state to be exclusively clutched at, and retained as a prize." BEET'S rendering has the great advantage of presenting the active meaning which the form of the Greek noun certainly suggests, "He did not count His equality with God (a means of) high-handed self-enrichment." MEYER and HOFMANN also "interpret the passage to mean that the Son did not look upon His Divine powers as a means of self-enrichment. They understand this passage to describe the Son contemplating His own Divine powers, in view of His approaching entrance into the world. He did not look upon His equality with God as a means of laying hold for Himself, after becoming man, of the good things of earth—wealth, enjoyment, power; but instead of this laid aside the form of God, *i.e.* the assertion of His Divine powers, and took His lot merely as a man among men. Christ thus presents an infinite contrast to the gods of Homer, who ever used their superhuman powers for their own enjoyment"—BEET. Whichever of these views we may adopt, the point of the illustration must not be lost sight of, Christ did not "look upon" His "own things" (viz. His equality with God), but on "the things of others" (viz. the needs of men).

7. **Yet**—"He was so far from tenaciously insisting upon, that He willingly relinquished, His claim. He was content to forego the glories of the Creator, and to appear in the form of a creature; nay, to be made in the likeness of fallen creatures; and not only to share the disgrace, but to suffer the punishment, due to the meanest and vilest amongst them all. **He emptied Himself**—of that Divine fulness, which He received again at His exaltation. Though He remained 'full' (John 1. 14), yet He appeared as if He had been 'empty'; for He veiled His fulness from the sight of men and angels. Yea, He not only veiled, but in some sense renounced, the glory which He had before the world began. **Taking**—and by that very act emptying Himself—**the form of a servant**—the 'form,' the 'likeness,' the 'fashion,' though not exactly the same, are yet nearly related to each other. 'The form' expresses something absolute; 'the likeness' refers to other things of the same kind; 'the fashion' respects what appears to sight and sense. **Being made in the likeness of men**—a real man, like other men. Hereby He took 'the form of a servant'"—WESLEY.

This verse sets forth the "exact opposite of counting His equality with God a means of self-enrichment. **Himself**—emphatic. A grasping hand frequently empties those on whom it is laid. So did the hand of the Eternal Son; but it was upon Himself that the violent hand was laid"—BEET. **He emptied Himself**—a profound saying. We can adore the fact, but not explain the process. "**He divested Himself**, not of His Divine nature, for this was impossible, but of the glories, the prerogatives of Deity. This He did by taking upon Him the form of a servant"—LIGHTFOOT. We must not "shrink from applying the term humiliation to our Lord's Person as Divine; not to His Divinity, which is immutable Eternal Spirit, but to His Person as Divine-human, and therefore to the Divinity as hiding, for a season, the manifestation of its glory under the veil of the flesh"—W. B. POPE. "If any man doubt how Christ emptied Himself, the text will satisfy him, **by taking the form of a servant**; if any still question how He took the form of a servant, he hath the apostle's resolution, by **being made in the likeness of men**"—PEARSON.

8. **And being found in fashion as a man**—"a common man, without any peculiar excellence or comeliness—**He humbled Himself**—to a still greater depth; **becoming obedient**—to God, though equal with Him. **Even unto death**—the greatest instance both of humiliation and obedience. **Yea, the death of the cross**—inflicted on few but servants or slaves"—WESLEY.

Being found in fashion as. The phraseology seems to mark the transition of S. Paul's thought, from the self-limitation of the Eternal Son of God to the humiliation and sufferings of the historical Jesus. "The **fashion as a man** was the outward guise of humanity, a visible clothing bearing only a distant relation to the actual nature of the Son. In this outward guise, by those who sought Him, the Incarnate Son was 'found'"—BEET. "**Humbled Himself**—refers to the acts of condescension and humiliation in that human nature which He emptied Himself to assume"—ELLICOTT. "Not only did He, when He was God, assume human nature, but, in that human nature, He did deeply humble Himself"—BULL. "**Becoming obedient.** Having laid aside the manifestation of His Divine powers and become man, the Son entered also the path of obedience, the normal moral state of man. **As far as to death**—the extent of Christ's obedience"—BEET. "**Even death upon a cross.** Not only death, but a death of suffering, shameful and accursed"—ELLICOTT. "For this was thought to be the most shameful death of all,

full of dishonour, accursed"—CHRYSOSTOM. (Comp. the remark of CICERO, "Far be the very name of a cross, not only from the bodies of Roman citizens, but from their imagination, eyes, and ears.")

9. **Wherefore**—"because of His voluntary humiliation and obedience, He humbled Himself; but **God hath exalted Him**—so recompensing His humiliation. **And hath given Him**—so recompensing His emptying Himself **—a name which is above every name**—dignity and majesty superior to every creature"—WESLEY.

This verse describes "the exaltation of Christ, by the description of which, grand in its simplicity, His example becomes all the more encouraging and animating"—MEYER. **God highly exalted Him**—for example in the resurrection and ascension; but more is meant. On account of His deep humiliation, He received this *high exaltation*. **A Name**—"The thought is, 'God has, by His exaltation, granted to Him that the name **Jesus Christ** surpasses all names in glory'"—MEYER.

10. **That every knee**—"that Divine honour might be paid in every possible manner by every creature—**might bow**—either with love or trembling. **Of those in heaven, earth, under the earth**—that is, through the whole universe"—WESLEY.

That in the name (R.V.)—not "at the name" (A.V.). The custom of bowing at every mention of our blessed Lord, observed by some Christians, has been supposed to find support in this passage. The R.V. (and correct) rendering has no such reference. "It denotes the spiritual sphere, the holy element, as it were, in which every prayer is to be offered, and every knee to bow"—ELLICOTT. **Every knee bow**—"graphic delineation of the act of worship"—BEET. **Of things in heaven**, etc. "Angels, living men and buried men"—ALFORD. "Angels, men, and lost spirits"—CHRYSOSTOM. But it is far better to regard the words as a rhetorical expansion of the one word *all*, than to assign a definite meaning to each clause; especially as the Pauline teaching on Christ and the universe is presented in its fullest development in this group of Epistles.

11. **And every tongue**—"even of His enemies—**confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**—Jehovah; not now 'in the form of a servant,' but enthroned **in the glory of God the Father**"—WESLEY.

Some find in this verse an allusion to the spirits of the lost acknowledging the Lordship of Jesus, and confessing the justice of their sentence. But it is improbable that such a detail was present to the apostle's mind. (See note on ver. 10.) The diction is still rhetorical, and the word *all* continues to dominate the passage. **Confess** or "openly avow." But in the New Testament Greek the word implies also praise and thanksgiving. **Jesus Christ.** (See note on ch. 1. 6.) The exaltation of the *Son of Man* is the thought; hence the order of the names. **To the glory**, etc. "As ever, S. Paul rises from the Son to the Father. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 28; Eph. 1. 12-14)"—BEET.

12. **Wherefore**—"having proposed Christ's example, he exhorts them to secure the salvation which Christ has purchased—**as ye have always**—hitherto—**obeyed**—both God and me His minister. **Now in my absence**—when ye have not me to instruct, assist, and direct you **—work out your own salvation.** Herein let every man aim at his own things. **With fear and trembling**—with the utmost care and diligence"—WESLEY.

As ye did always obey. When I was with you in Philippi. **Not as in my presence only** (comp. ch. 1. 27), **but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation.** "Your own" is very emphatic in the original. "The apostle is, in fact, bidding them 'learn to walk alone,' instead of leaning too much on *his* presence and personal influence. 'Do not make me your proxy in spiritual duties which must be your own. Hence the 'much more' of the previous clause; his absence was the occasion for a far fuller realisation of their own personal obligation and resources in the spiritual life"—MOULE. **Work out**—*lit.* "be working out" by watchfulness, prayer, faith, and effort day by day. **With fear and trembling**—"'with anxiety and self-distrust' is a nearer representation of this Pauline phrase than the literal English, as appears by the use of the same phrase in 1 Cor. 2. 3; 2 Cor. 7. 15; Eph. 6. 5. The 'fear' is a fear of failure, the 'trembling' an eager anxiety"—CONYBEARE.

13. **For it is God**—"God alone who is with you, though I am not—**that worketh in you according to His good pleasure.** Not for any merit of yours. Yet His influences are not to supersede but to encourage our own efforts. **Work out your own salvation.** Here is our duty. **For it is God that worketh in you.** Oh what a glorious encouragement, to have the arm of Omnipotence stretched out for our support and our succour"—WESLEY.

The teaching of this and the previous verse is deeply instructive. There have been many who have proclaimed that the whole truth about salvation is that man must will it, and work it out for himself. On the other hand, there have been many who have practically ignored human will and effort, laying the whole stress on the decrees and effectual workings of God. And it has been widely supposed that either one of these views must exclude the other. To the finite mind this is so. But the Christian soul, mysteriously sharing the life of the Infinite, has access to truths which transcend our finite reason, and is profoundly conscious of the ultimate harmony of these apparently opposed ideas. The free will of man and the absolute sovereignty of God contradict one another in terms only, and represent two sides of one eternal and glorious truth. All this is a

fair inference from the association of them by S. Paul in these two verses.

14. **Do all things**—"not only without contention (ver. 3), but even **without murmurings and disputings**—which are real, though smaller, hindrances of love"—WESLEY.

All things—as always, S. Paul's exhortation is comprehensive. **Without murmurings**—"as to whether you are under any obligation thereto, whether it is not too difficult, whether it is prudent, and the like"—MEYER. "About the duties of others, and the rights of self"—MOULE.

15. **That ye may be blameless**—"before men—**and simple**—before God, aiming at Him alone. **As the sons of God**—the God of love; acting up to your high character. **Unrebukable in the midst of a crooked**—guileful, serpentine, **and perverse generation**—such as the bulk of mankind always were. **Crooked**—by a corrupt nature, and yet more **perverse** by custom and practice"—WESLEY.

Among whom ye are seen as lights in the world. The verb in the Greek is used of the rising of stars. "The saints, in the beautiful light of holiness, were to rise star-like upon the dark sky of surrounding sin"—MOULE. **Lights** (R.V. *margin*, "luminaries"). (Comp. Matt. 5. 14–16.)

16. **Holding forth the word of life**—"as if with outstretched arm; a word not uncommon for one holding to another's lips food and drink"—BEET. **That I may rejoice**, etc. "He looks forward to a special recognition of his converts at Philippi, at the Lord's coming, and to a special 'joy of harvest' over them"—MOULE.

17. "Here he begins to treat of the latter clause of ch. 1. 22. **Yea, and if I be offered**—*lit.* 'if I be poured out'—**upon the sacrifice of your faith.** The Philippians, as the other converted heathens, were a sacrifice to God through S. Paul's ministry. (Rom. 15. 16.) And, as in sacrificing, wine was poured at the foot of the altar, so he was willing that his blood should be poured out. The expression well agrees with that kind of martyrdom by which he was afterwards offered up to God"—WESLEY.

Yea, and if I am poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith. "He takes up the last word characteristically. '*Laboured* for you, did I say? Nay, but if I have also to say *died, poured out my heart's blood*, it is only joy to me.' The imagery is sacrificial. He views the Philippians as an altar sacrifice, a burnt-offering, in their character of consecrated believers; and upon that sacrifice, the drink-offering, the libation, the outpoured wine, is S. Paul's life-blood, S. Paul as their missionary martyr"—MOULE. (Comp. Num. 15. 3, 10.) **With you all**—"for such a martyr death concerned them all"—MEYER.

18. **Congratulate me**—"when I am offered up"—WESLEY.

"That I am counted worthy to win the martyr's crown, and that blessing will result to you therefrom."

19. **When I know**—"upon my return, that ye stand steadfast"—WESLEY.

I also. In ch. 1. ver. 12, etc., he has written words calculated to comfort the Philippians concerning his state; and now hopes that in return equally cheering news will reach him concerning the state of his readers.

20. **I have none**—"of those who are now with me"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul has **no one** in whom care for the Philippians kindles the same emotions as in Timothy"—BEET. **Naturally** (R.V. *margin*, "Genuinely"). "With that genuineness of feeling which befits the relationship between the apostle and his converts"—ELLICOTT.

21. **For all**—"but Timotheus—**seek their own**—ease, safety, pleasure, or profit. Amazing! In that golden age of the Church, could S. Paul thoroughly approve of one only, among all the labourers that were with him? (Ch. 1. 14, 17.) And how many do we think can now approve themselves to God? **Not the things of Jesus Christ.** They who seek these alone, will sadly experience this. They will find few helpers likeminded with themselves, willing naked to follow a naked Master!"—WESLEY.

All—who were available as messengers to Philippi. These with the single exception of Timothy, **sought their own.** "The reason here given implies that self-seeking unfits a man to be a reliable witness of the spiritual life of others. For all selfishness dims spiritual vision, and thus veils to us spiritual things good or bad. Therefore selfish men cannot bring to S. Paul a trustworthy report"—BEET.

22. **As a son with his father.** "He uses an elegant peculiarity of phrase, speaking partly as of a son, partly as of a fellow-labourer"—WESLEY.

But ye know the proof of him—"the tried character of him"—ELLICOTT. For Timothy had laboured in Philippi, **in furtherance of the gospel.**

23. **Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, as soon as I shall see how it will go with me** (R.V.)—as soon as he knows the result of his trial.

24. **But I trust in the Lord**, or "am confident," etc. **Shortly**—no great time after Timothy.

25. **To send Epaphroditus**—"back immediately. **Your messenger**—the Philippians had sent him to S. Paul with their liberal contribution"—WESLEY.

Beyond this passage nothing is known of **Epaphroditus.** The theory that he is identical with Epaphras (Col. 1. 7, etc.) has no adequate support. Observe the five titles S. Paul here gives him: **Brother, fellow-**

worker, fellow-soldier, messenger, and **minister-to-need.** Epaphroditus evidently stood high in S. Paul's regard.

26. **He was full of heaviness**—"because he supposed you would be afflicted at hearing that **he was sick**"—WESLEY.

This verse explains why S. Paul **counted it necessary** to send on Epaphroditus, instead of keeping him back as a travelling companion for Timothy. **Longed after you all.** The meaning is almost that of our English phrase "homesick." **Was sore troubled** (R.V.). "Epaphroditus earnestly wished to return to the brethren at Philippi, in order that their anxiety might be dispelled by seeing him in good health. How they heard of his sickness, and how he knew that they had heard, we do not know. But communication between Rome and the Roman colony of Philippi, along the splendid Egnatian road, would be, if not regular, yet frequent. Notice a genuine trait of excellence. Many are glad for others to know of their sickness or trouble, especially if caused by service done for them. But this good man was sorry that, through their hearing of it, his own trouble had caused trouble to others"—BEET.

27. **God had compassion on him**—"restoring him to health"—WESLEY.

For indeed he was sick—the report was true—**nigh unto death**—*lit.* "as neighbour side by side of death." **God had mercy.** Not that death is a curse; but "those who are departed this life, can no longer win souls" —CHRYSOSTOM. **Sorrow on sorrow.** "He does not profess the *apatheia* of the Stoics, as though he was of iron, and free from human affections"—CALVIN.

28. **That I may be the less sorrowful**—"when I know you are rejoicing"—WESLEY.

"A beautiful touch of character. Among his sorrows, he intimates, was his being the unwilling cause of separating Epaphroditus from the Philippians, and bringing him into risks at Rome. To think of him as safely returned to Philippi would be a solace, though it would be a new separation for himself. Under the shadow of that last thought, perhaps, he says not *happier*, but **less sorrowful**"—MOULE.

29. **Hold such in honour.** (Comp. 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13.) The reason why they should do so is given in the next verse.

30. **To supply your deficiency of service** —"to do what you could not do in person"— WESLEY.

He hazarded his life (R.V.).—"he gambled with his life"—LIGHTFOOT. He was equally ready to keep or lose it **for the work of Christ. That which was lacking**—"the personal presence of the Philippian Christians" —BEET. "How delicate and winning, and at the same time how enlisting their grateful sympathy in the fate of Epaphroditus, was it to represent the absence of the Philippians as something that **had been lacking** in that service, and therefore as something which Paul had 'missed,' to supply which, as representative of the Church, the man had (as his deadly sickness had actually shown) hazarded his life"—MEYER.

CHAPTER III.

1. **The same things**—"which you have heard before"—WESLEY.

Finally, or "as to the rest," **Rejoice**—the keyword of the Epistle. A new topic is now abruptly opened. **Same things** — the things about to be mentioned. But as they are here mentioned for the first time in this Epistle, MEYER and BEET conclude that S. Paul had enlarged upon them in an earlier Epistle, now lost. It is **safe** that S. Paul should repeat the contents of that Epistle, and he does not find it "irksome" to do so.

2. **Beware of dogs** — "unclean, unholy, rapacious men. The title which the Jews usually gave the Gentiles, he returns upon themselves. **The concision**—circumcision being now ceased, the apostle will not call them the circumcision, but coins a term on purpose, taken from a Greek word used by the LXX. (Lev. 21. 5) for such a cutting as God had forbidden"—WESLEY.

Beware—"look to," "observe," with a view to avoiding them. **Dogs**—impure, unclean. (Comp. Matt. 7. 6.) **Evil workers**—"they, in fact, *laboured* in opposition to the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith"— MEYER.

3. **For we**—"Christians—**are the** only true **circumcision** — the people now in covenant with God. **Who worship God in spirit**— not barely in the letter, but with the spiritual worship of inward holiness — **and glory in Christ Jesus**—as the only cause of all our blessings—**and have no confidence in the flesh**—in any outward advantage or prerogative"—WESLEY.

The thought of this verse is fully brought out in the Epistle to the Galatians. **For we are the circumcision,** "and that is why I could not apply the word to the **evil workers,** and was compelled to call them **the concision.**" **Who worship by the Spirit of God** (R.V.) **and glory in Christ Jesus,** etc.— "not in our own privileges and legal performances as those false teachers do, who place their confidence in what is *fleshly, i.e.* in that which belongs to material human nature and has nothing in common with the Divine blessings of the Christian, such as circumcision, descent, outward observance of the Law. (Comp. vers. 4-6)"—MEYER.

4. **Though I.** "He subjoins this in the singular number, because the Philippians could not say thus"—WESLEY.

In order to test the worth of **confidence in the flesh,** S. Paul brings forward his own case. Ceasing to regard himself for the moment as

a Christian, he describes his standing and advantages in relation to Judaism, "in order to measure himself with his Judaistic opponents on their own ground of proud confidence, and thereupon (in ver. 7, etc.) yet again to abandon this standpoint, and to make those Israelitish advantages vanish into nothing before the light of his vital position as a Christian"—MEYER.

5. **Circumcised the eighth day**—"not at ripe age, as a proselyte. **Of the tribe of Benjamin**—sprung from the wife, not the handmaid. **An Hebrew of Hebrews**—by both my parents; in everything, nation, religion, language. **Touching the Law, a Pharisee**—one of that sect who most accurately observe it"—WESLEY.

Lit. **In respect of circumcision an eighth-day one**—and thereby distinguished from Ishmaelites ("the Arabians circumcise after the thirteenth year, because Ishmael was circumcised at that age"—JOSEPHUS) and proselytes, who might be circumcised as adults. **Of the stock of Israel**—"a descendant of Jacob"—MEYER. **Of the tribe of Benjamin**—"one of the two most illustrious of the tribes"—ELLICOTT. "**A Hebrew born of Hebrew parents**, so that his mother also was a Hebrew woman"—MEYER.

6. "Having such a **zeal** for it as to **persecute** to the death those who did not observe it. **Touching the righteousness which is** described and enjoined **by the Law**—that is, external observances, **blameless**"—WESLEY.

The last clause of ver. 5, and the two clauses of this set forth "his distinguished personal position in Judaism, in a threefold climactic gradation"—MEYER. He was "a Pharisee, a zealous Pharisee, and a blameless Pharisee"—ELLICOTT. **Blameless**—same Greek word as in ch. 2. 15, where the "blame of men" is meant. And so here. S. Paul's conduct was such that *men* could find no fault with it. "His title, or temptation to 'confidence in the flesh' was thus compounded of a natal right to the seal of the covenant; hereditary and educated loyalty to the purest Jewish life and practice; personal devotion to the strictest Jewish religionism; the utmost practical energy in its defence; the most minute attention to its rules. Of its kind the position was perfect"—MOULE.

7. "**But** all these **things, which I then accounted gain**, which were once my confidence, my glory, and joy—**those**, ever since I have believed—**I have accounted loss**—nothing worth in comparison of Christ"—WESLEY.

"He does not mean that he discovered his circumcision, ancestry, energy, diligence, exactness, to be *in themselves* evil things. But he found them evil in respect of his having used them to shut out the true Messiah from his obedience, faith, and love. As substitutes for HIM they were not only worthless, but positive **loss**. Every day of *reliance* on them had been a day of delay and deprivation in regard to the supreme blessing"—MOULE.

8. "**Yea, I** still **account** both all these and **all things** else **to be** mere **loss**, compared to the inward, experimental **knowledge of Christ**, as **my Lord**, as my Prophet, Priest, and King, as teaching me wisdom, atoning for my sins, and reigning in my heart. To refer this to justification only, is miserably to pervert the whole scope of the words. They manifestly relate to sanctification also; yea, to that chiefly. **For whom I have** actually **suffered the loss of all things**—which the world loves, esteems, or admires; of which I am so far from repenting, that I still **account them but dung.** The discourse rises. **Loss** is sustained with patience, but 'dung' is cast away with abhorrence. The Greek word signifies any, the vilest refuse of things, the dross of metals, the dregs of liquors, the excrements of animals, the most worthless scraps of meat, the basest offals, fit only for dogs. **That I may gain Christ.** He that loses all things, not excepting himself, gains Christ, and is gained by Christ. And still there is more; which even S. Paul speaks of his having not yet gained"—WESLEY.

Excellency—more *lit.* "the surpassingness of the knowledge." **My Lord.** Notice the singular pronoun. S. Paul appropriates Christ for himself, in exchange for all he has given up. **Dung**—or refuse. Some so derive it as to give the meaning, "what is cast to the dogs." **Gain Christ**—"is to lay fast hold upon Him, to receive Him inwardly into our bosoms, and so to make Him ours and ourselves His, that we may be joined to Him as our Head, espoused to Him as our Husband, incorporated into Him as our Nourishment, engrafted in Him as our Stock, and laid upon Him as a sure Foundation"—Bishop HALL.

9. "**And be found** by God ingrafted **in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law**—that merely outward righteousness prescribed by the Law, and performed by my own strength — **but that** righteousness **which is through faith**—which can flow from no other fountain. **The righteousness which is from God**—from His almighty Spirit, not by my own strength, but **by faith** alone. Here also the apostle is far from speaking of justification only"—WESLEY.

Be found in Him—by other men during S. Paul's life, and especially by God on the day of judgment. **Not having**, etc. The teaching of Galatians and Romans is here tersely reproduced. (Carefully compare Rom. 3. 22; Gal. 2. 16; 3. 21; read also the great argumentative sections in which these passages occur, viz. Rom. ch. 1.-5, and Gal. 2. 3.)

10. "The knowledge of Christ, mentioned in ver. 8, is here more largely explained. **That I may know Him**—as my complete Saviour. **And the power of His resurrection**—raising me from the death of sin into all the life of love. **And the fellowship of His sufferings**—

being crucified with Him. **And made conformable to His death**—so as to be dead to all things here below"—WESLEY.

Know Him—"practical and experimental, not merely speculative knowledge"—ELLICOTT. S. Paul then goes on to mention two things included in "knowing Him," **the power of His resurrection**—"the power of God which raised Christ from the dead. The intimate connection between the resurrection of Christ, the believer's present victory over sin, and moral elevation, and his final victory over the grave are ever present to S. Paul's thought"—BEET. **And the fellowship**, etc. "It is only in a participation in His sufferings that there can be one in His resurrection and glory. It is a sharing in the sufferings He suffered, a drinking from the cup He drank"—ELLICOTT. **Being conformed**, etc. "Every step towards a martyr's grave was making him more like Christ, who died on the cross"—BEET.

11. **The resurrection of the dead**—"that is, the resurrection to glory"—WESLEY.

"'For I am not yet,' he says, 'beyond feeling fear.' Thus humble-minded was he who says in another place, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall'"—THEOPHYLACT.

12. **Not that I have already attained**—"the prize. He here enters on a new set of metaphors, taken from a race. But observe how, in the utmost fervour, he retains his sobriety of spirit. **Or am already perfected.** There is a difference between one that is perfect, and one that is *perfected*. The one is fitted for the race (ver. 15), the other, ready to receive the prize. **But I pursue, if I may apprehend that**—perfect holiness, preparatory to glory—**for**, in order to, **which I was apprehended by Christ Jesus**—appearing to me in the way. (Acts 26. 14.) The speaking conditionally, both here and in the preceding verse, implies no uncertainty, but only the difficulty of attaining"—WESLEY.

"**By this I do not mean to say that I have already grasped it**"—MEYER. Grasped what? The imagery is that of the racecourse, hence the **prize** is meant. "This prize typifies the bliss of Messiah's kingdom. And accordingly **grasped** (R.V. 'obtained') is to be explained of the **having attained** in *ideal* anticipation, in which the individual is as sure and certain of the future attainment of the **prize** as if it were already an accomplished fact. What, therefore, S. Paul denies of himself is the same imagination with which he reproaches the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 4. 8"—MEYER. **Made perfect**—"suggests that the prize S. Paul seeks is to be obtained by personal maturity. Since it is given in the Great Day (comp. 2 Tim. 4. 8)—S. Paul probably means here that it is not yet so secure to him as to be no longer an object of earnest effort"—BEET. **I press on**, etc.—"to grasp the crown, with the animating thought that Christ, in the hour of conversion, grasped *him* with the express purpose in view that he, through the path of faith and obedience, might be glorified at last"—MOULE.

13. "**I do not account myself to have apprehended** this already; to be already possessed of perfect holiness"—WESLEY.

Brethren. He affectionately repeats the foregoing statements. **I . . . myself**: so placed in the Greek as to mean "whatever *others* account *themselves*, **I** do not account **myself**," etc. **But one thing**! So the Greek. The R.V. supplies the words **I do**; MEYER, **I think.**

14. **Forgetting the things that are behind**—"even that part of the race which is already run. **And reaching forth unto**—*lit.* 'stretched out over the things that are before'—pursuing with the whole bent and vigour of my soul, perfect holiness and eternal glory. **In Christ Jesus**—the author and finisher of every good thing"—WESLEY.

S. Paul **forgets the things behind**, not in the sense of ceasing to be grateful for, or to learn lessons from them, but in the sense of avoiding a complacent resting in past achievements. **Things before**—all that part of the course which remains to be covered. S. Paul does not shrink from the future—it is so full of opportunity that he is eager for it. **Goal**—the end of the course. **Prize**—the victor's crown (comp. Rev. 2. 10 and 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8). **High calling of God**—"the calling which issued from God above in heaven"—MEYER. **In Christ Jesus**—may mean that the **prize** is given *through* Him; but, more probably, that the **pressing forward** takes place *in* Him.

15. **Let us, as many as are perfect**—"fit for the race, strong in faith; so it means here—**be thus minded**—apply wholly to this one thing. **And if in anything ye**—who are not perfect, who are weak in faith—**be otherwise minded**—pursuing other things—God, if ye desire it, **shall reveal even this unto you**—will convince you of it"—WESLEY.

Verse 13 implied that there were some in the Church who considered themselves **perfect.** S. Paul here gently reminds them of the obligations such a profession imposes, viz., that they should be **likeminded** with himself as regards humility and earnest perseverance. Dr. DIXON used to say that Christian perfection was "perfect humility." **And if in anything**, etc.—"if in any matter you do not share my self-estimate and earnest effort, **even this** error, God will dissipate by heavenly light"—BEET.

16. "**But** let us take care not to lose the ground we have already gained—**let us walk by the same rule** we have done hitherto"—WESLEY.

"Let us count as nothing our present attainments, and press forward; **only** in so doing let us pursue the direction in which **we have attained** our present position. So will all real progress, mental and spiritual, be along the

lines of whatever progress we have already made"—BEET.

17. **Mark them**—"for your imitation"—WESLEY.

Be imitators of me—"not egotism or self-confidence, but absolute confidence in his message and its principles, and the consciousness that his life, by the grace of God, was moulded on those principles. In the present case he begs them to 'join in imitating' him in his renunciation of self-confidence and spiritual pride with their terrible risks"—MOULE.

18. **Weeping**—"as he wrote. **Enemies of the cross of Christ**—such are all cowardly, all shamefaced, all delicate Christians"—WESLEY. In the previous verse he has exhorted them to follow godly examples. In this verse he reminds them that evil examples are also set before them, and these they are to shun. These **enemies of the cross** were evidently professing Christians of an Antinomian type. Far from desiring the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings" (ver. 10), they desired self-indulgence (ver. 19). And as the **cross of Christ** is the symbol of suffering and unselfishness, they were clearly "enemies" of that cross. **Weeping**—both at the harm they do, and the ruin that is coming upon them. (Comp. Luke 19. 41–44.)

19. **Whose end is destruction**—"this is placed in the front, that what follows may be read with the greater horror. **Whose god is their belly**—whose supreme happiness lies in gratifying their sensual appetites. **Who mind**—'relish, desire, seek'—**earthly things**"—WESLEY.

Destruction (R.V. "Perdition")—to be *lost*, not to be *annihilated*. **Belly**. The word implies sensual appetites in general, not *gluttony* alone. **Whose glory is their shame**—their proudest boast is the very lawlessness which so degrades them. **Who mind**, etc. (Comp. Col. 3. 1.)

20. **Our conversation**. "The Greek word is of a very extensive meaning: our citizenship, our thoughts, our affections, are already **in heaven**"—WESLEY.

For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour (R.V.). **For our**, etc. "Our" is very emphatic, marking the contrast from the "enemies of the cross." "Our home in which we have municipal rights exists in heaven; and we are eagerly waiting for One from heaven who will rescue us from the perils and hardships around"—BEET.

21. **Who will transform our vile body**—"into the most perfect state, and the most beauteous form. It will then be purer than the unspotted firmament, brighter than the lustre of the stars, and, which exceeds all parallel, which comprehends all perfection, **like unto His glorious body**—like that wonderfully glorious body which He wears in His heavenly kingdom, and on His triumphant throne"—WESLEY.

Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory (R.V.). "To the ancient philosopher the body was merely the prison of the spirit; to the apostle it is its counterpart, destined to share with it, in profound harmony, the coming heaven. Not its essential nature, but its distorted condition in the fall, makes it now the clog of the renewed spirit; it shall hereafter be its wings"—MOULE. **Body of His glory**—"not according to the amount, but according to the kind of His glory, shall we be conformed"—THEODORET. **According to**, etc., "removes every doubt as to the possibility"—MEYER. God will be able to do **these things**, because He can do **all things**! In this verse S. Paul has been led to speak of the coming glory of the saints' bodies, on account of the present shame and abuse of the bodies of the sensualists in vers. 18, 19.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **So stand**—"as ye have done hitherto"—WESLEY.

Beloved. "His heart overflows as he turns from the sad view of sin and misbelief to these faithful and loving followers of the holy truth. He can hardly say the last word of love"—MOULE. **My joy**—"understood only by those who have children in the faith"—BEET. **My crown**—"the honour which accrued to the apostle from the excellent Christian condition of the Church is represented by him under the figure of a crown of victory"—MEYER.

2. **I beseech**. "He repeats this thrice, as if speaking to each face to face, and that with the utmost tenderness"—WESLEY.

"A special admonition to and for two meritorious women, through whose disagreement, the details of which are unknown to us, but which probably turned on differences of their working in the church, a scandal had occurred, and the **standing fast in the Lord** might more or less be imperilled"—MEYER.

3. **And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow**. "S. Paul had many fellow-labourers, but not many yokefellows. In this number was Barnabas first, and then Silas, whom he probably addresses here; for Silas had been his yokefellow at the very place. (Acts 16. 19.) **Help those women who laboured together with me**—*lit.* 'who wrestled.' The Greek word doth not imply preaching, or anything of that kind, but danger and toil endured for the sake of the gospel, which was also endured at the same time, probably at Philippi, by **Clement and my other fellow-labourers**. This is a different word from the former, and does properly imply fellow-preachers. **Whose names**, although not set down here, **are in the book of life**—as are those of all believers. An allusion to the wrestlers in the Olympic games, whose names were all enrolled in a book.

Reader, is thy name there? Then walk circumspectly, lest the Lord blot thee out of His book!"—WESLEY.

True yokefellow — "perhaps Epaphroditus"—LIGHTFOOT. But there is great force in the suggestion of MEYER who renders "genuine Syzygus." He thinks that S. Paul is addressing a prominent worker in the Philippian church (who no doubt had special influence with the two women) known by the name "Syzygus," a name meaning "yokefellow." By calling him *true* or *genuine*, he means *rightly-named*. This, of course, is no more than a theory, but it seems more satisfactory than the other explanations that have been proposed, especially as there are proper names given to the other persons mentioned in the passage. **Clement.** He was evidently a preacher, but we can gather nothing further about him. **And the rest**, etc., "who, though not named by me, nevertheless have their names in the book of life"—ELLICOTT.

4. **Rejoice in the Lord**, etc. Like the "leading motive" in some modern music, this theme is heard in the Epistle again and again.

5. **Let your gentleness** — "yieldingness, sweetness of temper, the result of joy in the Lord—**be known**—by your whole behaviour—**to all men**—good and bad, gentle and froward. Those of the roughest tempers are good-natured to some, from natural sympathy and various motives; a Christian, to all. **The Lord**—the judge, the rewarder, the avenger—**is at hand**—standeth at the door"—WESLEY.

Moderation is a translation which has proved very misleading, especially in reference to one matter concerning which this passage is often quoted. (R.V. "forbearance"; *margin*, "gentleness.") "Your gentle character as opposed to undue sternness"—MEYER. **The Lord is at hand.** (See ch. 1. 6, 10, and the notes.)

6. "**Be** anxiously **careful for nothing.** If men are not gentle towards you, yet neither on this, nor any other account, be careful, but pray. Carefulness and prayer cannot stand together. **In everything**—great and small—**let your requests be made known.** They who, by a preposterous shame or distrustful modesty, cover, stifle, or keep in their desires, as if they were either too small or too great, must be racked with care; from which they are entirely delivered, who pour them out with a free and filial confidence. **To God.** It is not always proper to disclose them to men. **By supplication**—which is the enlarging upon and pressing our petition—**with thanksgiving**—the surest mark of a soul free from care, and of prayer joined with true resignation. This is always followed by peace. Peace and thanksgiving are both coupled together. (Col. 3. 15)"—WESLEY.

In nothing be anxious (R.V.). S. Paul does not condemn "the forethought which enables us to guard against coming troubles, but the useless and painful care which merely brings the sorrows of to-morrow to spoil the pleasures of to-day"—BEET. (Comp. Matt. 6. 25–34.) **In nothing, in everything** — comprehensive precepts, as so often from S. Paul. **With thanksgiving.** "Thanks should be an element in our every approach to God, and be associated with every petition. Thus will memory of benefits and answers to prayer already received aid our prayers by stimulating a confident hope of good things to come"—BEET.

7. **And the peace of God** — "that calm, heavenly repose, that tranquillity of spirit, which God only can give—**which surpasseth all understanding**—which none can comprehend, save he that receiveth it—**shall keep**—shall guard, as a garrison does a city—**your hearts**—your affections. **Your minds**—your understandings, and all the various workings of them—**through** the Spirit and power of **Christ Jesus**, in the knowledge and love of God. Without a guard set on these likewise, the purity and vigour of our affections cannot long be preserved"—WESLEY.

Shall keep (R.V. "Shall guard"), as with military power. This promise is conditional upon obedience to the precept of the foregoing verse. He whose trust in God is so full that he is "anxious in nothing" alone realises the full meaning of being guarded by God's peace. Our "prayers and supplications" may or may not be answered in the way we wish; but we shall find **peace** in knowing that they will be answered in the way that is best. **Hearts and thoughts.** "The heart is the seat of the thoughts"—BENGEL. "**In Christ Jesus**, who is the one true spiritual region of blessing, the peace of God shall protect the soul against its foes"—MOULE.

8. **Finally**—"to sum up all—**whatsoever things are true.** Here are eight particulars placed in two fourfold rows—the former containing their duty; the latter, the commendation of it. The first word in the former row answers the first in the latter; the second word, the second; and so on. **True** — in speech. **Honest** — in action. **Just** — with regard to others. **Pure**—with regard to yourselves. **Lovely**—and what more lovely than truth? **Of good report**—as is honesty, even where it is not practised. **If there be any virtue** — and all virtues are contained in justice. **If there be any praise** — in those things which relate rather to ourselves than to our neighbour. **Think on these things**—that ye may both practise them yourselves, and recommend them to others"—WESLEY.

"**So many things as** suggests number and variety in each of the following classes. Notice the stately sixfold repetition. **True**—words, acts, and disposition, corresponding with reality, especially with the eternal realities. It includes, but is much wider than, truthfulness. **Honourable** — suggests the dignity

which pertains to conduct worthy of Christ. **Righteous**—agreeing with the authoritative standard of human conduct. **Pure**—unstained by evil of any kind. **Lovely**—denotes the attractive sweetness of Christian excellence. **Of good report**—whatever sounds well when spoken of"—BEET. **If there be any virtue and . . . praise.** "If there be any intrinsic human excellence, and if there be among men any recognition of its worth"—BEET. **Think on these things.** "Take them to heart, in order (ver. 9) to determine your conduct accordingly"—MEYER. "Thought comes first, then action follows"—CALVIN. Much might profitably be said on the ethics of thinking. One must think worthily to live worthily. No mind can dwell much on the impure and un-Christlike without grave moral peril. There is perhaps no higher state of grace than that in which sins of thought have ceased. The teaching of 2 Cor. 10. 5 often requires emphasising.

9. **The things which ye have learned**—"as catechumens—**and received**—by continual instructions—**and heard and seen**—in my life and conversation. **These do, and the God of peace shall be with you**—not only the peace of God, but God himself, the fountain of peace"—WESLEY.

"Happy they who can speak thus to their pupils. Such can with authority say, *do these things*"—BEET. **And the God of peace shall be with you**—the same promise, resting upon the same condition (though the wording is different) as the promise of Christ in John 14. 23.

10. **I rejoiced greatly**—"S. Paul was no Stoic: he had strong passions, but all devoted to God. **That your care of me hath flourished again**—as a tree blossoms after the winter. **Ye wanted opportunity**—either ye had not plenty yourselves, or you wanted a proper messenger"—WESLEY.

Down to ver. 20 we have "some courteous expressions, as dignified as they are delicate, concerning the aid which he had received"—MEYER. We gather that to the trial of captivity had been added the further trial of poverty. The Philippians, hearing of this, sent help to the apostle, which he here gracefully acknowledges. **That now at length**—ground of S. Paul's joy. He rejoices far more in the proof of Christian character which the gift affords, than in the relief of his own distress. "**At length**—suggests delay, but not reproach; for the delay is at once and satisfactorily explained"—BEET. **Ye lacked opportunity**—until the journey of Epaphroditus to Rome afforded one, which was promptly embraced.

11. **I have learned**—"from God. He only can teach this. **In everything, therewith to be content**—joyfully and thankfully patient. Nothing less is Christian content. We may observe a beautiful gradation in the expressions, **I have learned; I know; I am instructed; I can**"—WESLEY.

Not that I speak in respect of want. "The expression of joy in ver. 10 might seem to be the voice of a starving man whose distress had been unexpectedly relieved. That this is the explanation of his glowing words, S. Paul denies"—BEET. **I have learned**—and to S. Paul, as to less renowned servants of God, the lesson was no doubt hard to master—**in whatsoever state I am.** Note again the comprehensiveness of statement so characteristic of S. Paul. **Everywhere** and **always** he is content.

12. **I know how to be abased**—"having scarce what is needful for my body—**and to abound**—having wherewith to relieve others also. Presently after, the order of the words is inverted, to intimate his frequent transition from scarcity to plenty, and from plenty to scarcity. **I am instructed**—*lit.* 'I am initiated' in that mystery, unknown to all but Christians. **Both to be full and to be hungry**—for one day. **Both to abound and to want**—for a longer season"—WESLEY.

In this verse S. Paul gives a fuller account of the lesson he has learned (ver. 11). **In everything and in all things**—characteristic of the thorough-going S. Paul (see note on ver. 11). There are many Christians who can trust and love God when they **abound**, but lose both love and trust when they are called upon to be **abased** and **hungry.** On the other hand, there are many whose spiritual life is strengthened by adversity, but sadly weakened by prosperity. These have not learned how to "abound" and "to be filled." S. Paul, however, was equally content in both situations. For *how* this came about, see next verse.

13. **I can do all things**—"even fulfil all the will of God"—WESLEY.

I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me. By "all things" he means all the things referred to in the previous verse—abundance, want, etc. "In Him," *i.e.* "in Christ," the dominant thought of this group of Epistles. **That strengtheneth me**—for whoso shares the *life* of Christ our Head shares His strength withal. Taken by itself the previous verse might imply that S. Paul had reached the high state there described by the power of his own will, and by long-continued self-discipline; in which case many Christians, having dispositions very different from, and wills much weaker than S. Paul's, might well despair of doing likewise. But the addition of this verse places the matter in its true light, and reminds us that all of us may share S. Paul's experience, because all have access to the sufficient grace of *Him that strengtheneth* us.

14. **Howbeit**—or "nevertheless"—**ye did well that ye did take a share in my affliction.** He means, "Although I have learned to bear afflictions without murmuring, you have

done well, and have shown a truly Christian spirit, in seeking to relieve it." **Did take a share**—for the money they sent doubtless represented self-denial on their part; while to forward it they had also to give up for a time their friend Epaphroditus. These trials gave them **fellowship** in S. Paul's **affliction.**

15. **In the beginning of the gospel**—"when it was first preached at Philippi. **In respect of giving**—on your part. **And receiving**—on mine"—WESLEY.

"He suggests with the same delicacy of love that their previous gifts would have sufficed without this gift to witness and seal their hearts' co-operation with him. 'You have done well in such participation; *but* indeed you had assured its existence before'"—MOULE.

16. **In Thessalonica** — ninety-two miles away. S. Paul only stayed there a few weeks, and yet his Philippians sent help to him *twice* during that short time.

17. **Not that I desire**—"for my own sake, the very **gift** which I receive of you"—WESLEY.

Not that I seek for the gift: but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account (R.V.). "His appreciation of it was prompted not by eagerness for money, but by eagerness for his readers' spiritual profit"—BEET. **Increaseth**—with each proof of unselfishness they give. **To your account**—a reference to the day of judgment, characteristic of S. Paul.

18. **An odour of a sweet smell**—"more pleasing to God than the sweetest perfumes to men"—WESLEY.

"He carries on the correction, begun in ver. 17, of a possible misunderstanding of his warm words. He must not be thought to 'spell' for future gifts, least of all now, so amply supplied as he is"—MOULE. **An odour: a sacrifice**—for the association of these ideas comp. Eph. 5. 2; also Gen. 8. 21, etc. His readers' kindness to S. Paul was also **a sacrifice acceptable to God**, in accordance with Matt. 25. 40.

19. **All your need**—"as ye have mine. **According to His riches in glory**—in His abundant, eternal glory"—WESLEY.

My God. Lightfoot remarks that this phrase (characteristic of S. Paul) is specially in point here; the apostle is thinking of what God *on his behalf* shall do for others. **Every need of yours** (R.V.)—**according**, etc.—"measure of the promised supply. This will not only come out of the wealth of God, but will correspond with its infinite abundance"—BEET.

20. Most scholars regard the doxology of which this verse consists as prompted by the preceding words. As, however, S. Paul has now reached the end of his task (except for the greetings and benediction of the next three verses), it is, perhaps, better to consider it as concluding and crowning with an outburst of praise this "epistle of joy." The change from "my God" in ver. 19 to **our God** in this verse favours the latter view.

21. **The brethren which are with me**—"apparently the apostle's personal companions as distinguished from the Christians resident in Rome, who are described in the following verse"—LIGHTFOOT.

23. **Especially**—for these saints were in closer personal contact with the prisoner than the other Christians of Rome, and hence had heard more about the gifts and graces of the Philippians, and of the letter which was about to be despatched to them. **Cæsar's household**—not, of course, Nero's own family, but officials and servants connected with his huge establishment. "S. Paul's words assert that even in the home of Nero, perhaps the most corrupt spot on earth, were Christians"—BEET. (Comp. Gal. 6. 18, where, however, the word "spirit" has a more special significance than here. See the note.)

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

"COLOSSÆ was a city of the Greater Phrygia, not far from Laodicea and Hierapolis. Though S. Paul preached in many parts of Phrygia, yet he never had been at this city. It had received the gospel by the preaching of Epaphras, who was with S. Paul when he wrote this Epistle.

"It seems the Colossians were now in danger of being seduced by those who strove to blend Judaism, or heathen superstitions, with Christianity; pretending that God, because of His great majesty, was not to be approached but by the mediation of angels; and that there were certain

rites and observances, chiefly borrowed from the Law, whereby these angels might be made our friends.

"In opposition to them, the apostle (1) commends the knowledge of Christ, as more excellent than all other, and so entire and perfect that no other knowledge was necessary for a Christian. He shows (2) that Christ is above all angels, who are only His servants; and that, being reconciled to God through Him, we have free access to Him in all our necessities.

"THIS EPISTLE CONTAINS—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1, 2.
II. The Doctrine, wherein the Apostle pathetically explains the mystery of Christ—
By Thanksgiving for the Colossians, ... ,, ,, 3-8.
By Prayers for them, ... ,, ,, 9-23.
With a declaration of his affection for them, . . Chap. i. 24-29—ii. 1-3.
III. The Exhortation—
1. General; wherein he excites them to perseverance, and warns them not to be deceived, ... Chap. ii. 4-8.
Describes again the mystery of Christ in order, . . ,, ,, 9-15.
And in the same order, draws his admonitions—
(1) From Christ the Head, ... ,, ,, 16-19.
(2) From His death, ... ,, ,, 20-23.
(3) From His exaltation, ... ,, iii. 1-4.
2. Particular—
(1) To avoid several vices, ... ,, ,, 5-9.
(2) To practise several virtues, ... ,, ,, 10, 11.
Especially to love one another, . . . ,, ,, 12-15.
And study the Scriptures, ... ,, ,, 16, 17.
(3) To the relative duties of Wives and Husbands, . ,, ,, 18, 19.
Children and Parents, ... ,, ,, 20, 21.
Servants and Masters, . . . Chap. iii. 22-25—iv. 1.
3. Final to Prayer, ... Chap. iv. 2-4.
,, to Spiritual Wisdom, ... ,, ,, 5, 6.
IV. The Conclusion, ... ,, ,, 7-16."

WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

1. **An apostle**—omitted in the opening verse of Philippians but inserted here, perhaps because S. Paul is about to speak authoritatively on the Colossian heresies. **Through the will of God.** (Comp. 1 Cor. 1. 1; 2 Cor. 1. 1; Eph. 1. 1; 2 Tim. 1. 1.) **And Timothy, the brother.** "Whether 'Timothy,' who is not mentioned in the twin letter to Ephesus, is mentioned here because of some special relation to Colossæ, we do not know, but the scantiness of our information leaves this quite possible. He may or may not have been S. Paul's penman"—BEET.

2. **The saints.** "This word expresses their union with God—**and brethren**—this, their union with their fellow-Christians"—WESLEY.

Saints—"the people consecrated to God, the Israel of the new covenant—**and faithful brethren**: this unusual addition is full of meaning. Some members of the Colossian church were shaken in their allegiance, even if they had not fallen from it. The apostle, therefore, wishes it to be understood that when he speaks of the saints, he means the true and steadfast members of the brotherhood. In this way he obliquely hints at the defection"—LIGHTFOOT. **Colossæ**—on the Lycus, in Phrygia. The church there was the least important of all the churches to which S. Paul wrote. **Grace to you and peace.** "**Grace** is the sum of all blessings that God bestows through Christ. **Peace** is the sum of all spiritual blessings that man receives and experiences; it is 'grace' in its fruit and realisation. S. Paul's whole gospel is in these two words. 'Grace' is his watchword as 'Love' is that of S. John"—FINDLAY.

3. **We give thanks.** "There is a near resemblance between this Epistle and those to the Ephesians and Philippians"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Rom. 1. 8; 1 Cor. 1. 4; Eph. 1. 15; Phil. 1. 3, etc.) The sincerity of these thanksgivings is shown by the omission of them in

Galatians (a case in which occasion for thanksgiving did not exist). **Praying always.** The connection of the words in this verse is somewhat uncertain. Perhaps the best rendering is, **we always give thanks to God concerning you, whenever we pray.**

4. (Comp. Eph. 1. 15 and the note.) But here it is "love" toward the saints.

5. **Ye heard before**—"I wrote to you—**in the word of truth, of the gospel**—the true gospel preached to you"—WESLEY.

"Real significance of this faith and love; and therefore the ultimate reason of S. Paul's thanks—**because of the hope**, etc. All Christian hope is a germ developing into the glory of heaven; it is the dawn of the eternal day. And this is its real worth. In his readers' faith and love S. Paul saw a foretaste of eternal blessedness; and this prompted his thanks on their behalf"—BEET. **The truth of the gospel**—"the true and genuine gospel, as taught by Epaphras, and not the spurious substitute of these later pretenders"—LIGHTFOOT.

6. **It bringeth forth fruit in all the world**—"that is, in every place where it is preached. **Ye knew the grace of God in truth**—truly experienced the gracious power of God"—WESLEY.

"**Which** gospel **is present among you**—or, more fully, 'which has reached you, and is now present with you.' This suggests the good fortune of the Colossians in that the gospel had reached them, and the reality of the gospel which, like an overshadowing presence, is now among them. **According as also in all the world it is**—a larger fact, in harmony with that just stated. S. Paul carries out his readers' thought from the valley of the Lycus, where they had heard the gospel, to the wide world throughout which also the same gospel *is*, or *exists*, *i.e.* is heard and believed and gains victories. **All the world**—an hyperbole similar to that in Rom. 1. 8"—BEET. "**According as also among you**—another fact added to and in harmony with the foregoing. That the gospel is preached at Colossæ is part of a larger fact, viz., that it is preached throughout the world. S. Paul now adds that its good effects throughout the world are reproduced also at Colossæ"—BEET. "The comparison is thus doubled back, as it were, upon itself"—LIGHTFOOT.

7. **The fellow-servant**—"of Paul and Timotheus"—WESLEY.

"**Epaphras**—a Colossian (ch. 4. 12), who appears from this verse to have been one of the first, if not the first of the preachers of the gospel in Colossæ; he is again mentioned as being in prison with S. Paul at Rome (Philem. 23)"—ELLICOTT. **Epaphras** must not be confounded with Epaphroditus (Phil. 2. 25). **Beloved fellow-servant . . . faithful minister:** as the influence of teachers of heresy is increasing among the Colossians, S. Paul here bestows high praise upon Epaphras, a teacher of truth, in order that his influence also may be increased. "By these praises he shows the trustworthiness of the man"—THEODORET.

8. **Your love in the Spirit**—"your love wrought in you by the Spirit"—WESLEY.

This verse completes the account of the services rendered by Epaphras. In ver. 7 he is said to have declared the gospel to the Colossians on behalf of S. Paul; in this verse he is said to have declared to S. Paul the blessed result of his labours among them, on behalf of the Colossians.

9. **We pray for you.** "This was mentioned in general (ver. 3); but now more particularly. **That ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will**—of His revealed will. **In all wisdom**—with all the wisdom from above. **And spiritual understanding**—to discern by that light whatever agrees with, or differs from, His will"—WESLEY.

"**For this cause**—on account of all that has been said from ver. 4 onward"—MEYER. "**Knowledge**—a favourite word in the later Epistles of S. Paul. In all the four Epistles of the first Roman captivity it is an element in the apostle's opening prayer for his correspondents' wellbeing (Phil. 1. 9; Eph. 1. 17; Philem. 6, and here.) The greater stress which is thus laid on the contemplative aspects of the gospel may be explained partly by S. Paul's personal circumstances, partly by the requirements of the church. His enforced retirement and comparative leisure would lead his own thoughts in this direction, while, at the same time, the fresh dangers threatening the truth from the side of mystic speculation required to be confronted by an exposition of the gospel from a corresponding point of view"—LIGHTFOOT. **His will**—not only in reference to "what is to be believed," but also, and perhaps more particularly (THEODORET), to "what is to be done."

10. "**That**, knowing His whole will, **ye may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing**—so as actually to please Him in all things; daily **increasing in the** living, experimental **knowledge of God**, our Father, Saviour, Sanctifier"—WESLEY.

"The practical aim of the 'being filled' (ver. 9) is, 'that your behaviour may stand in morally appropriate relation to your belonging to Christ.' (Comp. Rom. 16. 2; Eph. 4. 1; Phil. 1. 27)"—MEYER. **Bearing fruit**, etc. This is "the first of three participial clauses describing further the worthy walk which S. Paul desires for his readers. To those who receive it the gospel communicates its own vitality and fruitfulness and growth. As it bears fruit in them, so they bear fruit in every good work, *i.e.* in beneficence of every kind. **Knowledge of God**—as in ver. 9, which it recalls. Just as there S. Paul desired for his readers full and complete knowledge of God in order that they may walk worthy of Christ

their Master, so now, while speaking of the growth he desires to accompany this worthy walk, he mentions the full knowledge of God as the means by which this growth is to be wrought. This quick repetition of the same thought, viz. knowledge as a means of something beyond itself, gives to this thought great emphasis"—BEET.

11. **Strengthened unto all patience and longsuffering, with joyfulness.** "This is the highest point: not only to know, to do, to suffer, the whole will of God; but to suffer it to the end, not barely with 'patience,' but with thankful joy"—WESLEY.

Strengthened with all strength, according to the power of His glory—"the power which is the attribute of the glory of God indicates the measure and degree in which the Colossians will be strengthened. **Glory**—the Divine power and fulness as manifested to men"—ELLICOTT. **Patience** "expresses the more general idea of endurance; **longsuffering** always refers in the New Testament to the relation of patient tolerance towards offenders" —MEYER.

12. "**Who**, by justifying and sanctifying us, **hath made us meet** for glory"—WESLEY.

"So rejoicing ye will pour forth your thanksgiving to the universal Father, who prepared and fitted us all—you and us alike—to take possession of the portion which His goodness has allotted to us among the saints in the kingdom of light"—LIGHTFOOT. **The Father**—not the "universal Father" (LIGHTFOOT), but *the Father of Jesus Christ*, for *the Son of His love* is the central figure in the great passage extending from this point to ver. 23.

13. "**Power** detains reluctant captives; a **kingdom** cherishes willing subjects. **His beloved Son**—this is treated of in the fifteenth and following verses"—WESLEY.

"We were slaves in the land of darkness. God rescued us from this thraldom. He transplanted us thence, and settled us as free colonists in the kingdom of His Son, in the realms of light. The transference from darkness to light is here represented as a transference from an arbitrary tyranny (**power**), to a well-ordered sovereignty (**kingdom**)"—LIGHTFOOT. **Power of darkness.** (Comp. Eph. 6. 12.) It is characteristic of S. Paul to compare the present blessedness of his readers with their past degradation. The words "in light" at the close of the previous verse doubtless suggested to him this reference to the time when he and they walked in "darkness." **The Son of His love**—"who belongs to the love of God as its eternal personal object. The phrase fixes our attention on the relation of the Son to this unique attribute of the Father"—BEET.

14. **In whom we have redemption.** "This is treated of from the middle of ver. 18. The voluntary passion of our Lord appeased the Father's wrath, obtained pardon and acceptance for us, and, consequently, dissolved the dominion and power which Satan had over us through our sins. So that **forgiveness** is the beginning of redemption, as the resurrection is the completion of it"—WESLEY.

S. Paul has written the same words in Eph. 1. 7. (See the notes on that passage.) There, however, we find the important addition "through His blood." ELLICOTT speaks of the four degrees of *redemption*—"(*a*) payment of ransom for all; (*b*) admission into the Church; (*c*) exemption from the tyranny of sin here; (*d*) exemption from hell and death hereafter."

15. **Who is.** "By describing the glory of Christ, and His pre-eminence over the highest angels, the apostle here lays a foundation for the reproof of all worshippers of angels. **The image of the invisible God**—whom none can represent, but His Only-begotten Son; in His Divine nature the invisible image, in His human the visible image, of the Father. **The First-begotten of every creature**—that is, begotten before every creature; subsisting before all worlds, before all time, from all eternity"—WESLEY.

"There now follows, after a moment's pause, a detailed description of the person of Christ, His dignity, and His exaltation. This forms one of the three important passages in S. Paul's Epistles (Eph. 1. 20–23; Phil. 2. 6–11, and this), in which the doctrine of the person of Christ is specially unfolded"—ELLICOTT. (See the notes on the above-named passages.) But while the great passage, Phil. 2. 6–11, occurs incidentally, being introduced to emphasise a moral precept, the present passage is directly doctrinal and controversial, being designed to meet the false teachings of certain heretics who were troubling the Colossian church. These false teachers were Jewish Christians, like the Galatian heretics, but differing from the latter in one very important particular. "While they likewise adhered to circumcision (ch. 2. 11), and to precepts as to meats and feasts (ch. 2. 16), to the prejudice of Christ's atoning death (ch. 2. 13, etc.), they at the same time put forward *a philosophy as to the higher spirit-world*, with the fancies and subtleties of which (ch. 2. 18) were combined, as practical errors, a conceited humility, worship of angels, and unsparing bodily asceticism (ch. 2. 20, 23). They came, however, most keenly into conflict with the exalted rank and the redeeming work of Christ, to whom they did not leave His full Divine dignity, but preferred to assign to Him merely a rank in the higher order of spirits, while they ascribed to the angels a certain action in bringing about the messianic salvation" —MEYER. **The image** (comp. Heb. 1. 3) **of the invisible God.** "If the words 'image of God' describe an eternal relation of the Son to the Father, the word 'invisible' must refer, as apparently does 1 Tim. 1. 17, to the eternal essence of God. Thus the word 'image' is correlative to *visible*. The essentially invisible

Father has in the Son an eternal organ of self-manifestation, an eternal counterpart and supplement to His own invisible nature"—BEET. (Comp. carefully John 1. 18.) **The First-born of all creation.** "The main ideas which this word involves are twofold—(1) *Priority* to all creation; in other words, it declares the absolute pre-existence of the Son. (2) *Sovereignty* over all creation. God's 'first-born' is the natural ruler, the acknowledged Head of God's household"—LIGHTFOOT. **First-born** here is equal to "Only-begotten." So the Nicene Creed, "Begotten not made."

16. **For**—"this explains the latter part of the preceding verse. **Through** implies something prior to the particles **by** and **for**, so denoting the beginning, the progress and the end. **Him.** This word, frequently repeated, signifies His supreme majesty, and excludes every creature. **Were created all things that are in heaven**—and heaven itself. But the inhabitants are named, because more noble than the house. **Invisible**—the several species of which are subjoined. **Thrones** are superior to **dominions**; **principalities** to **powers.** Perhaps the two latter may express their office with regard to other creatures; the two former may refer to God, who maketh them His chariots, and, as it were, rideth upon their wings"—WESLEY.

On the Eternal Son as Creator, comp. John 1. 3. **In Him**—not "through Him." "In Him lay, in fact, the potency of life from which God made the work of creation proceed, inasmuch as He was the personal principle of the Divine self-revelation, and therewith the accomplisher of the Divine idea of the world" —MEYER. **All things: powers.** (See notes on Eph. 1. 21.) **Thrones**, etc. It is a mistake to find in this passage a revelation concerning the rank, etc., of angels. S. Paul takes up the phraseology current in the churches tainted by Gnosticism without necessarily assenting to its accuracy. "You dispute much about the successive grades of angels; you distinguish each grade by its special title; you can tell how each order was generated from the preceding; you assign to each its proper degree of worship. Meanwhile, you have ignored or you have degraded Christ. I tell you it is not so. He is first and foremost, Lord of **heaven** and **earth**, far above all **thrones** or **dominations**, all **princedoms**, or **powers**, far above every dignity and every potentate—whether earthly or heavenly—whether angel or demon or man —that evokes your reverence and excites your fear"—LIGHTFOOT. **Through Him and unto Him.** "As all creation passed out from Him, so does it all converge again towards Him. The Eternal Word is the goal of the universe as He was the starting-point. It must end in unity as it proceeded from unity; and the centre of this unity is Christ"—LIGHTFOOT.

17. **And He is before all things.** "It is not said, He 'was'; He 'is' from everlasting to everlasting. **And by Him all things consist.** The original expression not only implies that He sustains all things in being, but more directly, 'All things were and are compacted in Him into one system.' He is the cement, as well as support, of the universe. And is He less than the supreme God?"—WESLEY.

He is. In the Greek both these words are very emphatic. "And He Himself, on His part, has an earlier existence than all things, and the collective whole subsists in Him"—MEYER. (Comp. Acts 17. 28.) "He is the principle of cohesion in the universe. He impresses upon creation that unity and solidarity which makes it a cosmos instead of a chaos. Thus (to take one instance) the action of gravitation, which keeps in their places things fixed, and regulates the motions of things moving, is an expression of His mind"—LIGHTFOOT. (See also Heb. 1. 3, "upholding all things by the word of His power.") The emphasis here laid on the creation of all things by Christ is partly a strengthening of what S. Paul is asserting concerning Christ's supremacy; but it is quite possible that he has also in his mind another point in the Gnostic heresy, according to which God committed the creation of the world to certain angels, whose limited capacities account for the imperfections in the work. Against this he uncompromisingly proclaims the Eternal Son as the Creator and Upholder of all things!

18. **And**—"from the whole he now descends to the most eminent part, the Church. **He is the Head of the Church**—universal; the supreme and only Head both of influence and of government to the whole body of believers. **Who is**—the repetition of the expression (see ver. 15) points out the entrance on a new paragraph. **The Beginning** — absolutely, the Eternal. **The First-begotten from the dead** —from whose resurrection flows all the life, spiritual and eternal, of all His brethren. **That in all things**—whether of nature or grace—**He might have the pre-eminence.** Who can sound this depth?"—WESLEY.

Vers. 15-17 set forth Christ's supremacy over the universe; this verse sets forth His supremacy of the Church. "And not only does He hold the position of absolute priority and sovereignty over the universe—the natural creation—He stands also in the same relation to the Church—the new spiritual creation. He is its Head, and it is His body. This is His prerogative, because He is the source and the beginning of its life, being the First-born from the dead. Thus in all things—in the spiritual order as in the natural—in the Church as in the world—He is found to have the pre-eminence"—LIGHTFOOT. **Beginning.** The ideas of priority and sovereignty are present in this word, as in the parallel word of the passage preceding (**First-born**). The Creator of the universe and the Head of the Body are one and the same, viz., Christ. Both the world and

the Church begin and continue **in Him. From the dead.** "His resurrection from the dead is His title to the Headship of the Church; for 'the power of His resurrection' (Phil. 3. 10) is the life of the Church"—LIGHTFOOT. "That this priority may be universal, *i.e.* that it might extend to the Church, Christ rose from the dead before any of His servants; and He did so by the deliberate purpose of God"—BEET.

19. **For it pleased the Father that all fulness**—"all the fulness of God—**should dwell in Him**—constantly, as in a temple; and always ready for our approach to Him"—WESLEY.

For the whole fulness was pleased to dwell in Him (R.V. *margin*). But the more familiar rendering is to be preferred. "Fulness." The word in the Greek, thus translated, has become the technical (word among theologians for the totality of Divine attributes. In the "Divine-human Person the entire circle of the attributes of God took up its abode. This is in complete harmony with the complementary truth in Phil. 2. 7, 'He emptied Himself.' For even on earth the Word (John 1. 14) was 'full of grace and truth,' and (ver. 16) 'from His *fulness* we all have received.' All that belongs to the essence of God was present in Jesus. But the Son deliberately and definitely laid aside for a time, in order to become a sharer of our weakness, the actual exercise of the outer and lower circle of His Divine attributes. It was the essential and unchangeable possession of these attributes which made possible, and gave worth to, this temporary surrender of the exercise and enjoyment of them. But nothing was surrendered even for a moment which was needful to the further purpose stated in ver. 20"—BEET.

20. **Through the blood of the cross**—"the blood shed thereon. **Whether things on earth.** Here the enmity began; therefore this is mentioned first. **Or things in heaven**—those who are now in paradise; the saints who died before Christ came"—WESLEY.

A further account of the "good pleasure of the Father"—viz., **through Him to reconcile**—"meaning possibly to restore a lost friendship"—BEET. **All things.** "The absolute totality of created things shall be restored into its primal harmony with its Creator"—ELLICOTT. (See note on Eph. 1. 10.) **Peace**—'the blessed and abiding result of the reconciliation. **Through the blood of His cross**—graphic exposition of 'through Him.' God resolved to **make peace** between Himself and man by means of **the blood** shed on **the cross** of Christ. Similarly, though less vividly, Eph. 2. 16; Phil. 3. 18; Gal. 6. 14; 1 Cor. 17. 18. **The cross**—of Christ is used in this theological sense in the New Testament, only by S. Paul"—BEET. **In heaven.** Some expositors infer from this that there must be "disharmony in heaven." Of course it is possible that such disharmony exists, but it is perhaps a mistake to look for proof of it in this rhetorical phrase, so frequently employed by S. Paul in passages of this kind.

21. **And you that were alienated, and enemies**—"actual alienation of affection makes habitual enmity. **In your mind**—both your understanding and your affections. **By wicked works**—which continually feed and increase inward alienation from, and enmity to, God. **He hath now reconciled**—from the moment ye believed"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Eph. 2. 12; ch. 4. 18, and the notes. see also note on ver. 13 of this chapter. **Alienated**—not "from the commonwealth of Israel" as in Eph. 2. 12, but, in accordance with the wide reference of the preceding verse, from God and from the ideal harmony of His universe. **Enemies — works** — "enemies ye were, and the deeds of enemies ye did"—CHRYSOSTOM.

22. **By the body of His flesh**—"so distinguished from His body, the Church. The body here denotes His entire manhood. **Through death**—whereby He purchased the reconciliation which we receive by faith. **To present you**—the very end of that reconciliation—**holy**—towards God. **Spotless**—in yourselves. **Unreprovable**—as to your neighbour"—WESLEY.

The body of His flesh. "This body, when nailed to the cross, is here thought of as the sacred locality *in* which the Father reconciled us to Himself. (Comp. 1 Pet. 2. 24.) **Through death**—the precise means of the reconciliation which took place 'in the body of His flesh'"—BEET. **To present.** (Comp. Eph. 5. 27.) **Holy**—entirely consecrated or devoted. **Without blemish**—not only entirely given up to God, but also entirely free from spot or stain. **Unreprovable before Him**—on that great day when "He cometh to judge the earth."

23. **If ye continue in the faith**—"otherwise, ye will lose all the blessings which ye have already begun to enjoy. **And be not removed from the hope of the gospel**—"the glorious hope of perfect love. **Which is preached**—is already begun to be preached—**to every creature under heaven**"—WESLEY.

If so be (R.V.)—"assuming, namely, that ye"—MEYER. **The faith: the hope of the gospel which ye heard**—the true faith and genuine gospel made known to them by Epaphras. **Which was preached in all creation under heaven.** (Comp. Mark 16. 15.) "The inspired apostle sees the universal tendency of Christianity already realised"—OLSHAUSEN. **I, Paul**—through whom, more than any other under God, this widespread preaching of Christ has come to pass.

24. **Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up**—"that is, whereby I fill up—**that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ**—that which remains to be suffered by His members. These are termed the sufferings

of Christ—(1) Because the suffering of any member is the suffering of the whole; and of the Head especially, which supplies strength, spirits, sense, and motion to all. (2) Because they are for His sake, for the testimony of His truth. And these also are necessary for the Church; not to reconcile it to God, or satisfy for sin (for that Christ did perfectly), but for example to others, perfecting the saints, and increasing the reward"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul tells us in vers. 24–29 his office and work in the universal Church; and in ch. 2. 1–3 his special interest in the churches of Colossæ and Laodicea"—BEET. **In my sufferings** means not only "over" or "because of my sufferings," but also "in the midst of them." "I rejoice, suffering"—CHRYSOSTOM. The rest of the verse implies that there was **something lacking** in **the afflictions of Christ**; and that for the Church's sake (**for His body's sake**) S. Paul suffered physical hardships (**in my flesh**) to **fill up** the lack. "In what sense are these strange words true? In this sense. When Christ breathed His last upon the cross, all the sufferings needful for the complete establishment of the kingdom of God had not yet been endured. For the full realisation of the purposes of God it was needful, not only that Christ should die for the sins of the world, but that the gospel should be preached to all nations. This involved, owing to the wickedness of men, hardship to the preachers. This hardship S. Paul willingly endured in order to save men. Consequently, just as the life on earth of the servants of Christ is in some sense a continuation of His Incarnation (for in them He lives, Gal. 2. 20) so the sufferings of S. Paul were, in a similar sense, a continuation and completion of the sufferings of Christ"—BEET.

25. **According to the dispensation of God which is given me**—"or the stewardship with which I am entrusted"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Eph. 3. 2–7—a passage closely resembling this—and the notes.) "**Dispensation** or 'stewardship'—position of one entrusted by God with wealth for distribution to others"—BEET. **To you-ward**—for the benefit of you Gentiles, to whom my mission especially is. **To fulfil the word of God**—by so preaching the whole truth everywhere that all men will hear and obey it.

26. **The mystery**—"namely, Christ both justifying and sanctifying Gentiles, as well as Jews—**which hath been** comparatively **hid from** former **ages and** past **generations** of men"—WESLEY.

"The heathen mysteries were strictly confined to a narrow circle, the Christian mysteries are freely communicated to all. Thus the idea of secresy or reserve disappears when **mystery** is adopted into the Christian vocabulary by S. Paul; and the word signifies simply 'a truth which was once hidden but now is revealed; a truth which, without special revelation, would have been unknown.' The one special mystery which absorbs S. Paul's thoughts in Colossians and Ephesians is the free admission of the Gentiles on equal terms to the privileges of the covenant"—LIGHTFOOT. **Saints**—"the apostles and their converts"—THEODORET (evidently interpreting the passage by Eph. 3. 5); "Christians generally"—MEYER.

27. "**Christ** dwelling and reigning **in you, the hope of glory**—the ground of your hope"—WESLEY.

The riches of the glory of this mystery—a magnificent and truly Pauline phrase, implying both the abounding quantity and heavenly quality of the blessings **God was pleased to make known. Among the Gentiles.** The universality of the gospel is a thought so familiar to us, that we find it hard sometimes to understand the enthusiasm with which S. Paul speaks of the admission of Gentiles to the commonwealth of Israel. By recalling the facts of his early training we shall enter into his feelings more easily. To this "Hebrew of Hebrews" it never ceased to be a marvel that "to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11. 18). **Christ in you.** The "in" cannot be expressed by any one English word. It means "among you," *i.e.* "among the Gentiles" at large, to whom Christ is now preached; and also "in you," *i.e.* "in" each Gentile who truly believes on Christ (in the sense of Gal. 2. 20).

28. "We **teach** the ignorant and **admonish** them that are already taught"—WESLEY.

Whom we proclaim. The "we" is emphatic, marking a contrast between true and heretical preachers of Christ. **Admonishing and teaching**—"admonishing" to repent, and "teaching" to believe. (So MEYER.) "Admonition concerning what they should do, teaching concerning what they should believe"—THEOPHYLACT. **In all wisdom.** (See second note on Eph. 1. 8.) **To present every man perfect.** (Comp. ver. 22.) What was there described as the purpose of God is here named as the supreme endeavour of S. Paul. God's will and S. Paul's life-work were one. **Whereunto**—to the end that "I may present every man perfect"—**I also toil.** "Besides admonition and teaching I also sustain every form of toil in the cause of the gospel"—ELLICOTT. **Striving.** The Greek is "agonising," but not quite in the modern sense. It means "contending" against the opponents of the gospel without, and, more particularly, an "inward struggle" of ceaseless prayer, watchfulness, and faith for the furtherance of the gospel. **According**, etc. "S. Paul does not contend, amid the labours of his office, according to the measure of his own strength, but **according to the effectual working of Christ which worketh in him**"—MEYER.

CHAPTER II.

1. **How great a conflict**—"of care, desire, prayer. **As many as have not seen my face**—therefore, in writing to the Colossians, he refrains from those familiar appellations, 'brethren,' 'beloved'"—WESLEY.

How greatly I strive for you (R.V.). In the last verse of the previous chapter he has named his "striving" for the Church as a whole. He now asserts that his readers at Colossæ (which city he had never visited) have not a little to do with this "striving." "That S. Paul should have been so concerned about the Colossians and Laodiceans, as those who did not know him personally is natural enough, seeing that they were not in a position to oppose the living impression of the apostle's ministry, and his direct authority, to the heretical seductions"—MEYER.

2. **Unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the acknowledgment of the mystery of God**—"that is, unto the fullest and clearest understanding and knowledge of the gospel"—WESLEY.

That their hearts, etc. "Most thoughtfully and lovingly S. Paul designates the concern of his solicitude as 'the comforting of their hearts,' not impeaching them on account of the heretical seductions, but making those temptations to be felt as a misfortune in the presence of which one requires 'comfort'"—MEYER. **Knit together in love**—"this loving union one with another being the means by which their **hearts** are to receive **encouragement**"—BEET. **For all riches**—"that they may attain to all the unspeakable wealth which comes from the firm conviction of an understanding mind, may be brought to the perfect knowledge of God's mystery, which is nothing else than Christ"—LIGHTFOOT. (See note on ch. 1. 27.)

3. **In whom**—*i.e.* in Christ, or "in which," *i.e.* the mystery (so MEYER). **"Wisdom**—such acquaintance with the great realities as enables a man to choose the best steps in life. **Knowledge**—acquaintance with things seen or unseen, great or small"—BEET. **Hidden.** The genius of the Gnostic system was truly Oriental, and included certain occult lore and esoteric writings, such as have always had a fascination for Eastern minds. S. Paul here says that **all wisdom and knowledge is hidden in Christ.** But all who seek may find it, so that there is the same difference between the Christian and Gnostic "hidden things" as between the Christian and heathen mysteries. (See note on ch. 1. 28.)

4. "I say all this to you, lest you should be led astray by those false teachers who speak of another knowledge, of other mysteries"—LIGHTFOOT.

5. "While the weak and mortal **flesh** of S. Paul lingered in prison at Rome, the eye of his **spirit** was fixed on the Christians at Colossæ"—BEET. **Order, steadfastness** — military terms. The verse seems to imply that so far the soldiers of Christ at Colossæ had stood firm against the attacks of their false teachers.

6. **So walk in Him**—"in the same faith, love, holiness"—WESLEY.

As therefore ye received—"from Epaphras and his colleagues the true gospel, and consequently **Christ Jesus the Lord; so walk in Him**—who is the Way leading to the Father"—CHRYSOSTOM. But bearing in mind the whole usage of the phrase **in Him** in this group of Epistles, the view of MEYER is better, "Make Christ the element in which your conduct of the outer and inner life moves."

7. **Rooted in Him**—"as the vine. **Built** on the sure foundation"—WESLEY. (Comp. Eph. 3. 18; John 15. 1-8; Eph. 2. 20-22.) **In Him.** Christ is to be conceived as the soil for the roots striking downwards, and as the foundation for the building extending upwards. **Being made firm by your faith** (R.V. *margin*, "by"). "Faith is, as it were, the cement of the building"—LIGHTFOOT.

8. **Through philosophy and empty deceit**—"that is, through the empty deceit of philosophy blended with Christianity. This the apostle condemns—(1) because it was 'empty' and 'deceitful,' promising happiness, but giving none; (2) because it was grounded, not on solid reason, but **the traditions of men**; and (3) because it was so shallow and superficial, not advancing beyond the knowledge of sensible things, no, not beyond the first **rudiments** of them"—WESLEY.

Maketh spoil of you—the word means "carry off as spoil." **Through his philosophy and vain deceit.** Against a true and pure philosophy S. Paul has no grudge, for his own writings abound in it. Never does he disparage wisdom; on the contrary, he is always praying for a fuller measure of it. It is true that he despises the intellectual arrogance which is no more than "man's wisdom"; and this he looks upon as "foolishness with God." Such high-sounding fallacies he has in view here, and describes them, not by the noble word **philosophy** alone, but by the phrase **philosophy and vain deceit.** The added words "and vain deceit" mark off the "philosophy" of the Gnostics as false, in distinction from worthier "philosophies" which S. Paul himself appears to have studied. **Traditions of men**—possibly those of the Pharisees. But the reference is more probably to the Gnostics, who had inherited such traditions from the Essenes. **The rudiments of the world.** (Comp. Gal. 4. 3.) There were elements of truth in the religions and philosophies which were **not after Christ**; but they were extremely scanty—mere "rudiments" of truth. "Of the world"—as opposed to the Spirit. "In Christ you have attained the liberty and intelligence of manhood; do not submit yourselves again to a rudimentary

discipline fit only for children. In Christ you have been exalted into the sphere of the Spirit; do not plunge yourselves again into the atmosphere of material and sensuous things"—LIGHTFOOT.

9. **For in Him dwelleth**—"inhabiteth, continually abideth—**all the fulness of the Godhead.** Believers are 'filled with all the fulness of God' (Eph. 3. 19). But in Christ 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead'; the most full Godhead; not only Divine powers but Divine nature. (Col. 1. 19.) **Bodily**—personally, really, substantially. The very substance of God, if one might so speak, dwells in Christ in the most full sense"—WESLEY.

This verse gives the "reason for the implied exclusion of all other teaching except that 'after Christ.' **In Him**, and in none other than Him"—ELLICOTT. "In explaining the true doctrine, S. Paul condemns the two false principles which lay at the root of this heretical teaching — (1) the *theological* error of substituting inferior and created beings, angelic mediators, for the Divine Head Himself (vers. 9, 10); and (2) the *practical* error of insisting upon ritual and ascetic observances as the foundation of their moral teaching (vers. 11–14). **Dwells**—has its fixed abode—**all the fulness**—the totality of the Divine powers and attributes"—LIGHTFOOT. (See note on ch. 1. 19.) "All the exhaustless perfections of the essential being of God"—ELLICOTT. **Bodily**—or "in bodily fashion." For the Eternal Word, who became incarnate, did not lay human nature aside when the work of redemption was finished, but remains the God-Man for ever. Hence we have here **dwells**, not "dwelt," and consequently this verse enshrines an even profounder truth concerning the Incarnation than John 1. 14. This great verse is aimed carefully at the heretical teaching. "In Christ dwells the whole *pleroma*, the entire fulness of the Godhead, whereas they represent it to you as dispersed among several spiritual agencies. Christ is the one fountain-head of all spiritual life, whereas they teach you to seek it in communion with inferior creatures"—LIGHTFOOT.

10. **And ye**—"who believe—**are filled with Him.** (John 1. 16.) Christ is filled with God, and ye are filled with Christ. And 'ye' are filled 'by Him.' The fulness of Christ overflows His Church. (Ps. 133. 3.) He is originally full. We 'are filled by Him' with wisdom and holiness. **Who is the Head of all principality and power**—of angels as well as men. Not from angels, therefore, but from their Head, are we to ask whatever we stand in need of"—WESLEY.

"**Made full** or 'complete' denotes a filling up of an outline of any kind. The outline here is sketched by the needs and aim of our being. They who are in Christ, and, so far as they are in Him, find in Him their need supplied and their goal attained. In them remain no unfilled chasms. They have therefore no need to seek anything away from Christ"—BEET. "From 'the fulness of the Godhead,' which dwells in the exalted Christ, flows the 'being filled' of the Christian, which has its basis, therefore, in no other than Christ, and in nothing else than just in fellowship with Him"—MEYER. **Who is the Head**—both the Creator and Sovereign—**of all principality and power**—"and therefore of those angelic beings whom the false teachers adopted as mediators, thus transferring to the inferior members the allegiance due to the Head"—LIGHTFOOT.

11. **By whom also ye have been circumcised**—"ye have received the spiritual blessings typified of old by circumcision—**with a circumcision not performed with hands**—by an inward, spiritual operation—**in putting off** not a little skin, but **the whole body of the sins of the flesh**—all the sins of your evil nature—**by the circumcision of Christ**—by that spiritual circumcision which Christ works in your heart"—WESLEY.

The Colossian heresy included Judaising errors as well as those with reference to angel mediators, alluded to in the previous verse. As in Galatia, attempts were being made to force upon the believers at Colossæ the rite of circumcision. S. Paul's way of opposing this error is to assure the Colossians that they are circumcised already, **in the circumcision of Christ.** The circumcision of the flesh is therefore superfluous; and as it is lower than "the circumcision of Christ" by as much as the flesh is lower than the spirit (**not made with hands** = "spiritual," comp. 2 Cor. 5. 1), to submit to it will be a backward and downward step. "You do not need the circumcision of the flesh; for you have received the circumcision of the heart. The distinguishing features of this higher circumcision are threefold—(1) It is not external, but inward, not made with hands, but wrought by the Spirit; (2) It divests not of a part only of the flesh, but of the whole body of carnal affections; (3) It is the circumcision, not of Moses or of the patriarchs, but of Christ. Thus it is distinguished as regards (1) its character, (2) its extent, (3) its author"—LIGHTFOOT.

12. "Which He wrought in you, when ye were, as it were, **buried with Him in baptism**—the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion is as manifestly alluded to here as the other manner of baptizing by sprinkling or pouring of water is in Heb. 10. 22. But no stress is laid on the age of the baptized, or the manner of performing it, in one or the other way; but only on our being risen with Christ, through the powerful operation of God in the soul, which we cannot but know assuredly, if it really is so; and if we do not experience this, our baptism has not answered the end of its institution. **By which ye are also risen with Him**—from the death of sin to the life of holiness. It does not appear that in all this

S. Paul speaks of justification at all, but of sanctification altogether"—WESLEY.

Having been buried, etc.—"another description of this inward and spiritual circumcision, specifying also its time and outward instrumentality. Already, in Rom. 6. 3–11 and Gal. 2. 20; 6. 14, we have been taught that, like Christ and in Christ, we are to be dead to sin, *i.e.* completely separated from it as the dead are from the world in which they once lived, by means of that death upon the cross by which Christ Himself was separated from the penalty and curse and power of sin under which for our sakes He once groaned; and that consequently baptism, the visible gate through which the convert from heathenism entered the company of the professed followers of Christ, is designed to be the funeral service of the old life, announcing publicly that life has ceased, and separating the dead man completely from that land in which he lived. In this sense the Colossian Christians were **buried** in the grave of Christ; and this burial took place **in their baptism**"—BEET. "But baptism is not a grave only"—CHRYSOSTOM. **Ye were also raised with Him**—"evidently supplements **buried with Him**, recalling forcibly the ancient mode of the rite, and the baptismal water under which the convert sank and from which he rose. **Through faith**—the constant condition of salvation in all its aspects. (Phil. 3. 9; Eph. 2. 8; 3. 12, 17; Rom. 3. 22, etc.)"—BEET. **The working**, etc. (See note on Eph. 1. 19.)

13. **And you who were dead**—"doubly dead to God, not only wallowing in **trespasses**, outward sins, but also in **the uncircumcision of your flesh**—a beautiful expression for original sin, the inbred corruption of your nature, your uncircumcised heart and affections—**hath He**—God the Father—**quickened together with Him**—making you partakers of the power of His resurrection. It is evident the apostle thus far speaks, not of justification, but of sanctification only"—WESLEY.

(Read the notes on Eph. 2. 1.) **Uncircumcision of your flesh**—which signalised their alienation from God's covenant people. But LIGHTFOOT says: "The outward uncircumcision of the Gentiles is a type of their unchastened carnal mind. In other words, though the literal meaning is not excluded, the spiritual reference is most prominent, as appears from ver. 11." **You together with Him**—"a very emphatic mode of asserting that God has so joined us to Christ, that the act by which He gave life to the sacred corpse in the grave gave immortal life also to us"—BEET. **Having forgiven us all our trespasses.** "This blotting out of our whole debt of sin was necessarily prior to the **quickening**—by the fact, namely, that He remitted to us all the sins which we had committed, the cause of the being dead was done away"—MEYER.

14. **Having blotted out**—"in consequence of His gracious **decrees**, that Christ should come into the world to save sinners, and that whosoever believeth on Him should have everlasting life—**the handwriting against us.** Where a debt is contracted, it is usually testified by some handwriting; and when the debt is forgiven, the handwriting is destroyed, either by blotting it out, by taking it away, or by tearing it. The apostle expresses in all these three ways God's destroying the handwriting **which was contrary to us**, or at enmity with us. This was not properly our sins themselves (they were the debt), but their guilt and cry before God"—WESLEY.

"**Having blotted out**, or 'washed out,' a common word for complete removal of writing. The defective nature of ancient ink made it easy"—BEET. **The bond**—*lit.* "the handwriting," but the word is usually employed for a "bond." **In ordinances**—*Greek*, "dogmas." "The **dogmas** must be the various commands, ritual or moral, of the Law of Moses which S. Paul speaks of in 2 Cor. 3. 6 as the 'letter which kills.' And this condemnatory document is the chief feature of the old covenant. The Law was made up of 'dogmas,' *i.e.* of commands claiming simply obedience. And these decrees gave to the Law its power **against us**, for we had broken them, and they cried out for punishment"—BEET. But though the primary reference is no doubt to the Law of Moses, the word **us** seems "to include Gentiles as well as Jews, so that a wider reference must be given to the expression. The **dogmas** will include all forms of positive decrees in which moral or social principles are embodied or religious duties defined; and the **bond** is the moral assent of the conscience, which (as it were) signs and seals the obligations. **And He hath taken it away.** The Greek tense (the perfect) expresses an action the result of which continues up to the present time, "He took it away, and it remains taken away." **Nailing it**, etc. "'The abrogation was even more emphatic. Not only was the writing erased, but the document itself was torn up and cast aside.' By **nailed** is meant that the law of ordinances was nailed to the cross, rent with Christ's body, and destroyed with His death. (See Gal. 6. 14.) It has been supposed that in some cities the abrogation of a decree was signified by running a nail through it and hanging it up in public. The image would thus gain force, but there is no distinct evidence of such a custom"—LIGHTFOOT.

15. **And having spoiled the principalities and powers**—"the evil angels, of their usurped dominion—**He**—God the Father—**exposed them openly**—before all the hosts of hell and heaven—**triumphing over them in** or **by Him**—by Christ. Thus the paragraph begins with Christ, goes on with Him, and ends with Him"—WESLEY.

"Perhaps the most obscure verse in the New

Testament. Its obscurity arises from our ignorance of the precise nature of the error here combated"—BEET. The A.V. rendering **having spoiled** presents very little difficulty; but it is more easy than correct. The verb certainly means "having stripped off from Himself," and the question then is, In what sense did Christ or God **strip off principalities and powers from Himself**? ELLICOTT and LIGHTFOOT, following the Greek Fathers, think that the **powers of evil** or bad angels (comp. Eph. 6. 12) are meant. "Our Lord by His death stripped away from Himself all the opposing hostile powers of evil that sought to win for themselves a victory over Him in the nature which He had condescended to assume. When He died on the cross, when He dissolved that temple into which they both in earlier (Matt. 4. 1 ff.; Luke 4. 2 ff.) and later efforts of temptation (John 14. 30; Luke 22. 53), had vainly endeavoured to make sacrilegious entry, He reft them away for ever, and vindicated His regal power; yea, the loud voice (Matt. 27. 50; Mark 15. 37; Luke 23. 46) was the shout of eternal triumph and victory"—ELLICOTT. "The powers of evil which had clung like a Nessus robe about His humanity, were torn off and cast aside for ever. And the victory of mankind is involved in the victory of Christ. In His cross we too are divested of the poisonous clinging garments of temptation and sin and death"—LIGHTFOOT. But BEET understands **principalities and powers** of *good* angels, and hence arrives at a very different interpretation. His note (somewhat compressed) is: "Is there any sense in which, until the death of Christ and no longer, the angels of heaven might be spoken of as a robe of God? There is. (See Gal. 3. 19.) The whole argument of Heb. (ch. 1. 2), especially ch. 2. 2, implies that angels were the medium through which the revelations of the old covenant were given. If so we may speak of these bright messengers as the robe in which God revealed Himself to men during long ages. But in Christ the veil is laid aside. Through the lips of the Incarnate Son, God spake to man face to face, and revealed His unveiled glory. He thus stripped off and laid aside the veil He had previously worn. This is a strong reason why the Colossians should not (ver. 18) 'worship angels.' To do so is to cling to a superseded mode of Divine revelation. In Christ God has (ver. 15) laid aside the visible mediation of angels: consequently, no one (ver. 18) may any longer worship them." Widely as these expositions differ, they both do justice to S. Paul's central thought at this point, viz., the supremacy of Christ over all angelic beings. The remaining clauses of the verse present no great difficulty. Whether it was by triumphing over the attacks of bad angels, or by discarding the mediation of good angels, Christ *in it, i.e.* in His cross, openly showed His supremacy over them.

16. **Therefore**—"seeing these things are so—**let none judge you**—that is, regard none who judge you—**in meat or drink**—for not observing the Ceremonial Law in these or any other particulars—**or in respect of a** yearly **feast, the new moon**, or the weekly Jewish **Sabbaths**"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Rom. 14. 3, 10 on "judging" in such matters.) **Meat or drink**—*lit.* "eating or drinking." For the prohibitions on these subjects formed part of the "decrees," or "dogmas" ("ordinances," ver. 14), which Christ has taken away, and a man who **judges** us by such standards is a mere beater of the air, striving to administer an abrogated Law. In this passage something more than ordinary Judaism seems to be meant. The false teachers in Colossæ were advocating a rigorous asceticism, partly Nazarite (hence the allusion to **drinking**, perhaps) and partly Gnostic. The history of religion teems with illustrations of long-continued fasting, leading to visions of angels and demons; and probably the visions in which the Gnostics of S. Paul's day firmly believed may, in the light of this verse, admit of a similar explanation.

17. **Which are** but **a** lifeless **shadow; but the body**, the substance, **is of Christ**"—WESLEY.

"Two ideas are prominent in this image—(1) The contrast between the ordinances of the Law, and the teaching of the gospel, as the shadow and substance respectively. (2) The conception of the shadow as thrown before the substance, so that the Law was a type and presage of the gospel. Thus it implies both the unsubstantiality and the supersession of the Mosaic ritual. **But the body**, etc. As the shadow belonged to Moses, so *the substance belongs to Christ, i.e.* the reality, the antitype, in each case is found in the Christian dispensation. Thus the Passover typifies the atoning sacrifice, etc."—LIGHTFOOT.

18. "Out of pretended **humility**, they **worshipped angels**, as not daring to apply immediately to God. Yet this really sprang from their being **puffed up** (the constant forerunner of a fall, Prov. 16. 18), so far was it from being an instance of true humility"—WESLEY.

Voluntary humility (A.V. and R.V.) is not a good rendering. Better is, "Let no man rob you of your prize," which, so far, you are entitled to, for you have run well, **desiring** (to rob you of it) **by humility and worshipping of angels**. With "the pride that apes humility," the false teacher pretended that he could not presume to directly approach the Eternal Father or the Eternal Son, and that he was only worthy to worship through the medium of those angelic beings, who, according to his creed, formed the connecting links in a long chain from earth to heaven. But really "all this was prompted, not by humility as was pretended, but by an inflated self-estimate which was in reality a form of self-indulgence"

—BEET. And should the Colossians fall away into a similar error it will **rob** them of their **prize. Dwelling in the things which he hath seen**—such visions as are alluded to under ver. 16. (A.V. "Intruding into those things which he hath not seen"—but the best MSS. omit "not." But though the A.V. reading is wrong, and must be set aside, its lesson is much needed, and must never be neglected.

19. **And not holding the Head.** "He does not hold Christ, who does not trust in Him alone. All the members are **nourished** by faith, and **knit together** by love and mutual sympathy"—WESLEY.

Not holding fast the Head. Because of the time and attention they gave to the angels, His inferiors, their hold upon Christ, the Head, became ever more and more feeble. For from the angels they could derive none of the **increase of God**, it being entirely from Christ that **all the body**, the Church, Christ's mystical body **being supplied**, etc. (Comp. Eph. 4. 16.) So long as the members are united to one another and to the Head they will "increase" in peace, strength, holiness, faith, joy, usefulness, with "the increase" which "God" will give.

20. **Therefore.** "The inference begun, ver. 16, is continued. A new inference follows. (Col. 3. 1.) **If ye are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world**—that is, 'If ye are dead with Christ,' and so freed **from** them, **why receive ye ordinances**—which Christ hath not joined, from which He hath made you free"—WESLEY.

If ye died (R.V.). That the Colossians "died with Christ" was asserted in ver. 12. (See note on that verse.) LIGHTFOOT thus paraphrases vers. 20–23: "You died with Christ to your old life. All mundane relations have ceased for you. Why then do you—you who have attained your spiritual manhood—submit still to the rudimentary discipline of children? Why do you—you who are citizens of heaven—bow your necks afresh to the tyranny of material ordinances, as though you were still living in the world? It is the same old story again; the same round of hard, meaningless, vexatious prohibitions. **Handle not, Taste not, Touch not.** What folly! When all these things—these meats and drinks and the like—are earthly, perishable, wholly trivial and unimportant! They are used, and there is an end of them. What is this but to draw down upon yourselves the denunciations uttered by the prophet of old? What is this but to abandon God's word for precepts which are issued by human authority and inculcated by human teachers? All such things have a show of wisdom, I grant. There is an officious parade of religious devotion, an eager affectation of humility; there is a stern, ascetic rigour which ill-treats the body, but there is nothing of any real value to check indulgence of the flesh."

21. **Touch not**—"an unclean thing. **Taste not**—any forbidden meat. **Handle not**—any consecrated vessel"—WESLEY.

Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (R.V.). Among the Essenes (who should be studied in connection with this Colossian heresy) there were prohibitions against oil, flesh, wine, etc. "It will be noted that all these commands are negative, not positive. They are marked by the ordinary ascetic preference of spiritual restraint to spiritual energy"—BARRY.

22. **Perish in the using**—"have no further use, no influence on the mind"—WESLEY.

"**Only** consider what is the real import of this scrupulous avoidance. Why, you are attributing an inherent value to things that are fleeting; you yourselves are citizens of eternity, and yet your thoughts are absorbed in the perishable"—LIGHTFOOT. **Precepts and doctrines of men**—"recalls a similar rebuke of empty forms of religion in Isa. 29. 13, which in the LXX. reads, 'teaching commands of men and teachings.' It was quoted by Christ in Matt. 15. 9. This similar use of Old Testament words suggests whether S. Paul had heard of the discourse of Christ there recorded"—BEET.

23. **Not sparing the body**—"denying it many gratifications, and putting it to many inconveniences. Yet they are **not of any** real **value** before God, nor do they, upon the whole, mortify, but **satisfy, the flesh.** They indulge our corrupt nature, our self-will, pride, and desire of being distinguished from others"—WESLEY.

Which things have indeed a show of wisdom, or "reputation of wisdom." (Comp. ver. 8 and the note.) **In will-worship**—better rendered "self-imposed worship" (so BEET, ELLICOTT, MEYER). The reference is to the worship of angels, which was not commanded by God, but a gratuitous invention of those who had **a show of wisdom**, imposing it upon themselves with the sham "humility" of ver. 18 (where see note) and "severity to the body," ver. 16 (see note). **But are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh** (R.V.). "That there is a satisfaction of the fleshly temper in the attempt over-much to curb the flesh, the whole history of asceticism bears witness"—BARRY. Compare ver. 18, where S. Paul also accuses those who profess to treat the flesh with such rigour with being "vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind." The R.V. margin has **honour**, in which case the meaning will be **they have a show of wisdom in self-imposed worship**, etc., but on the other hand they have no real **honour against the indulgence of the flesh.**

CHAPTER III.

1. **If ye are risen, seek the things above**—"as Christ being risen, immediately went to heaven"—WESLEY.

If then ye were raised—as asserted in ver.

12 of the previous chapter, **seek the things that are above**: seek so to live by the power of His resurrection, as at the end to find the bliss above, **where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.** (Comp. Heb. 1. 3, 13, and see note on Eph. 1. 20.) With S. Paul the resurrection is often so conceived as to include a reference to the ascension. And so here. Note that believers have "died" with Christ to sin, "risen" with Christ to newness of life, and "ascended" with Christ to the heavenly places, so that they enjoy "heaven on earth." (See last note on Eph. 1. 3.) Of course, in a literal sense, they still await death, resurrection, and ascension, but the mystical sense above alluded to is none the less real and important.

2. "The same expression repeated for emphasis, 'You must not only **seek** heaven, you must also **think** heaven"—LIGHTFOOT. (Comp. Matt. 6. 19–21.) **Not the things on the earth** as did both the Gnostics of Colossæ and the sensualists of Philippi. (See Phil. 3. 18, 19.)

3. **For ye are dead**—"to the things on earth—**and your** real, spiritual **life is hid** from the world, and laid up **in God, with Christ**—who hath merited, promised, prepared it for us, and gives us the earnest and foretaste of it in our hearts"—WESLEY.

Ye are dead. (Read the note on ch. 2. 12.) This statement justifies the preceding exhortation not to mind **things on the earth.** For if they are dead to the world they should have no further interest in it. **And your life.** This clause justifies the exhortation "to mind the things above." **Is hid**—"beyond human sight, and beyond reach of accident and death—**with Christ**—for they are dead, buried, and risen with Him. Whatever Christ has and is they share"—BEET. **Hidden**—"shrouded in the depths of inward experiences and the mystery of its union with the life of Christ"—ELLICOTT. This profound saying intimates that the believer even shares the life of the Eternal Son in "the bosom of the Father." Had the Colossian heretics any *hidden treasures* (see notes on ch. 2. 3) worthy to be named with this?

4. **When Christ**—"the abruptness of the sentence surrounds us with sudden light—**our life**—the fountain of holiness and glory—**shall appear**—in the clouds of heaven"—WESLEY.

"This life, indeed, is hidden now; it has no outward splendour as men count splendour; for it is a life with Christ, a life in God. But the veil will not always shroud it. Christ our life shall be manifested hereafter; then ye also shall be manifested with Him, and the world shall see your glory"—LIGHTFOOT. (Comp. 1 John 3. 2.) "At present the real dignity of the sons of God is hidden from the eyes of men, and, indeed, from their own eyes, as Christ is hidden from mortal sight. In that day Christ in His essential grandeur will appear, and with Him will appear also the grandeur with which He will adorn His servants. (Comp. Phil. 3. 21; Rom. 8. 19–21)"—BEET.

5. **Mortify therefore**—"put to death, slay with a continued stroke—**your members**—which together make up the body of sin—**which are upon the earth**—where they find their nourishment. **Uncleanness**—in act, word, or thought. **Inordinate affection**—every passion which does not flow from and lead to the love of God. **Evil desire**—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life. **Covetousness**—according to the derivation of the word, means the desire of having more, or of anything independent on God. **Which is idolatry**—properly and directly; for it is giving the heart to a creature"—WESLEY.

"'Since, according to vers. 3, 4, ye are dead, but have your life hidden with Christ in God and are destined to be glorified with Christ, it would be in contradiction of all this, according to which ye belong no longer to the earth but to the heavenly state of life, to permit your earthly members still to live; no, ye are to put them to death, make them die.' **Members**—hand, foot, eye, etc. They were not to be put to death in the physical sense but in an ethical respect, as the seat and organ of sinful lusts"—MEYER. **Which are upon the earth**—for though "our life is hid with Christ in God" our bodies still remain **upon the earth. Covetousness.** The Greek word means "the desire to have more." **Which is idolatry.** "Covetousness is worship of material good"—BEET. Many wish to live "by bread alone," and sooner or later become worshippers of the god named in Phil. 3. 19—idolaters of food, drink, lands, gold, pleasure.

6. **For which**—"though the heathens lightly regarded them"—WESLEY.

Almost word for word as in Eph. 5. 6, where compare the notes. **Sons of disobedience.** "In each sinner the abstract principle of unbelief has given birth to a child"—BEET.

7. "**Living** denotes the inward principle; **walking**, the outward acts"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Eph. 2. 3.) To stimulate his readers in the direction of practical holiness by reminding them of the misery and darkness of their lives when they walked in unholiness is characteristic of S. Paul.

8. **Wrath**—"is lasting anger. **Filthy discourse.** And was there need to warn even these saints of God against so gross and palpable a sin as this? Oh what is man, till perfect love casts out both fear and sin!"—WESLEY.

Put ye away all, etc. "'Not only those vices which have been specially named before (ver. 5), but "all" of whatever kind.' The apostle accordingly goes on to specify sins of a wholly different type from those already mentioned, sins of uncharitableness, such as anger, detraction, malice, and the like"—LIGHTFOOT. **Anger** denotes more or less settled hatred, **wrath** the furious outbursts of

passion to which it often gives rise. **Malice** or "badness," not merely the absence of goodness, but the positive desire to harm others. **Railing** against man or God (in which case it equals the word "blasphemy").

9. (Comp. Eph. 4. 22, 25.) **Put off**—"as one takes off and lays aside clothing—**the old man.** So complete is the change that the man himself as he formerly was is spoken of as an old garment laid aside, as though personality itself were changed"—BEET. (Comp. Rom. 6. 6; 2 Cor. 5. 17.)

10. **In knowledge** — "the knowledge of God, His will, His word"—WESLEY.

New man—"in contrast to the 'old man' of ver. 9. **Which is being renewed.** The tense suggests the continual progress of the Christian life. The word 'renewed' does not necessarily mean restoration to a former state. For the new covenant is by no means a restoration of the old covenant to its original form: and the new earth and heaven will differ greatly from the present ones. But it involves the removal of all defects. The renewal will not be complete till every trace of the damage done by sin is erased. **Knowledge.** This mention of knowledge as an aim of renewal is in close harmony with ch. 1. 9, 28; 2. 2, and with the general scope of this Epistle"—BEET. **Image**, etc. (Comp. Gen. 1. 26.)

11. **Where**—"in which case, it matters not what a man is externally, whether **Jew** or Gentile, **circumcised**, or **uncircumcised, barbarian**, void of all the advantages of education, —yea, **Scythian**, of all barbarians most barbarous. **But Christ is in all** that are thus renewed, **and** is **all** things in them and to them"—WESLEY.

(See the note on Gal. 3. 28.) **Where**—in that *new creation* (2 Cor. 5. 17, R.V. *margin*) alluded to in the previous verse. **Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision.** By thus denying the existence, in Christ, of the distinction between the circumcised Jew and the uncircumcised Gentile, S. Paul strikes a blow at the Judaising errors of the Colossian heretics. By admitting **barbarians** and **Scythians** (thought to be the lowest type of "barbarians") on equal terms with "Greek" and "Jew," their Gnostic errors are met. For the tendency of Gnosticism was to reserve religion exclusively for the cultured and intellectual. **Bond and free.** These words have probably no reference to the Colossian heretics, but are added naturally by the apostle, in accordance with his characteristic instinct for the greatest possible comprehensiveness. LIGHTFOOT, however, thinks that the words are inserted with special reference to the case of Onesimus and Philemon. **But Christ is all and in all.** Judaism and Gnosticism were from their very nature opposed to S. Paul's grand doctrine of the universality of the gospel. This sentence is a sublime restatement of that doctrine. It presents the teachings of Galatians in the language of Ephesians.

12. "All who are thus renewed are **elected of God, holy, and** therefore the more **beloved** of Him. Holiness is the consequence of their **election**, and God's superior love, of their holiness"—WESLEY.

"As you have put on the new man, put on all its characteristic qualities. **As chosen ones of God**—as being men who enjoy and value so great and singular a blessing as to have been called out of heathen darkness to the knowledge of Christ"—ELLICOTT. **Holy and beloved**—given up to His service and inspired to perform it by His love. **Bowels of mercies**, or a "heart of compassion" (R.V.). Note that the "service of God" implied in the word **holy** above is now defined in terms of love and service to our fellow-men. Towards others we are to have a "heart of compassion," which will prompt us to help the poor and needy; **kindness**, gentleness and sweet reasonableness in our intercourse with all; **humility**, best understood by pondering Phil. 2. 3–5; **meekness**, to be studied in Gal. 6. 1–4; **long-suffering**, of which God Himself is our example. It is a fruit of love (1 Cor. 13. 4), and we find in it God, for "God is Love."

13. **Forbearing one another** — "if anything is now wrong — **and forgiving one another**—what is past"—WESLEY.

Read the notes on Gal. 6. 1–4 and Eph. 4. 32, where precepts very similar to these are found.

14. "The *love* of God contains the whole of Christian perfection, and connects all the parts of it together"—WESLEY.

Ver. 12 began with the words "put on," and the virtues named are conceived as garments in which God's saints robe themselves. **Upon all these**, or "over them," they are to **put on love** "as an outer garment over all the underclothing"—BEET. Like a girdle, love will hold all other virtues in their places. And as to have all the virtues, each in its right proportion and place, is "perfectness," love, which secures this state of things, is rightly called **the bond of perfectness.** On love as the source of all virtues, see 1 Cor. 13.

15. **And** then **the peace of God shall rule in your hearts**—"shall sway every temper, affection, thought, as the *reward* (so the Greek word implies) of your preceding love and obedience"—WESLEY.

And let the peace of Christ, etc. (R.V.). "The virtues named from ver. 12 onward have reference to our outward life, our dealings with others; but they will only be possible when there is health and strength of inward life, of our inmost selves. Hence all these virtues, along with the love which binds them together, must have their deep living foundation in 'the peace of Christ,' which reigns in the heart, and their abiding incite-

ment in *gratitude* towards God for the salvation received in Christ"—MEYER. **To the which**—*i.e.* Christ's peace and the life in which that peace is ruler—**ye were called**—in your conversion—**in one body**—the Church. It is characteristic of S. Paul to insist on union with the members, as well as with the Head, in such connections as the present. **And be thankful.** On the promise of peace to those who display a spirit of "thanksgiving," see Phil. 4. 6, 7. To give thanks we must needs recall God's faithfulness and love in the past; and, as we do so, we feel so sure He will "go on to be gracious" that **peace** steals into our hearts and calms all fears respecting the future.

16. **Let the word of Christ**—"so the apostle calls the whole Scripture, and thereby asserts the divinity of his Master—**dwell**—not make a short stay, or an occasional visit, but take up its stated residence—**richly**—in the largest measure, and with the greatest efficacy; so as to fill and govern the whole soul"—WESLEY. **The word of Christ**—"the gospel of which the subject-matter is CHRIST'S life, teachings, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension. **Dwell in you**—'in' each believer, and *among* the whole company of them. **Richly**—suggests abundance and enrichment. S. Paul desires the spoken word of Christ to have a permanent and abundant place in the church at Colossæ, and in the lips and thoughts of its members, thus making them truly rich"—BEET. **In all wisdom, teaching**, etc.—for so the words should be joined and not as A.V. and R.V. On **teaching and admonishing**, see ch. 1. 28. **Psalms and hymns**, etc. "Psalms" of David and similar compositions. "Hymns" of which some had already come into use among Christian congregations. They were probably doxologies, like those afterwards included in the Apocalypse. **Spiritual songs**—a wider word than the two preceding; any sort of poetical composition, provided it be *spiritual*.

17. **In the name**—"in the power and Spirit—**of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God**—the Holy Ghost—**and the Father through Him**—Christ"—WESLEY. **And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed**—another instance of the Pauline comprehensiveness often remarked in these notes. **Do all in the name**, etc.—not "for the sake of the name of Jesus," but the far stronger "in the name" of Phil. 2. 10—in that holy sphere which His name represents. LIGHTFOOT points out the reiteration of LORD in vers. 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, regarding it as intentional, and as "the great practical lesson which flows from the theological teaching of the Epistle." **To God the Father** (R.V.)—"of Christ as of us"—BEET.

18. **Wives, submit**—"or be subject **to**. It is properly a military term, alluding to that entire submission that soldiers pay to their general"—WESLEY.

From this point to the first verse of the next chapter, we have a series of precepts very similar to those in Eph. 5. 22–6. 9. (Read the notes there.) **As is fitting in the Lord.** Eph. 5. 22–33 contains S. Paul's profound philosophy of the subordination (but not in any sense the degradation) of woman in Christian marriage.

19. **Be not bitter**—"(which may be without any appearance of anger) either in word or spirit"—WESLEY. **Bitter**—"denotes acute unpleasantness of word, demeanour, or thought. The stronger party having nothing to fear from the weaker, is frequently in danger of acting or speaking harshly. To refrain from such harshness, even towards those we love, is sometimes, amid the irritations of life, no easy task. But it is binding upon the Christian"—BEET.

20. On this and the following verse, see Eph. 6. 1–4 and the notes.

21. **Lest they be discouraged**—"which may occasion their turning either desperate or stupid"—WESLEY.

This verse betrays once more the apostle's fine insight into the facts of human nature. By constant fault-finding and scolding, and by seeming unreasonably hard to please, parents are not to **discourage** their children, who are often trying to do well more than they get credit for. Uncalled-for rebukes, irritably and hastily administered, have permanently soured innumerable lives which would else have been full of sweetness.

22. **Eyeservice**—"being more diligent under their eye than at other times. **Singleness of heart**—a simple intention of 'doing right,' without looking any further. **Fearing God**—that is, acting from this principle"—WESLEY. (See the closely parallel passage in Eph. 6. 5–8, and the notes there.)

23. **Heartily**—"cheerfully, diligently. 'Menpleasers' are soon dejected and made angry: the 'single-hearted' are never displeased or disappointed; because they have another aim, which the good or evil treatment of those they serve cannot disappoint"—WESLEY. (See notes on Eph. 6. 5–8 and the full exposition there.) S. Paul considered this advice important enough to find a place in two of his Epistles, and the time is unhappily far distant when it will be superfluous.

24, 25. Expounded under Eph. 6. 8, 9, where see the notes.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Just**—"according to your contract. **Equitable**—even beyond the letter of your contract"—WESLEY. **Render**, or "furnish on your part." "The idea is 'reciprocation,' the master's duty as corresponding to the slave's"—LIGHTFOOT. (See notes on Eph. 6. 9.)

2. **Continue steadfastly in prayer.** (Comp. Rom. 12. 12; Acts 1. 14.) **Watching.** The word suggests "the opposite of sleep. In our persistent prayers our spiritual faculties must be in active exercise. We must, while we pray, be keenly alive to our own needs and dangers, and to the promise of God. **With thanksgiving.** Ceaseless prayer, with ceaseless praise, was the atmosphere of S. Paul's spiritual life" —BEET.

3. **That God would open to us a door of utterance**—"that is, give us utterance, that we 'may open our mouth boldly' (Eph. 6. 19), and give us an opportunity of speaking, so that none may be able to hinder"—WESLEY.

(Comp. notes on Eph. 6. 19, 20.) **Withal.** S. Paul, in ver. 2, has exhorted the Colossians to prayer in general, and he now mentions one thing in particular for which they ought to pray. **A door for the word**—an opportunity of preaching it where so far the door has been shut against it. **Mystery.** (Comp. ch. 1. 26, 27; 2. 2; and Eph. 3. 4.)

4. **As I ought to speak**, or "as I must speak"—the sentiment of 1 Cor. 9. 16.

5. **Them that are without**—without the Church. On the rest of the verse see notes on Eph. 5. 15, a passage closely resembling this.

6. "**Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned** with the grace of God, as flesh is with **salt**"—WESLEY.

Your speech—especially to unbelievers (see previous verse). **With grace.** (See Eph. 4. 29, where the positive precept of this verse is negatively expressed by the words, "let no corrupt communication," etc.) **With salt** in this is the exact opposite of "corrupt" in that passage. **Each one**—for the varying temperaments and circumstances of "each one" we talk with will call for great wisdom in the adaptation of our manner and matter so as to do the greatest possible amount of good. (Comp. 1 Cor. 9. 22.)

7. **Tychicus** was probably a native of Ephesus. He travelled with S. Paul during part of the apostle's third missionary tour. (See Acts 20. 4.) At the time this Epistle was written he was with S. Paul at Rome, where the sorely-tried prisoner found him to be indeed a **beloved brother**, and a **faithful minister.** S. Paul seems to have sent him to Proconsular Asia with the circular letter, known as Ephesians (see note on Eph. 1. 1), and at the same time he was made the bearer of the Colossian Epistle. A few years later Tychicus was with S. Paul again. (2 Tim. 4. 12; Tit. 3. 12.) To such men as Tychicus, whose very memory would have perished but for a few stray references in the Epistles, the debt of the Church will not be known until the day of Christ.

8. **Whom I have sent unto you**—have instructed him to visit Colossæ after leaving Laodicea (where there was a much larger church, to which, with other churches, the circular letter was sent). Laodicea was only a few miles from Colossæ, but the extra travelling Tychicus would have to undertake justifies S. Paul's language here. **That ye may know your estate** (R.V.). The A.V. has "that he might know your estate." But the R.V. reading is better. (See note on Phil. 1. 12.) S. Paul believes that when the Colossians "know his estate," and understand that his imprisonment is furthering rather than hindering the gospel, this will **comfort their hearts.** But THEOPHYLACT thinks the afflictions of the Colossians themselves and not of the apostle are meant.

9. **Onesimus.** (See the notes on Philemon.) **The faithful and beloved brother.** He had run away from Colossæ a dishonest and worthless slave, but so genuine had been his repentance, and so real his faith, that S. Paul is now able to apply to him the words "faithful and beloved."

10. **Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner**—"such was Epaphras likewise for a time (Philem. 23). **Ye have received directions**—namely, by Tychicus, bringing this letter. The ancients adapted their language to the time of reading the letter; not, as we do, to the time when it was written. It is not improbable, they might have scrupled to *receive him*, without this fresh direction, after he had left S. Paul, and 'departed from the work'"—WESLEY.

Aristarchus. (Comp. Acts 19. 29; 20. 4; 27. 2.) He was a Thessalonian. **My fellow-prisoner.** Aristarchus and Epaphras (see Philem. 23) were both S. Paul's "fellow-prisoners." Whether they were actual prisoners, or only such in the sense of voluntarily sharing S. Paul's captivity, we do not know. **Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.** Probably "John surnamed Mark" (Acts 12. 12, 25; 15. 27). **Ye received commandments**—either by an earlier messenger, or in a letter which has not been preserved. If the missionary work of Mark should bring him to Colossæ, he is to be well received.

11. **These**—"three, **Aristarchus, Marcus,** and **Justus—of all the circumcision**—that is, of all my Jewish fellow-labourers—**are the only fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God**—that is, in preaching the gospel—**who have been a comfort to me.** What, then, can *we* expect that all our fellow-workers should be a comfort to us?"—WESLEY.

Jesus—the Greek form of the Hebrew "Joshua." "Its use here as a designation of an obscure Jewish Christian proves that the Eternal Son bore on earth not merely a human name but a name given to ordinary men"—BEET. **Justus**—a Latin surname meaning "righteous." This is the only place where Jesus Justus is named. **Who are of the circumcision**—circumcised Jews. **These only,** etc., so R.V. and A.V. But it is far better so to punctuate as to render, **of those who are of the circumcision these only,** etc. For the

other Jews were adding to his trials. (Phil. 1. 17.)

12. **Perfect**—"endued with every Christian grace. **Filled**—as no longer being babes, but grown up to the measure of the stature of Christ; being full of His light, grace, wisdom, holiness"—WESLEY.

Epaphras. Must not be confounded with "Epaphroditus" (Phil. 2. 25). He was probably a native of Colossæ and the founder of the church there. His great services to the gospel account for his receiving the title **servant of Jesus Christ**, only used by S. Paul of himself, Timothy, and Epaphras. **Always wrestling in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.** The presence of Gnostic influences at Colossæ, those so insidious perils to *perfection* and *full assurance*, had reached the ears of Epaphras in Rome, and called forth these strivings in prayer for his fellow-townsmen.

13. Colossæ, **Laodicea**, and **Hierapolis**, all lay near together in the valley of the Lycus, and Epaphras had no doubt done good work in all three cities.

14. **Luke, the physician**—"such he had been, at least, if he was not then"—WESLEY.

Luke, the beloved physician — a Gentile and the writer of the Third Gospel, with its continuation the Acts. **Demas** — nothing is here said in praise of Demas. Perhaps (but we can only hazard a guess) the love of the world named in 2 Tim. 4. 10 had already begun to impair his usefulness.

15. **Nymphas** — "probably an eminent Christian at **Laodicea**"—WESLEY.

Salute the brethren in Laodicea — with whom some at least of the Colossians would often meet, the two cities being only twelve miles apart. Among these brethren was **Nymphas**, whose house had been thrown open for Christian worship.

16. **The Epistle from Laodicea** — "not to Laodicea. Perhaps some letter had been written to S. Paul from thence"—WESLEY.

And when this Epistle has been read among you—which would probably be done by reading it aloud next time the Colossian believers met for worship—**cause . . . Laodiceans**, among whom also Gnostic influences were at work. **The Epistle from Laodicea**—the circular letter now known as the Epistle to the Ephesians. (See note on Eph. 1. 1.)

17. **And say to Archippus**—"one of the pastors of that church—**take heed.** It is the duty of the flock to try them that say they are apostles; to reject the false, and to warn, as well as to receive, the real. **The ministry**—not a lordship, but a service; a laborious and painful work; an obligation to do and suffer all things; to be the least, and the servant, of all. **In the Lord**—Christ; by whom, and for whose sake, we receive the various gifts of the Holy Spirit"—WESLEY.

"The ministry which Archippus had received was **in the Lord**, a ministry, or service, referring to the gospel, and to be **fulfilled** with a view to the welfare of the Church. It comprised, as is probable, all that is included in the ministerial and pastoral office; the preaching of the word, and the maintenance of discipline"—Dr. BUNTING. Ignorant as we are of the local circumstances, we cannot explain why S. Paul does not address himself directly to **Archippus**, as he does to Euodias and Syntche in Phil. 4. 2. Many think that Archippus had been left in charge during the absence of Epaphras. **Say ye to Archippus**—"perhaps S. Paul thought thus to inspire in him a sense of responsibility to the whole Church"—BEET.

18. **The salutation of me Paul.** After conveying the greetings of those with him, S. Paul concludes with his own. **With mine own hand.** (Comp. 2 Thess. 3. 17; 1 Cor. 15. 21.) S. Paul generally added a few closing words in his own handwriting to guard against forgeries. **Remember my bonds.** (See note on Eph. 6. 20.) As the captive apostle takes the pen from his amanuensis, he feels the chains dragging at his wrist. And that his readers may be moved to earnest prayer on his behalf, he adds with deep and unaffected pathos, **Remember my bonds.** In answer to such prayers grace will be given him. That same gift he desires for them; and closes this profound Epistle with the simple and dignified benediction, **Grace be with you.**

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

"THIS is the first of all the Epistles which S. Paul wrote. Thessalonica was one of the chief cities of Macedonia. Hither S. Paul went after the persecution at Philippi; but he had not preached here long before the unbelieving Jews raised a tumult against him and Silvanus and Timotheus. On this the brethren sent them away to Berea. Thence S. Paul went by sea to Athens, and sent for Silvanus and Timotheus to come speedily to him. But being in fear

lest the Thessalonian converts should be moved from their steadfastness, after a short time he sends Timotheus to them to know the state of their church. Timotheus returning found the apostle at Corinth; from whence he sent them this Epistle, about a year after he had been at Thessalonica.

"THE PARTS OF IT ARE THESE—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1.
II. He celebrates the grace of God towards them, . . . ,, ,, 2–10.
Mentions the sincerity of himself and his fellow-labourers, ... ,, ii. 1–12.
And the teachableness of the Thessalonians, . . . ,, ,, 13–16.
III. He declares—
1. His desire, ... ,, ,, 17–20.
2. His care, ... ,, iii. 1–5.
3. His joy and prayers for them, ... ,, ,, 6–13.
IV. He exhorts them to grow—
1. In holiness, ... ,, iv. 1–8.
2. In brotherly love with industry, ... ,, ,, 9–12.
V. He teaches and exhorts—
1. Concerning them that sleep, ... ,, ,, 13–18.
2. Concerning the times, ... ,, v. 1–11.
VI. He adds Miscellaneous Exhortations, ... ,, ,, 12–24.
VII. The Conclusion, ... ,, ,, 25–28."

—WESLEY.

To the Thessalonians I.

So the title runs in the oldest copies. S. Paul's Epistles were at first gathered into a single volume by themselves, entitled "The Apostle." Within this volume the Epistles were distinguished simply by the names of those to whom they were addressed. The order of this earliest collection was the same as appears in our English Bibles (except that the position of the Epistle to the Hebrews varied—now fourth, now tenth, and then last of the fourteenth). The Thessalonian letters came last in the second group, which consisted of five smaller Epistles addressed to the churches—Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians. This was not the order of time, but of magnitude and supposed importance.

THE ADDRESS AND SALUTATION.

This being the earliest of S. Paul's extant letters, let us note with care the form of his address and introduction, for it is that from which he never departed. But his greetings were enlarged as time went on, and varied with every variation in the circumstances of his readers and in his relations to them.

CHAPTER I.

1. Paul. "In this Epistle S. Paul neither uses the title of an apostle, nor any other, as writing to pious and simple-hearted men, with the utmost familiarity. There is a peculiar sweetness in this Epistle, unmixed with any sharpness or reproof: those evils which the apostles afterward reproved having not yet crept into the church"—WESLEY.

"There is no apostolic title given in this salutation, which would certainly have been assumed by a *forger*. The omission may be studiously in consonance with the character of this Epistle, which has little of the tonic severity of some others, and presents a picture drawn with the softest pencil of Christian love"—S. C. "**In God the Father, etc.** All things in their highest aspect — churches, individuals, the actions, feelings, and moods of men—are in Christ. They pass out of themselves into union with the Divine nature"—JOWETT. **Paul** — here and in the Second Epistle S. Paul introduces himself without the title "Apostle," or any personal designation. Similarly in his much later Epistle to the

Philippians, and to his friend Philemon. For in these cases he has no need to stand on his dignity. He is "gentle among them, as a nurse with her children" (ch. 2. 6–8); and prefers, as in writing to Philemon (ver. 9), to merge the apostle in the friend **Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.** "Silvanus and Timotheus" had been S. Paul's companions at Thessalonica. The apostle was accustomed to associate with himself in writing to the churches any of his helpers present with him and known to his readers. This was courteous, and promoted mutual sympathy.

SECTION I.—Vers. 2–10. THE THANKSGIVING AND THE REASONS FOR IT.—In every Epistle, except Galatians, the apostle's first words are of thanks and praise to God for the fruits of God's grace found in his readers, according to his own maxim (ch. 5. 18), "In everything give thanks." And his thanksgiving is expressed here in the fullest and warmest terms. This long sentence is a good example of S. Paul's manner as a writer. His thought flows on in a single rapid stream, turning now hither, now thither, but always advancing towards its goal. His sentences are not built up in regular and distinct periods, but grow and extend themselves like living things under our eyes, "gaining force in each successive clause by the repetition and expansion of the preceding"—JOWETT.

2. **We give thanks to God always for you all.** "We," *i.e.* the three above-named. Here, as in Phil. 1. 4, he has thankfulness and joy over them "all"; no other churches seem to have been so much to the apostle's mind as these two. And everything dear to him or useful to others in his friends moves him to gratitude toward God on their account. This S. Paul felt that he "owed to God" (2 Thess. 1. 3), the Source of all goodness in men; and it was the best and safest way of commending them. **Making mention of you in our prayers**—*i.e.* "when engaged in prayer." As often as the apostle and his companions prayed, the Thessalonian church came to their mind; and, with supplication, praise on their behalf constantly mingled.

3. **Remembering in the sight of God**—"that is, praising Him for it—**your work of faith**—your active, ever-working faith—**and labour of love**—love continually labouring for the bodies or souls of men. They who do not thus labour, do not love. **Faith** works, **love** labours, **hope** patiently suffers all things"—WESLEY.

Remembering, *i.e.* "how active and faithful your faith has shown itself to be, how devoted and unwearied your love, and what fortitude your hope in the Lord Jesus has inspired." **Faith, love,** and **hope** are the essence of practical Christianity. There was a remarkable vigour, a moral courage and activity, in the life of this church, over which the apostle rejoiced even more than he did in the eloquence and knowledge of the church of Corinth. (1 Cor. 1. 5.) "**Warmth of heart and practical energy** were the distinguishing features of Thessalonian Christianity"—C. B. The Thessalonians' **work of faith** was manifest especially in the two forms of **toil of love, and endurance of hope.** Similarly in 2 Thess. 1. 3, 4, 'faith' is joined with 'love' (the 'charity' of 1. Cor. 13) on the one side, and with **patience** on the other. These are the two chief branches of Christian work—loving service to the brethren and our fellow-men (comp. ch. 4. 10; 5. 13), and fearless testimony for Christ before the world, with endurance of the loss and suffering this may entail (vers. 6, 7; 2. 13, 14; 3. 2–4)—'the good fight of faith' (1 Tim. 6. 12). So we see the Christian life in its simplest elements—'a faith that had its outward effect on your lives; a love that spent itself in the service of others; a hope that was no transient feeling, but was content to wait for the things unseen, when it should be revealed'"—JOWETT. "If joy is the key-note of the Epistle to the Philippians, hope is that of the present epistle"—ELLICOTT.

4. **Knowing your election**—"which is through faith, by these plain proofs"—WESLEY.

"The apostle thinks of his readers as *brethren*, for he has just been carrying them in his thoughts in prayer 'before our God and *Father*.' The knowledge that God their Father loves them and has chosen them for His own gives confidence to the apostle's prayers for them and inexpressible joy to his thanksgivings. (Comp. 2 Thess. 2. 13.) 'We are bound to give thanks always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you,' etc.; and Eph. 1. 3–5, 'Blessed be God . . . who blessed us in every spiritual blessing . . . according as He chose us in Christ,' etc. The word **election**, here occurring for the first time in S. Paul's Epistles, and expressing one of his most important doctrines, needs to be carefully studied. The New Testament use of the word originates in the Old Testament idea of Israel as God's 'peculiar possession,' 'the people whom He chose for His inheritance' (see Ps. 33. 12; 35. 4; Deut. 14. 2; Isa. 43. 1-7, etc.). Such 'election' implies two things—(1) *selection out of others*, nations or men, who are not thus chosen—'the rest' ch. 4. 13; 5. 6); and (2) *appropriation by God* for His own love and service. Since Israel as a people now rejected Christ, S. Paul was compelled to distinguish between national Israel and the true 'election,' the spiritual kernel of the chosen people, who were the real objects of God's favour: 'the election obtained what Israel seeks after, but the rest were hardened' (Rom. 11. 7). With this true election, through Christ, all believing Gentiles are identified—'wild olive-shoots, grafted into the good olive tree' (Rom. 11. 17-24). So

the nation gives place to a *spiritual election*—the 'Israel of God' (Gal. 6. 16); and the Apostle Paul applies the term, as in this place, to Jewish and Gentile members of the Church indiscriminately. *God's* choice of men for His purposes must, of course, precede *their* choice of Him and of His salvation; but it in no way precludes human choice and freedom of will—nay, rather anticipates and prepares for our free volition (comp. Rom. 8. 28–30), and invites us to be 'workers together' with it for our salvation: 'work out your own salvation . . . for it is God that worketh in you' (Phil. 2. 12, 13)"—C. B.

5. **With power**—"piercing the very heart with a sense of sin; and deeply convincing you of your want of a Saviour from guilt, misery, and eternal ruin. **With the Holy Ghost**—bearing an outward testimony, by miracles, to the truth of what we preached, and you felt: also by His descent through laying on of hands. **With much assurance**—*lit.* with 'full assurance,' and 'much' of it: the Spirit bearing witness by shedding the love of God abroad in your hearts, which is the highest testimony that can be given. And these signs, if not the miraculous gifts, always attend the preaching of the gospel, unless it be in vain: neither are the extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost ever wholly withheld, where the gospel is preached with power, and men are alive to God. **For your sake**—seeking your advantage, not our own"—WESLEY.

The R.V. reads, **how that our gospel**, etc.; better perhaps "in that"; the difference is slight: in any case, the conversion of the Thessalonians, described in vers. 5, 6, was not that wherein their election *consisted*, but wherein it was *evidenced*. Paul and Silas were conscious in declaring their message of a power beyond all words attending it, which made them sure at the time that it would not be in vain. It was evident to them that God "had much people in this city." **Our gospel** is God's good news about Jesus Christ, proclaimed by His servants. (See Rom. 1. 1–5.) ELLICOTT says (**In word only**), "It did not consist *merely* of so much eloquent instruction, but also we found we were speaking with a conscious power,—indeed, with all the force of the Holy Ghost—and with an overmastering conviction that we were right and should prevail." That by the **power, assurance**, etc., are meant the preacher's own, and not the people's, is proved by the next clause, **as ye know**.

6. "Though **in much affliction**, yet **with** much **joy**"—WESLEY.

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord (R.V. "imitators of us," etc.). (Comp. ch. 2. 14; 2 Thess. 3. 9, where the same correction is made.) An "imitator" not only accepts the teaching of another, but copies his example. This *imitation* consisted (1) in the joyful endurance of suffering for the gospel's sake, as the following words show (comp. ch. 2. 2, 14, 15, etc.); but (2) also in the vigour which marked the life of this church, corresponding to that of the apostle's ministry amongst them (ver. 4). Observe two things here—(1) How inspiring to the Thessalonians to be told they were walking in the very steps "*of* the Lord"; this makes toil welcome, and shame glorious. (2) How bold in the apostle, and what a good conscience he kept, that he could identify following himself with following *Christ*. (Comp. 1 Cor. 11. 1, "Be imitators of me, even as I also of Christ.")

7. **So that ye were ensamples**—"the sense really is, that there were in that church as *many examples* as individuals. They became so many *moulds* of *form* for the Christian life"—S. C. S. Paul imitated Christ, the Thessalonians him (ver. 6), and all neighbouring Christians took pattern by them. So good example spreads.

8. **For from you the word sounded forth**—"Thessalonica being a city of great commerce. Being echoed, as it were, from you. And your conversion was divulged far beyond **Macedonia** and **Achaia. So that we need not speak anything**—concerning it"—WESLEY.

"**For from you sounded out the word of the Lord**—better 'hath sounded out, or resounded.' The Greek word suggests a clear ringing note, 'as of a trumpet' (Chrysostom); and the tense (perfect) implies no transient sound, but a continuing effect. 'The word of the Lord,' is the standing Old Testament designation for God's revealed will—all that, as *the Lord*, He says to men. But 'the Lord' is now *Christ* in His Divine authority and glory; and this title of Christ is notably frequent in our two Epistles. Only in them is this expression applied by S. Paul to the gospel. (Comp. ch. 4. 15; 2 Thess. 3. 1.) Afterwards he calls it 'the word of God,' or 'of Christ'—'not men's word, but as it is in truth, God's word' (ch. 2. 13). The fullest declaration of the authorship and purport of this 'word' is from the lips of S. Peter, in Acts 10. 36, 'The word which God sent,—in good tidings of peace through Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all'"—C. B. Read this in close connection with the next verse. It is as much as to say, "No need for us to tell the story. We hear of it from all sides; everywhere people are talking about your conversion and your brave testimony for Christ."

9. **For they themselves** — "the people wherever we come"—WESLEY.

For they themselves show of us (R.V.)—rather, "report concerning us." "They" points to "those in Macedonia and Achaia" and "in every place,"—any whom the apostle visited, or to whom he had thought of sending the news. "Instead of waiting to be told by us, we find them spreading the joyful news

already!" And this self-diffusing report concerned not the Thessalonians alone, but *S. Paul and his colleagues.* It published their success at this great city, and helped their further progress: **they report . . . what kind of an entrance we had unto you.** The "faith toward God" defined in this verse, is the faith of the whole Bible, in which from the first to the last God asserts Himself as "the Living and True," against the ten thousand forms of human idolatry. In the next verse he advances to that which was distinctively Christian in their new creed.

10. **Whom He hath raised from the dead** —"in proof of His future coming to judgment. **Who delivereth us**—He redeemed us once; He delivers us continually; and will deliver all that believe **from the wrath**, the eternal vengeance, which will then **come** upon the ungodly"—WESLEY.

"It has been said to be remarkable that S. Paul should here make 'the *essence of the gospel* consist, not in belief in Christ, nor in taking up His cross, but in the hope of His coming again.' But S. Paul does not give us the slightest ground for thinking that he is here defining 'the essence of the gospel.' With S. Paul, as with all great Christian thinkers, different aspects of the gospel will acquire especial importance at different times. The seasons of the year are represented variously in S. Paul's writings. The breath of Advent-tide blows about the First Epistle to the Thessalonians"—S. C. **And to wait for His Son from heaven . . . even Jesus** — *lit.* "from the heavens"; comp. 2 Cor. 12. 2, "the third heaven"; and Heb. 4. 14, "Jesus . . . who (in ascending) hath passed through the heavens." "Heaven" is a plural word in Hebrew, and its conception was manifold, implying the existence of successive regions and stages, like the courts and chambers of the tabernacle, leading up to the innermost immediate presence-chamber of the Most High. "**Whom He raised from the dead.** Raised from the dead, Jesus was exalted as God's Son, and man's Saviour, and Lord of all things, to the highest heaven (Eph. 1. 20-22); and in this character He will return, as He said, 'with His Father's glory and with the holy angels,' to 'render to every man according to his deeds' (Matt. 16. 27; Mark 8. 38). The resurrection was the first step in Christ's glorification, the pledge of all the rest. *How* Jesus 'delivers us' from the wrath impending over sinful men, S. Paul does not tell us here; he had certainly taught the Thessalonians. In ch. 5. 8-10 he opposes to God's 'wrath' '*salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us'; and this shows that he had proclaimed at Thessalonica the same doctrine of reconciliation through the cross which he expounds in the next group of his Epistles, and which was the core of his gospel from the beginning"—C. B.

CHAPTER II.

SECTION II.—Vers. 1-12. THE APOSTLE'S CONDUCT AT THESSALONICA.—1. "What was proposed (1 Thess. 1. 5, 6) is now largely treated of: concerning S. Paul and his fellow-labourers, vers. 1-12; concerning the Thessalonians, vers. 13-16"—WESLEY.

"This verse might be rendered somewhat more freely in English idiom, **For you know of yourselves, brethren, that our coming amongst you has not proved vain.** The appeal made to the recollections and experience of the readers is characteristic of these letters (see vers. 2, 5, 10, 11; ch. 1. 5). Concerning the 'entrance' of the missionaries amongst them the Thessalonians know better than any-one else, 'that it hath not been found vain' (R.V.). And not merely did the coming of Christ's servants produce a striking impression at the time; their work has proved thoroughly successful. Its fruit is permanent"—FINDLAY.

2. **We had suffered**—"in several places. **We are bold**—notwithstanding. **With much contention**—notwithstanding both inward and outward conflicts of all kinds"—WESLEY.

Shamefully treated—implies insult and injury combined, such as constituted a legal crime. This accords with the protest of Paul and Silas against the Philippian magistrates (Acts 16. 37), "They have beaten us, publicly, uncondemned, being Romans!" Such indignities the apostle felt keenly; they add a distinct element to his sufferings. As to the circumstances of the missionaries' visit to Philippi and their experience there, read carefully Acts 16. Instead of being daunted by the violence they suffered, Paul and Silas at Philippi "sang praises to God at midnight, with their feet fast in the stocks." And God there signally vindicated His servants and turned their shame to honour. So we are not surprised to read of the holy confidence with which they declared their message at Thessalonica: **we waxed bold** (R.V.)—or, "took courage in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God amid much conflict." The last words of the clause explain the first, on which the emphasis rests. The "conflict" that broke out at Philippi continued under another form at Thessalonica, and the apostles needed all their courage and faith in God to sustain them in entering on their ministry in this new city. Throughout the first European mission it required a hard struggle to win for the gospel a footing anywhere. There was **much conflict.**

3. **For our exhortation**—"that is, our preaching. A part is put for the whole. **Is not**, at any time, **of deceit**—we preach not a lie, but the truth of God. **Nor of uncleanness**—with any unholy or selfish view. This expression is not always appropriated to lust, although it is sometimes emphatically applied thereto. **Nor in guile**—but with great plainness of speech"—WESLEY.

Exhortation hardly conveys his full meaning—"our appeal" is perhaps better; it is the practical "appeal," or "address," which "the gospel of God," as the missionaries of Christ preach it everywhere, makes to its hearers. "The whole gospel preaching and message is so-called, as permeated by and living in an atmosphere of gentle, soothing affection. Religion has been defined as morality tinctured by emotion. Much more truly is the whole gospel a system tinctured by emotion. As addressed to the careless, slothful, tempted, fallen, it is an **exhortation**; as addressed to the sad and seeking, it is *solace* and *comfort*. It is the gospel exhortation, which is never without a certain soothing, sympathetic sweetness"—S. C. Professor JOWETT says: "Many passages of the New Testament lead us to suppose that there existed in the age of the apostles a connection between the form of spirituality and licentiousness. Of this S. Paul declares his innocence, and with it he elsewhere upbraids the false teachers."

4. **As we have been approved by God to be entrusted.** "The apostle had been tested for his work, and tested by it; God had made proof of him as a minister of Christ, and he was shown to be worthy of his trust; *tried*, then *trusted*. (Comp. 1 Tim. 1. 12.) 'To be put in trust with the gospel' is the highest conceivable responsibility; the sense of it is enough to exclude every base motive and deceitful practice (ver. 3). On S. Paul's 'trust' read 1 Tim. 1. 12–17 and Acts 9. 15, 16: 'He is a chosen vessel unto Me.' S. Paul tells us elsewhere, and by way of example, that he 'pleased all in all things for their good, unto edification.' (1 Cor. 10. 33; Rom. 15. 2.) To please men in that which displeases God, is to injure them: 'If (in such circumstances) I pleased men, I should not be Christ's slave' (Gal. 1. 10). That is, to be the slave of public opinion—often an ignorant, sometimes an unprincipled master"—FINDLAY.

5. **Flattering words**—"this **ye know. Nor a cloke of covetousness**—of this **God is witness.** He calls men to witness an open fact—**God**, the secret intentions of the heart. In a point of a mixed nature (ver. 10), he appeals both to God and man"—WESLEY.

"We did not use words such as flattery uses, or pretexts such as avarice uses"—JOWETT. "We did not allow ourselves to be drawn into an atmosphere of perpetual flattery in speech, nor into a long deception arising from self-seeking"—S. C. **A cloke of covetousness.** "No man will profess himself covetous; but he will for very shame cast as handsome a cloke over it as he can (*frugality*, some cloke or other), to hide the filthiness of it from the sight of others"—Bishop SANDERSON.

In repudiating **the cloke of covetousness** he appeals to **God** as **witness** (comp. Rom. 1. 9, "God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son"; also Rom. 2. 15; 9. 1), "God, who proveth our hearts" (ver. 4). The "cloke" signifies the *pretext* of an affected self-devotion, such as might be used to conceal the "covetousness" of a selfish heart. "God is witness," he says, "that no secret avarice was hidden behind our zeal for your salvation." "The Greek word for **covetousness** denotes 'greed' of any kind—oftenest, but not always or necessarily, *for money*; it is the spirit of *self-aggrandisement*, selfishness as a ruling passion. Such a motive in the servant of God would constitute the 'uncleanness' denied in ver. 3. This verse gives double evidence of the pure zeal for God professed in vers. 3 and 4—the one *outward* and of the lips, the other *inward* and known only to God in the heart. Contrast the opposite description of Ps. 12. 2, 'A flattering lip, and a double heart'"—C. B.

6. **Nor from others**—"who would have honoured us more, if we had **been burdensome**—that is, taken state upon ourselves"—WESLEY.

The motive of *ambition*—"that last infirmity of noble minds"—rises above the *selfishness* just disclaimed; but it is just as warmly repudiated, for it is equally inconsistent with the single-mindedness of men devoted to the glory of God. Our Lord finds in superiority to human praise the mark of a sincere faith: "How can ye believe," He asks, "who receive honour one of another, and the glory which cometh from the only God ye seek not?" (John 5. 44.)

7. **But we were gentle**—"mild, tender—**in the midst of you**—like a hen surrounded with her young. **Even as a nurse cherisheth her own children**—the offspring of her own womb"—WESLEY.

Among you—"rather, 'in the midst of you,' making the gentleness still more marked. **Her**—in the Greek emphatically 'her own.' The contrast is drawn between the charlatan—licentious, sophistical, fawning, greedy, vainglorious teachers, to whom Greeks were well accustomed, and the apostles, sitting familiarly like mothers amidst a group of their own children, fondling them for warmth to their bosoms. 'Keep a mother's heart for men,' was the advice which made Henri Perreyve's life so winning"—ELLICOTT.

8. **To impart our own souls**—"to lay down our lives for your sake"—WESLEY.

The apostles were not merely **willing** (A.V.) to bestow themselves on the Thessalonians, they actually *did so*, and with the glad consent of a mother nourishing the babe from her own life. The same verb is rendered "thought-good" in ch. 3. 1; and the corresponding noun is "good-pleasure" in 2 Thess. 1. 11.

9. S. Paul's motives in continuing to work were three—(1) *independence*, the being able to take what has been ingeniously called 'a lay position'; (2) *example* (2 Thess. 3. 8, 9);

(3) *charity*, having something to give in alms (Acts 20. 34)"—S. C. S. Paul was a "tent-maker by trade." (Acts 18. 3.) "Jewish fathers, even if wealthy, had their sons taught some mechanical craft as a remedy against poverty or idleness; and S. Paul had learnt in his youth at Tarsus the business of cutting out and stitching the coarse goats' hair cloth used in Cilicia for making tents. He found this skill in his wandering apostleship a great resource"—FINDLAY.

10. **Holily**—"in the things of God. **Justly**—with regard to men. **Unblamable**—in respect of ourselves. **Among you that believe**—who were the constant observers of our behaviour"—WESLEY.

Ye are witnesses. Abruptly, without conjunction, the writers add a summary description of their conduct at Thessalonica; before, they had dwelt on details, now on the broad characteristics. As in ver. 5, **God** is appealed to, because the readers could only judge of the outward propriety of their teachers conduct; and it is a moral law that (as ARISTOTLE says), "the righteous man is not he that does acts which in themselves are righteous, but he that does those acts in *such a mind* as befits righteous men."

11. "By **exhorting**, we are moved to do a thing willingly; by **comforting**, to do it joyfully; by **charging**, to do it carefully"—WESLEY.

The apostle compared himself to a "nurse-mother" (ver. 7) in his tender, gentle affection; now he is a *father* in the fidelity and manly strength of his counsels. (Comp. 1 Cor. 4. 14–21, where he gives a different turn to the figure.) **Exhorting** is the general term for animating address. (Comp. notes on ver. 3, and ch. 3. 2.) "Encouraging" (as in ch. 5. 14, John 11. 19, 31; rendered uniformly in A.V. "comforting") is the calming and consoling side of exhortation, as addressed to the afflicted or the weak. "Testifying" (same word as in Gal. 5. 3; Eph. 4. 17; Acts 26. 22) supplies its solemn, warning element. The Thessalonian church was both suffering and tempted, and the apostle's ministry to them had been at once *consolatory* and *admonitory*. So are his two Epistles.

12. "**To His kingdom** here, **and glory** hereafter"—WESLEY.

"It was *God's* message the apostles of Christ had brought to the Thessalonians (vers. 2, 9); 'unto *God*, the living and true,' they had 'turned from their idols to serve' Him (ch. 1. 9). They must, therefore, now live a life **worthy of God**—worthy of those who have such a God and are His servants and sons. Nowhere, perhaps, does S. Paul lay such continued emphasis on the relation of the Christian believer to God as in these Epistles. To 'walk worthy of God' is the noblest possible ideal of life; so high that it would appear visionary and impracticable, if it were not for what follows:—(Worthy of God) **who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory.** According to the truer reading, 'who calleth'—for it is a call that continues till its purpose is accomplished. (Comp. ch. 4. 8, 'God who giveth His Holy Spirit,' R.V.); and 'into His own kingdom,' etc."—FINDLAY.

SECTION III.—Vers. 13–16. JEWISH PERSECUTORS OF THE CHURCH.—This short paragraph is of peculiar interest. The apostle was at the time exposed in his Gentile mission to the bitterest persecution from the unbelieving Jews, as we gather from the contemporary narrative of Acts (ch. 16–18). And he employs against them in vers. 15, 16, language more severe than is found in any other of his writings. Evidently he regarded the Jews as being now, in the counsels of God, a doomed nation (ver. 16). Accordingly we find him in Rom. (ch. 9–11.) a few years later, arguing upon the reprobation of "Israel after the flesh" as a settled thing. We observe, too, his desire (ver. 14) to draw the Jewish and Gentile sections of the Church nearer to each other in sympathy under the stress of persecution.

13. Literally the clause reads, **you accepted not men's word, but as it is truly, God's word.** "*Men's* word"—the mere word of "Paul and Silas and Timothy." The Thessalonians accepted God's word *as God's*, with reverence and faith. They recognised in what they heard from Paul and Silas a higher Voice, the message of the living and true God, calling them to life eternal. The success of religious teaching lies in its power to make God's voice audible through human speech. If the preacher cannot do this, he does nothing. S. Paul considers the receiving the word of God, not as an independent act of his readers, but as an operation of God's grace in them. To **Him** therefore, alone, are thanks for it also due.

14. **Ye suffered the same things**—"the same fruit, the same afflictions, and the same experience, at all times and in all places, are an excellent criterion of evangelical truth. **As they from the Jews**—their countrymen"—WESLEY.

"More strictly, **which are in Judea in Christ Jesus** (R.V.). 'In Judea' is the local, 'in Christ Jesus' the spiritual, *habitat* of these churches. This latter phrase—an expression characteristic of St. Paul, and frequent in subsequent Epistles—signifies 'in union and communion with Him, incorporated with Him who is the Head' of His body the Church"—ELLICOTT.

15. **Us**—"apostles and preachers of the gospel. **They please not God**—nor are they even careful to please Him, notwithstanding their fair professions. **And are contrary to all men**—are common enemies of mankind; not only by their continual seditions and insurrections, and by their utter contempt of

all other nations; but, in particluar, by their endeavouring to hinder their hearing or receiving the gospel"—WESLEY.

Killed the Lord Jesus. "The title the Lord here is not simply one of usual *reverence.* There is an undertone of horror, indignation, and realisation of their guilt in it. 'They killed the *Lord Jesus*'—Him, who as their Master, they were bound to serve. The title is an addition to their guilt. (Comp. 1 Cor. 2. 8)"—S. C. "A tremendous invective against the Jews, the purpose of which is—(1) to show the deep sympathy of S. Paul with the persecuted Thessalonians, and his indignation against the persecutors; (2) to make them see still more deeply the value of their faith by the efforts made to keep it from them. Objection is often made to S. John's Gospel, on the ground that no born Jew could have written of 'the Jews' in the bitter way so common in that book, or viewed them so completely as a separate body from himself. This passage, in an indubitable Epistle of 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews,' seems a satisfactory answer. The memories of S. Stephen's speech (Acts 7. 52) seem to be waking in the mind of him who was once a persecuting Jew himself"—ELLICOTT.

16. **To fill up**—"the measure of **their sins always**, as they have ever done. **But** the vengeance of God **is come upon them**—hath overtaken them unawares, whilst they were seeking to destroy others, and will speedily complete their destruction"—WESLEY.

May be saved (R.V.). As much as to say "These Jews, if they had their way, would prevent us speaking a single word to you about the gospel; they would willingly see all the Gentiles perish!" This stamped them as enemies of the human race. They were furious to think that unclean Gentiles claimed a share in their Messiah. Their murderous hatred against S. Paul was due to the fact that he preached Christ to the heathen and declared God to be the God of Jews and Gentiles equally, saving both alike through faith in Christ.

To fill up their sins alway. "After the death of Christ a space for repentance was allowed them, the 'forty years' alluded to in Heb. 3. 9, 17. Had they accepted Christ's message of reconciliation through the apostles, and become His witnesses to the Gentiles, the judgment would have been averted. (Acts 3. 19.) The measure allowed to the nation's sins was not yet full; but this last refusal made their cup overflow—slowly filling, as it had been, for many ages. 'Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers,' Jesus had said to them (Matt. 23. 32); and this they had done, beyond all question. The phrase 'fill up their sins,' signifying ripeness for judgment, is used in Gen. 15. 16 of the Amorites in Abraham's time—an ominous parallel"—FINDLAY. "The Jews for stoning the prophet—but most of all for crucifying the Son of God—brought blood-guiltiness, not only upon themselves. (Matt. 27. 25.) The 'wrath of God,' therefore, coming upon them to the uttermost, and abiding upon their posterity even to this day, wherever they still remain, scattered almost everywhere"—Bishop SANDERSON.

SECTION IV.—Ver. 17-3. 13. S. PAUL'S PRESENT RELATIONS TO THE THESSALONIANS.—The apostle had been drawn aside in the last paragraph, by a sudden and characteristic burst of feeling, from the main purpose of his letter.

17. "In this verse we have a remarkable instance, not so much of the transient affections of holy grief, desire, or joy, as of that abiding tenderness, that loving temper, which is so apparent in all S. Paul's writings, towards those he styles his children in the faith. This is the more carefully to be observed, because the passions occasionally exercising themselves, and flowing like a torrent, in the apostle, are observable to every reader; whereas it requires a nicer attention to discern those calm standing tempers, that fixed posture of his soul, from whence the others only flow out, and which more particularly distinguish his character"—WESLEY.

Now comes a change of subject: no longer the memories of the time when S. Paul was among them, but his hopes and fears about them since he left. ELLICOTT paraphrases the verse: "But while you were being persecuted by these reprobate Jews, we, who were driven away from you, were longing to come back to see whether your faith was such an effectual working faith as to support you through it all."

18. **Satan**—"by those persecuting Jews (Acts 17. 13)"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul had not come at all; but it was not for want of will. And the apostle had made up his mind to this more than once—**both once and twice.** Silas had, no doubt, shared in the wish and endeavour to return from Berœa; the second attempt, likewise frustrated, was made by the apostle alone, from Athens (ch. 3. 1). The expression recurs in Phil. 4. 16. (Comp. with the whole statement Rom. 1. 13, 'Many times I purposed to come to you, and have been hindered hitherto.') The apostle's prophetic gift did not save him from the discipline of disappointment. We may paraphrase the sentence thus: **We strove eagerly to find means of coming to see you; indeed, for my part, I had made up my mind to do it more than once; and our way was blocked, by Satan!** What form the hindrance took we can only guess. Jewish malice doubtless had much to do with it. But behind this baffling and unforeseen combination of circumstances the apostle discerned the craft of the arch-enemy. **Satan,** *i.e.* 'the Adversary,' is the Old Testament name of the leader of evil spirits, the great enemy of God and man—called also 'the devil' (slanderer), 'the evil one' (2 Thess. 3. 3), and 'the

tempter' (ch. 3. 5). Satan is, throughout the New Testament, a real personality, and no figure of speech"—C. B.

19. **Ye also**—"as well as our other children"—WESLEY.

Crown of rejoicing — or "of boasting"; "crowns that we are proud to wear," like victors in the games.

20. **For ye are our glory and joy**—or, "Yea, verily, you are our glory and joy." Emphasis rests both on "ye" and "are." This delight was not matter of hope alone (ver. 19), but of present *fact*. See ch. 1. 2–4 and 3. 9, "The joy wherewith we rejoice on your account before our God"; and 2 Thess. 1. 4, "We glory in you in the churches of God." *Glory* is praise and honour from others; *joy* is one's own delight.

CHAPTER III.

1. **We**—"Paul and Silvanus—**could bear no longer**—our desire and fear for you"—WESLEY.

Bear is the same word as in 1 Cor. 13. 7, "Love beareth all things"—bears up under, holds out against. "This protracted separation and repeated disappointment was more than we could endure."

2. "This ungrudging praise is heaped upon Timothy, both to promote confidence in his messenger, and with a tender reference to the sacrifice which he was making in giving up the society of such a friend and helper"—S. C.

3. **We are appointed hereto** — "are in every respect laid in a fit posture for it, by the very design and contrivance of God Himself; for the trial and increase of our faith and all other graces. He gives riches to the world; but stores up His treasure of wholesome afflictions for His children"—WESLEY.

That no man be moved (R.V.). "Objective sentence, explaining and specifying the subject-matter of the exhortations"—ELLICOTT. **Moved by these afflictions**—which gave force to every temptation. It was Timothy's business to show that such trials ought not to disturb, but rather to confirm their faith.

4. **For verily, when**, etc.—"to appreciate the nature of the argument, see the passages referred to in the margin of the New Testament"—WESLEY.

All this is recalled to the minds of the readers and dwelt on with iteration, not to justify the apostle's foresight—for it needed no gift of prophecy to anticipate persecution at Thessalonica—but to make them realise how well they had been prepared for what they are now experiencing, and so far to reconcile them to it. (Comp. John 14. 29; 1 Pet. 4. 12, "Beloved, count it not strange.")

5. **For this cause**—"because I knew that temptation was sure to overtake you, I sent to see whether our work still lived, and was likely to live, in spite of it. **To know your faith**—to ascertain whether you still believed. **Our labour be in vain**—it is a sad thing to lose spiritual labour"—WESLEY.

6. **But now when Timotheus was come to us from you**—"immediately after his return, S. Paul wrote; while his joy was fresh, and his tenderness at the height"—WESLEY.

Timothy had already returned from his mission to Thessalonica, as related in Acts 18. 5, and the occasion of this present letter will be S. Paul's relief at the news brought by him. His return had been anxiously awaited; and no sooner has he arrived and told his story, than S. Paul sits down and writes out of a full heart this affectionate and grateful letter. For Timothy **brought us glad tidings of your faith and love** (R.V.). These comprise the whole Christian life, and imply the "hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" added to them in ch. 1. 3. (Comp. 2 Thess. 1. 3; Eph. 1. 15; Philem. 5–7; 1 John 3. 23.) "That we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another." This is the sum of our religion.

7. **Were comforted**—"their loyalty brought joy to him. So in 2 Cor. 7. 6, 7"—WESLEY.

8. **Now we live**—"indeed; we enjoy life: so great is our affection for you"—WESLEY.

We live—"expresses the highest joy. (Contrast 'I *die* daily,' 1 Cor. 15. 31. Oh what a tender heart he had, who yearned over his children with such affection that he could say, 'We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord'"—S. ANSELM. His heaviest burden, weighing down body and mind alike, was "the care of the churches" (2 Cor. 11. 28, 29). This passage, like the Epistle to the Galatians and the Second to Corinth, show S. Paul as a man of high-strung and ardent nature, sensitive in his affections to an extreme degree. His whole soul was bound up with the churches he had founded. (Comp. ch. 2. 8.) They were his "children," his "loved and longed for," his "joy and glory and crown of boasting." He lived for nothing else. Read in illustration of this, 2 Cor. 7. 2–16.

9. "The condition of alarm and depression which S. Paul had previously experienced made this rebound of joy the more vivid. Only those who have suffered much know joy in its full capacity, 'as dying, and behold we live! as sorrowing, but ever rejoicing' (2 Cor. 6. 9, 10)"—FINDLAY.

10. **And perfect that which is wanting in your faith.** "So S. Paul did not know that 'they who are once upon the rock no longer need to be taught by man'"—WESLEY.

"Bishop Wordsworth points out the unflattering faithfulness of S. Paul's dealing with his converts. What the deficiencies were is unknown, but they certainly include want of knowledge of the state of the dead, and concerning the advent. Timothy's return from Thessalonica and the news he brought while removing S. Paul's great anxiety, made him still more sensible of the need this young and

most promising church had for the continued instruction which he alone could supply. This increased his eagerness to revisit the Thessalonians. For a similar wish — less warmly expressed, inasmuch as it concerned strangers — see Rom. 1. 9–15; 15. 23"—FINDLAY.

11. **Direct our way** — "this prayer is addressed to Christ, as well as to the Father" —WESLEY.

"It is beautiful to note through these Epistles in how many chapters the strain of exhortation is gently stirred by the sigh of prayer. (Comp. ch. 3. 11; 5. 23; 2 Thess. 1. 2; 2. 16; 3. 5–16)"—S. C.

"Literally the verse begins, **But may our God**, etc. There is a transition, by way of contrast, from the thought of S. Paul's own (human) wish and longing, that has been so fervently uttered, to the thought of *God*, who alone can fulfil His servant's desire. The prayers of ch. 5. 23 and 2 Thess. 2. 16 begin in the same style"—C. B.

12, 13. **With all His**, Christ's, **saints**— "both angels and men"—WESLEY.

Increase and abound—"multiply you in love until you have enough and to spare of it —and the same progress is expressed by the *objects* of the swelling charity. **So that you may not only love one another abundantly, but all mankind**—missionary efforts being the supreme work of Christian love—'such loving missionary work' as *ours* among *you*" — ELLICOTT. "The word *you* stands emphatically at the beginning of the sentence. 'I pray that He may smooth the way which *we* desire to take to *you*. But *you*—whatever comes of *us*, whether our way be made straight to you, or not — may He make you increase and abound.' 'The apostle, full of the Spirit, here piles together much which was suggested by his affection, and is not *solicitous about words*, but leaves some to be understood or passes over them in silence'"—S. C.

CHAPTER IV.

SECTION V. — Vers. 1–12. A LESSON IN CHRISTIAN MORALS. — "We now pass from the first to the second of the two main divisions of the Epistle, from *narrative* to *exhortation*. Chaps. 1–3 are complete in themselves, and the letter might fitly have terminated with the prayer just concluded (ch. 3. 11–13). For the apostle has accomplished the chief objects with which he began to write, viz. to assure his readers of the intense interest he takes in their welfare, to express his sympathy with them under their persecutions, and to explain how it was that he had not himself returned to them. But he cannot let the occasion pass without adding counsel and exhortation on certain subjects in which the Thessalonian church was specially in need of guidance. Chief amongst these were the misunderstandings that had arisen touching the second advent of Christ (ch. 4. 13–5. 11). But before he deals with this topic, there are a few things he wishes to say to them about *morals* and matters of *conduct towards each other*, which we have before us in this section. It is significant that the apostle puts these things first in his exhortation, although the question of the Parousia was of such absorbing interest. The topics embraced in this section are (1) and chiefly, that of *chastity* and *the sanctification of the body* (vers. 3–8); (2) *brotherly love* (vers. 9, 10); (3) *diligence* in secular work (vers. 11, 12)" — FINDLAY. This is the practical portion of the Epistle. The first point on which the Thessalonians need instruction is in the matter of social purity (vers. 1–8).

1. **More and more.** "It is not enough to have faith, even so as to please God, unless we 'abound more and more therein'" — WESLEY.

Beseech—"better 'request,' the word being one of calm and friendly asking, implying that the person so addressed will recognise the propriety of complying. **By the Lord**—rather, 'in the Lord.' It is not an adjuration, as in Rom. 12. 1, but states the authoritative ground of his request. 'We encourage you, on the strength of our union in the Lord Jesus.' (Comp. ch. 1. 1)"—ELLICOTT. "The apostle entreats and exhorts his readers to progress with the greatest earnestness in the Christian life, which they had begun, according to the instructions and commandments which they had received"—LUNEMANN.

2, 3. **Sanctification** — "entire holiness of heart and life: particular branches of it are subjoined—**that ye abstain from fornication** —a beautiful transition from sanctification to a single branch of the contrary; and this shows that nothing is so seemingly distant, or below our thoughts, but we have need to guard against it"—WESLEY.

S. Paul insists, with great solemnity, upon a truth which at various times, even in the Church, has been, if not denied yet half forgotten, that *moral* evils are always *spiritual* evils of the first magnitude. It is certainly remarkable that here, and elsewhere repeatedly, the apostle does not speak of this offence as of an evil scarcely known among, and little to be feared by, true believers, but rather as of an evil not only widely-spread but certain to assault them. Professor JOWETT says: "What he seems to penetrate is the inward nature of sin, not in its outward effects. Even its consequences in another state of being are but slightly touched upon in comparison with that living death which itself is. It is not merely a vice or a crime, or even an offence against the law of God, to be punished here or hereafter. It is more than this. It is what men feel *within*; not what shall be, but what is—a terrible consciousness, a communion with unseen powers of evil." FINDLAY adds;

"The foul and heathenish vice of **fornication** was so prevalent in Greek cities and so little condemned by public opinion—it was even fostered by some forms of pagan religion—that abstinence from it on the part of the Thessalonians was a sign of devotion to a holy God. But their purity was imperilled from the condition of society around them, and in many cases from former unchaste habits. The temptations to licentiousness assailing the first generation of Christians were fearfully strong; and all the Epistles contain urgent warnings upon this subject. The sense of purity had to be re-created in men gathered out of the midst of pagan corruption."

4. **That everyone know**—"for this requires knowledge, as well as chastity—**to possess his vessel**—his wife—**in sanctification and honour**—so as neither to dishonour God or himself, not to obstruct, but further, holiness; remembering, marriage is not designed to inflame, but to conquer, natural desires"—WESLEY.

Should know. The clause is simply parallel to the last, and, with it, explains the word "sanctification." He indicates that chastity is a matter that requires self-discipline and study. (Comp. Eph. 5. 17.) ELLICOTT says: "The body, which is chiefly meant here, is not dissociated from the man's personality, but also identified with it; the Incarnation has taught us the true dignity of the body. Thus it becomes easy to understand what is meant by 'knowing how to gain possession of' such an instrument as the body with its many faculties, rescuing it from its vile prostitution, and wielding it wisely for its proper uses."

5. **Not in passionate desire**—"which had no place in man when in a state of innocence. **Who know not God**—and so may naturally seek happiness in a creature. What seemingly accidental words slide in; and yet how fine, and how vastly important!"—WESLEY.

"This language would seem strange now, in any pastoral letter to a Christian church; but the state of morals among the **Gentiles that** knew **not God**, rendered it necessary"—SUTCLIFFE. "The word 'passion' signifies not so much a violent feeling, as an *overpowering* feeling, one to which the man so yields himself that he is borne along by evil as if he were its passive instrument; he has lost the dignity of self-rule, and is the slave of his lower appetites. (Comp. Rom. 7. 5, 'the passions of sin which wrought in our members'; and ver. 20, 'It is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.') In such shameful bondage lived 'the Gentiles which knew not God,' an Old Testament expression (Ps. 79. 6; Isa. 45. 4, 5; recurring in 2 Thess. 1. 8, see note). For impurity, often in the most abandoned and revolting forms, was a prevailing feature of pagan life at this time. In Rom. 1. 24, etc., S. Paul speaks of this as a punishment of the heathen world for its wilful ignorance of God. 'He gave them up unto passions of dishonour.' Man first denies his Maker; then degrades himself"—FINDLAY. **Which know not God.** Ignorance of God is the fountain of impurity. (Comp. Rom. 1. 24.) "Look at the purity of the sky, and let a loathing for impurity take hold upon thee," cries BENGEL.

6. **In this matter**—"by violating his bed. The things forbidden here are three: *fornication* (ver. 3); the passion of *desire*, or inordinate affection in the married state (ver. 5); and the breach of the marriage-contract"—WESLEY.

Another aspect of impurity is here given—the wrong done to one's brother. The force is well expressed, "that no man should craftily compass and circumvent his brother to obtain his fleshly lusts."

7. Observe that **God's call** is the starting-point of a Christian's life. All the motives and aims by which that life is governed are virtually contained in this. "Walk worthily of the calling wherewith you were called" is with S. Paul an exhortation that includes all others. (Eph. 4. 1.) So he comes to his last word on the matter (see ver. 8).

8. **He that despiseth**—"the commandments we gave—**despiseth God**—Himself—**who hath also given you His Holy Spirit**—to convince you of the truth, and enable you to be holy. What naked majesty of words! How oratorical, and yet with what great simplicity!—a simplicity that does not impair, but improve, the understanding to the utmost; that, like the rays of heat through a glass, collects all the powers of reason into one orderly point, from being scattered abroad in utter confusion"—WESLEY.

"He who will not receive these teachings, and is led either to undervalue or despise them, despises not us but God, from whom we have received our commission, and by whose Spirit we give these directions. **Given unto us His Holy Spirit.** God has taught 'us' that we may teach 'you'; and He has also given 'you' His Holy Spirit that ye might understand and be enabled to practise these things. It is one thing to *receive* a *revelation* from the Spirit of God; it is another thing to *receive* that *Spirit* to enable a man to live according to that revelation. In the first sense the apostles alone received this Holy Spirit; in the latter sense all true Christians, as well as the Thessalonians, receive it"—CLARKE. "**Who hath also**—in addition to His calling us in holiness. **His Holy Spirit.** The apostle thinks and speaks, not so much of the *continual giving* of the *gifts* of the Holy Ghost, as of that *gift* which is the Holy Ghost Himself. The gift of Him who is not only the Sanctifier of men, but the very living sanctity of God, enhances the guilt of those who repudiate the apostle's teaching upon purity"—C. B.

9. **We need not write**—"largely. **For ye are taught of God**—by His Spirit"—WESLEY.

Touching brotherly love. They were re-

markable for this; it was a doctrine which they fully understood and practised, and doubtless it largely contributed to the prosperity of the church. The same gracious spirit will still strengthen the weak, and establish the strong churches of to-day. **Are taught of God**—refers not only to a partial and fragmentary lesson, but to a permanent relation established between the human mind and the Divine Teacher. We are pupils all our life through in the school of God.

11. **That ye study**—*lit.* 'that ye be ambitious'; an ambition worthy of a Christian. **To work with your hands**—not a needless caution; for temporal concerns are often a cross to them that are newly filled with the love of God"—WESLEY.

"**Be ambitious to keep quiet.** There is a true and false ambition; political ambition excludes keeping quiet. The expression contains a remarkable emphasis, or a grave acumen, for whereas *ambition* commonly doth prompt men to be restlessly busy in the concernments proper to others, he biddeth them to be ambitious the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abstinence from other affairs beside their own"—BARROW. The apostle exhorts his readers to give no offence by their conduct to those who were not Christians, not as the fulfilment of the commandment of love to man in general, but as a matter of *prudence* and *discretion*, in order in such a manner to counteract the prejudices against Christianity, and so to pave the way for its diffusion in wider circles"—MEYER.

12. **Decently**—"that they may have no pretence to say (but they will say it still), 'This religion makes men idle, and brings them to beggary.' **And may want nothing**—needful for life and godliness. What Christian desires more?"—WESLEY.

"**Walk honestly toward them that are without.** The heathen were certain to be watching the conduct of the members of the new religion, and it would bring down political suspicion if they were seen to be acting more like agitators for a secret society than honest citizens who worked at their handicraft and calling"—ELLICOTT. "**To have need of nothing,** inasmuch as labour leads to the possession of all that is necessary for life, whereas idleness has as its inevitable consequence, want and need"—MEYER.

SECTION VI.—Ver. 13-5. 11. THE COMING OF THE LORD JESUS.—13. **Now**—"herein the efficacy of Christianity greatly appears—that is, neither takes away nor embitters, but sweetly tempers, that most refined of all affections, our desire of or love to the dead"—WESLEY.

13-18. *A Removal of an Objection.*—"The painful uneasiness, which had seized on the Thessalonians concerning the fate of their deceased Christian friends, consisted not in anxiety lest the deceased should only be raised at the general resurrection of the dead, and would thus forfeit the blessedness of communion with the Lord in the interval between the advent and this general resurrection ('the so-called reign of a thousand years,' Olshausen),—there is no trace in our section of a distinction between a first and a second resurrection: and the idea of a long interval of time between the resurrection of believers and the resurrection of the rest of mankind (Rev. 20) is, moreover, entirely strange to the Apostle Paul, as is evident from 1 Cor. 15. 22 ff., correctly understood that the resurrection of unbelievers takes place in immediate connection with the resurrection of Christians,—rather it was feared that those already dead, as they would no more be found alive at the advent of Christ, would receive no share in the blessedness of the advent, and accordingly would be placed in irreparable disadvantage to those who are then alive"—LUNEMANN.

14. **So**—"as God raised Him. **With Him**—with their living Head"—WESLEY.

"The Thessalonians were not to mourn, for **Christ** has risen from the dead; but if *this* fact be certain, then it follows that they also who are fallen asleep, about whom the Thessalonians were so troubled, will be raised. There lies at the foundation of this proof, which S. Paul uses as a supposition, the idea that Christ and believers form together an organism of indissoluble unity, of which Christ is the Head and Christians are the members; consequently, what happens to the Head must likewise happen to the members; where that is, there these must also be"—MEYER.

15. **By the word of the Lord**—"by a particular revelation—**we who are left.** This intimates the fewness of those who will be then alive, compared to the multitude of the dead. Believers of all ages and nations made up, as it were, one body; in consideration of which, the believers of that age might put themselves in the place, and speak in the person, of them who were to live till the coming of the Lord. Not that S. Paul hereby asserted (though some seem to have imagined so) that the day of the Lord was at hand"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul now announces more explicitly to his readers the progress of the occurrences as certain revealed truth. Here he expresses only *negatively*, the living will not come before the dead, *i.e.* they will not go into the kingdom of God alone, nay, not even earlier than the latter; then in vers. 16, 17, he gives the *positive* heads in the sequence of occurrences"—OLSHAUSEN. "**We which are alive and remain.** There is not the least necessity for supposing from these words that S. Paul confidently *expected* the advent before his death. Very likely he did, but it cannot be proved from this passage. Had the 'we' stood alone, without the explanatory participles, it might have amounted to a proof, but not so now. His converts are strongly under the impression that *they* will be

alive at the coming, and that it will be the worse for the departed; therefore, S. Paul (becoming all things to all men) identifies himself with them—assumes that it will be as they expected—and proves the more vividly the fallacy of the Thessalonians' fears. It would have been impossible, on the contrary, for S. Paul to have said 'we which are dead' without definitely abandoning the hope of seeing the return. Besides which, S. Paul is only *picturing* to imagination the *scene* of the advent; and for any man it is far easier to imagine himself among the quick than among the dead at that moment"—ELLICOTT.

16. **With a shout**—"properly, a proclamation made to a great multitude. Above this is, **the voice of the archangel**; above both, **the trumpet of God**; the voice of God, somewhat analogous to the sound of a trumpet"—WESLEY.

For the Lord Himself—"in His personal august presence." (Comp. 2 Thess. 2. 16; 3. 16, for this kind of emphasis; also ch. 3. 11; 5. 23, "God Himself.") In each case we feel the majesty with which God (or "the Lord") rises above all human doings and desires. **With a shout.** Strictly, "word of command," or *signal*—the shout with which the general gives the order to his troops, or the captain to his crew. Such "command" might be given either by voice—his own or another's; or through a trumpet; both are added here, to complete the impressive picture—**with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God.** We must not look for literal exactness where things are depicted beyond the reach of sense. These three may form but one idea, that of "the voice of the Son of God," by which the dead will be called forth (John 5. 28), Christ's "command" being expressed by an "archangel's voice," and that again constituting the "trumpet of God." In 1 Cor. 15. 52 the whole is described in one word, "The *trumpet* shall sound, and the dead shall be raised up." This is a *military* trumpet, like "word of command" above, by which the Lord of hosts musters and marshals His array. (Comp. ch. 5. 8, with its "breastplate" and "helmet.") "As a commander rouses his sleeping soldiers, so the Lord calls up His dead, and bids them shake off the fetters of the grave and rise anew to waking life"—HOFMANN.

17. **Together**—in the same moment—**in the air.** "The wicked will remain beneath, while the righteous, being absolved, shall be assessors with their Lord in the judgment. **With the Lord**—in heaven"—WESLEY.

"There is something wonderful and mystical about the clouds, half of heaven and half of earth, that fits them to be the medium of such events. They lend their ethereal drapery to form the curtain and canopy of this glorious meeting. Such a raising of the living bodies of the saints, along with the risen dead, implies the physical transformation of the former to which the apostle afterwards alludes in 1 Cor. 15. 51, 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed' (comp. 2 Cor. 5. 1-4; Phil. 3. 21). Some change had taken place in the sacred body of Jesus after His resurrection, for it was emancipated from the ordinary laws of matter. And this transformation the apostle conceived to be possible without dissolution. **To meet the Lord in the air**—*lit.* 'into (raised into) the air.' 'The air,' like 'the clouds,' belongs to the interspace between the heaven from which Christ comes and the earth to which He returns. Here He will meet His Church. **So shall we ever be with the Lord**—*where* the apostle does not say; whether still on earth for some longer space, or in heaven. The one and all-sufficing comfort is in the thought of being 'always with the Lord.' This, too, was the promise of Christ. 'Where I am, there shall also My servant be' (John 12. 26; 14. 3). Those living in the flesh cannot be so in any complete sense; 'home in the body,' we are 'absent from the Lord' (2 Cor. 5. 6)"—C. B.

18. **Comfort one another.** Here is the balm for the "sorrow" of ver. 13—rather "*in* these words" than "*with*." "Repeat these very words to one another, and you will find the comfort." What bereaved Christian has not found this true? The apostle was most wishful that his flock should minister **to each other.** (Comp. ch. 5. 12, 14.)

CHAPTER V.

"THE first part of this chapter stands in close connection with the last six verses of ch. 4. Together they form the most distinctive and the weightiest section of the Epistle. The two paragraphs of the section touch upon two different aspects of our Lord's coming, viewed first *as it concerns departed Christians*, and then *in its relation to men living on the earth.* The former passage supplies comfort respecting the dead in Christ, the latter enjoins watchfulness and preparedness upon the living"—FINDLAY.

1. "**But of the** precise **times** when this shall be"—WESLEY.

The next verse shows that this paragraph is not so much intended for an answer to a false theory about the time of the advent, as practically to cure the restlessness common at Thessalonica.

2. "**For** this in general **ye** do **know**; and ye can and need no more"—WESLEY.

Know perfectly—"you know—not the hour of Christ's coming, but—the utter uncertainty respecting it." Any other knowledge as to this "day of the Lord" would be hurtful and unprofitable to mankind. The fact here disclosed should prompt men to a constant watchfulness. It is an absolute certainty that "the day" will come.

3. **When they**—"the men of the world—**say**"—WESLEY.

Peace and safety—taking their repose in

security; unconscious of the probability of any interruption to their slumbers. **Then sudden destruction cometh**—a terrible awakening to sorrow and woe. All illustration of this awful experience must fail to convey to us the full meaning of this verse.

4. **Ye are not in darkness** — "sleeping secure in sin"—WESLEY.

But ye—members of the Church, living in the light, expecting the coming of your Lord (Matt. 25. 10), cannot be surprised. Your knowledge and faith lead you to be always ready.

5. **Ye are all.** "S. Paul recognises no exceptions, no inner distinctions, among the members of the church; all stand alike so far as grace, privileges, and duties are concerned. The following exhortation shows that it was a matter of each man's free will whether he would sustain his character as a 'child of light' or not"—ELLICOTT.

6. **Awake, and keep awake** — "being awakened, let us have all our spiritual senses about us"—WESLEY.

Let us not sleep. Let us not be careless in spiritual and moral things. Let us not be indifferent about Christ's coming. S. Paul (as always) indicates that it was possible for "children of light" to be converted back into "children of darkness." **Watch and be sober.** The comparison of night now suggests to the writer another thought besides that of sloth, namely, that of dissipation. Christians are not to turn day into night by debauchery any more than by sleep.

7. "**They** usually **sleep and are drunken in the night**—these things do not love the light"—WESLEY.

"The 'sons of day' must be wakeful and sober, for the opposite conditions belong to *night* and are proper to its children. To be drunken *by day* was a monstrous and almost unheard-of thing. (Comp. Acts 2. 15.) Negligence and wantonness have no place in those who belong to 'the day.' These words look beyond their literal sense, as 'sober' in ver. 6. Drunkenness signifies the condition of a soul besotted and enslaved by evil. We catch here another echo of our Lord's warnings, 'Lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life; and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare.' (Luke 21. 34; comp. ver. 3 above; also Luke 12. 45, 46; and Rom. 13. 13.) Thus dawn surprises guilty revellers"—FINDLAY.

8. "The apostle passes over to a new image, whilst he, as the proper *preparation* for watchfulness and sobriety, requires the putting on of the Christian's spiritual armour, with the help of which they are in a condition victoriously to repel all the assaults of internal and external enemies. He delights to represent the Christian under the image of a warrior. (Comp. 2 Cor. 10. 4 ff.; Rom. 6. 12; 13. 12; and especially Eph. 6. 11 ff.)"—LUNEMANN.

9. **God hath not appointed us to wrath**—"as He hath the obstinately impenitent"—WESLEY.

"We may well be confident then, for we ourselves are the only persons that can defeat God's predestination"—ELLICOTT. **Appointed**—"reminds us of 'election' (ch. 1. 4); it implies the *authority* with which God called the Thessalonians to salvation (comp. ch. 2. 12), as well as the fact of His gracious *intention* respecting them"—C. B.

10. **Whether we wake or sleep**—"be alive or dead at His coming"—WESLEY.

Wake or sleep — *i.e.* "living or dead," with allusion to the use of the same terms to denote spiritual wakefulness or slumber in vers. 6, 7. "Let us arm ourselves with a brave hope of our salvation, for it will be against God's will if we should perish: He means us to save ourselves by union with Him who put an end to death for us by dying, and made all who wait for His coming to *live*, whether they be, in the world's sense, dead or alive." There can be no evil to those who "live together with Him." This is the life "that is life indeed" (1 Tim. 6. 19); it is superior to the accidents of time, since in its spring and essence "hid with Christ in God" (Col 3. 1-4). Such is S. Paul's conception of the nature of the Christian's life. No wonder he adds, **Wherefore comfort yourselves together.**

SECTION VII.—RULES FOR THE SANCTIFIED LIFE. Vers. 12-24.—12. **Know them that** (1) **labour among you**; (2) **Are over you in the Lord**; (3) **Admonish you.** "'Know'—see, mark, take knowledge of them and their work. Sometimes the same person may both 'labour,' that is, preach; 'be over,' or govern; and 'admonish' the flock by particular application to each: sometimes two or more different persons, according as God variously dispenses His gifts. But oh, what a misery it is when a man undertakes this whole work without either gifts or graces for any part of it! Why, then, will he undertake it? for pay? What! will he sell both his own soul and all the souls of the flock? What words can describe such a wretch as this? And yet even this may be 'an honourable man'!"—WESLEY.

"The apostle resumes the line of exhortation which he there commenced, and which was interrupted by the consolations and warnings he had to give on the subject of the second coming. The 'But' with which this entreaty begins, points back to ver. 11. The apostle has been directing his readers generally to 'encourage and edify each other': *but* at the same time they must not ignore the services of their official ministry, or deem their oversight or teaching needless. **To know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.** A clear testimony, from this earliest writing of the

New Testament, to the existence in the Church at the beginning of a ministerial order—a *clergy* (to use the language of a later age) as distinguished from the *laity*—charged with specific duties and authority. But there is nothing in the grammar of the sentence, nor in the nature of the duties specified, which would warrant us in distributing these functions amongst *distinct orders* of Church office. 'Labouring,' 'presiding,' and 'admonishing,' form the threefold calling of the local Christian ministry. Doubtless S. Paul had organised this church before leaving it, as he and S. Barnabas did the churches of Lycaonia at an earlier time, 'ordaining elders in every city' (Acts 14. 33). It is not likely that it had advanced beyond the incipient stage of Church government. The Epistle to the Philippians, in which 'bishops and deacons' are addressed (Phil. 1. 1), was written nearly ten years later"—FINDLAY.

13. **Esteem them very highly** — "*lit.* 'more than abundantly, in love'—the inexpressible sympathy that is between true pastors and their flock is intimated, not only here, but also in divers other places of this Epistle. (See ch. 2. 7, 8.) **For their work's sake**—the principal ground of their vast regard for them. But how are we to esteem them who do not work at all?"—WESLEY.

"**Exceeding highly** (R.V.)—the same Greek adverb as in ch. 3. 10, the strongest intensive possible to the language. So deep and warm should be the affection uniting pastors and their flocks. Their appreciation is not to be a cold esteem; it has mutual 'love' for its pervading element, a grace in which the Thessalonians were already 'taught of God' (ch. 4. 9). Their 'work,' described in ver. 12, is the reason for this devoted esteem. In **work** this church excelled (ch. 1. 3); and this it knew how to appreciate"—C. B. ELLICOTT says: "The bond which binds the Christian community to their directors is not to be one of 'recognition' and obedience only (ver. 12), but of holy affection above all. **For their work's sake.** Our love is to be paid them not for any social or intellectual qualities they may have in themselves, it is the work which they have to do that should attract our sympathy. The original seems to mean that we are to love them, not only *because they do* such work, but also '*for the sake of* their work,' *i.e.* to help it forward."

14. **Warn the disorderly** — "them that stand, as it were, out of their rank in the spiritual warfare. Some such were even in that church. **The feeble-minded**—*lit.* 'them of little soul,' such as have no spiritual courage"—WESLEY.

The weak and **fainthearted** stand in contrast with **the disorderly.** The latter are overbold, and need to be checked; the former are despondent, and need stimulus and help. Fainthearted men think themselves weak, but perhaps are not so; and encouragement may make them bold. The mourners whom S. Paul consoled in ch. 4. 13–18 would be amongst the "fainthearted" at Thessalonica.

15. **See that none.** "Watch over both yourselves and each other. **Follow that which is good**—do it resolutely and perseveringly"—WESLEY.

"This is a prohibition of revenge. S. Paul speaks thus, because man is only too ready to gratify his natural inclination to revenge. Watchfulness, struggle, and self-conquest are necessary to offer resistance to it"—MEYER.

16, 17. **Rejoice evermore** — "in uninterrupted happiness in God. **Pray without ceasing**—which is the fruit of 'always rejoicing' in the Lord. **In everything give thanks**—which is the fruit of both the former. This is Christian perfection. Further than this we cannot go, and we need not stop short of it. Our Lord has purchased joy, as well as righteousness, for us. It is the very design of the gospel that, being saved from guilt, we should be happy in the love of Christ. Prayer may be said to be the breath of our spiritual life. He that lives cannot possibly cease breathing. So much as we really enjoy of the presence of God, so much prayer and praise do we offer up 'without ceasing'; else our rejoicing is but delusion. Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer: it is almost essentially connected with it. He that always prays is ever giving praise, whether in ease or pain, both for prosperity and for the greatest adversity. He blesses God for all things, looks on them as coming from Him, and receives them only for His sake; not choosing nor refusing, liking nor disliking, anything, but only as it is agreeable or disagreeable to His perfect will"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Phil. 4. 4.) "This exhortation is closely connected with the preceding one. The readers are to be always joyfully inclined, even when the case indicated in ver. 15 occurs—that sufferings are prepared for them. The Christian *can* always feel inspired and elevated with internal joy, as he has the assured confidence that all things promote the good of the children of God. (Comp. Rom. 8. 28; 2 Cor. 6. 10; Rom. 5. 3)"—LUNEMANN. **Rejoice evermore.** The remaining commands are more spiritual, and hardly form part of the same paragraph as vers. 12–15, which related to discipline. The Christian who remains in sadness and depression really breaks a commandment; in some direction or other he mistrusts God — His power, providence, forgiveness. The command is specially good for a persecuted church like that of Thessalonica (Matt. 5. 10–12). **Pray without ceasing.** THEOPHYLACT says: "This shows the way to 'rejoice always'—to wit, incessant prayer and Eucharist, for he that has accustomed himself to hold converse with God, and to give thanks to Him over

everything that happens as happening well, will evidently have unbroken joy. "Though a man cannot always be incessantly praying in words, the mind may be held continuously in an attitude of prayer."

18. **For this**—"that you should thus rejoice, pray, give thanks—**is the will of God**—always good, always pointing at our salvation"—WESLEY.

In everything give thanks. This again the apostle taught by example as well as precept. (See ch. 1. 2; 3. 9, 10; and comp. Phil. 4. 6; Col. 4. 2.) "In *everything*," even in persecution and shame, suffered for Christ's sake. (Comp. Phil. 1. 29; 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.) Prayer and thanksgiving are the two wings of the soul by which it rises upward to God. AUGUSTINE said: "If God give prosperity, praise Him, and it shall be increased. If adversity, praise Him, and it shall be removed, or at least sanctified." And TRAPP adds: "Job blessed God as well for taking as giving (Job 1). He knew that God afflicted him to refine him, not to ruin him."

19. **Quench not the Spirit.** "Wherever it is, it burns; it flames in holy love, in joy, prayer, thanksgiving. Oh quench it not, damp it not in yourself or others, either by neglecting to do good, or by doing evil!"—WESLEY.

"The command, **Quench not the Spirit**, is universal. Whatever obstructs or disparages His work in the souls of men—whether in others or in ourselves—is thus forbidden. It is a strange and awful, but very real power, that we have to 'resist the Holy Spirit' (Acts 7. 51). Since He may be 'quenched,' He is ■ *fire*, as appeared on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2. 3.) This emblem sets forth the sudden and vehement activities of the Holy Spirit, with His gifts of warmth for the heart and light for the mind, and His power to kindle the human spirit. Prophecy exhibited His presence under this aspect, in its intensity and ardour. On the other hand, He appears in gentler form under the emblem of *the dove*, in whose guise the Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism"—C. B.

20. **Despise not prophesyings**—"that is, preaching; for the apostle is not here speaking of extraordinary gifts. It seems, one means of grace is put for all; and whoever despises any of these, under whatever pretence, will surely (though perhaps gradually and almost insensibly) **quench the Spirit**"—WESLEY.

The despondency of the Thessalonians led them, not only to quench the fervour of the Holy Ghost in their own bosoms, but to turn a cold and disparaging ear to the sanguine "prophets" who preached to them, the effect of which insensibility was to **quench the Spirit** by degrees in the prophets also. It was because of this double effect of gloominess, inward upon themselves and outward upon others, that the command, "Quench not," occurs between the exhortation to thanksgiving and the warning not to despise prophecy. This seems to be the most natural way of accounting for the present warning.

21. "Meantime, **prove all things**—which any preacher recommends. (He speaks of practice, not of doctrines.) Try every advice by the touchstone of Scripture, and **hold fast that which is good**—zealously, resolutely, diligently practise it, in spite of all opposition"—WESLEY.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Some of the best ancient authorities read, "But prove all things." In any case, this exhortation, while capable of the widest application, arises out of the subject of the last. "Instead of accepting or rejecting wholesale what is addressed to you as prophecy, use your judgment; learn to discriminate; sift the wheat from the chaff." So needful was it to distinguish between true and false revelations, that a special endowment was bestowed on some persons for this end—the "discernment of spirits" (1 Cor. 12. 10). And S. Paul gives a criterion for the purpose in 1 Cor. 12. 3. (Comp. 1 John 4. 1–3, "Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God.") "Our religion is one that dares to be understood; that offers itself to the search of the inquisitive, to the inspection of the severest and most awakened reason; for, being secure of her substantial truth and purity, she knows that for her to be seen and looked into is to be embraced and admired; as there needs no greater argument for men to love the light than to see it"—SOUTH.

22. "And be equally zealous and careful to **abstain from all appearance of evil.** Observe, those who 'heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears,' under pretence of proving all things, have no countenance or excuse from this scripture"—WESLEY.

"**Abstain from every form of evil** (R.V.). The apostle does not advise the Thessalonians to avoid what *looks like* evil; the command thus understood encourages the studying of appearances, and tends to the 'doing of our works to be seen of men' which our Lord condemns. (Matt. 23. 5.) But in completing on the negative side the previous command, 'hold fast the good (in prophesyings),' he gives to it the widest possible extension, 'Keep yourselves not only from this, but *from every sort of evil*'"—C. B.

23. **And may the God of peace sanctify you**—"by the peace He works in you, which is a great means of sanctification. **Wholly**—the word signifies 'wholly and perfectly'; every part and all that concerns you; all that is of or about you. **And may the whole of you, the spirit and the soul and the body**—just before he said 'you,' now he denominates them from their spiritual state. 'The spirit' (Gal. 6. 8); wishing that it may be preserved 'whole and entire'; then from their natural state 'the soul and the body,' for these

two make up the whole nature of man (Matt. 10. 28), wishing it **may be preserved blameless till the coming of Christ.** To explain this a little further: of the three here mentioned, only the two last are the natural constituent parts of man. The first is adventitious, and the supernatural gift of God, to be found in Christians only. That man cannot possibly consist of three parts, appears hence: the soul is either matter or no matter; there is no medium. But if it is matter, it is part of the body; if not matter, it coincides with the spirit"—WESLEY.

"This is a prayer for the entire sanctification of the soul and spirit, as well as of the flesh or body, from all sin, by which can only be meant our complete deliverance from all spiritual pollution, all inward depravation of the heart, as well as that which, expressing itself outwardly by the indulgence of the senses, is called 'filthiness of the flesh'"—WATSON. "The connection between *sanctity* and *safety* (**be preserved**) lies in the fact that what is sanctified is given over to God. 'No one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand,' said Jesus (John 10. 29). (See the next verse, and comp. 2 Tim. 1. 12; also Ps. 121; Isa. 27. 3.) The word 'preserved' stands with emphasis at the end of the sentence. In the intercession of John (ch. 17) our Lord prays first, 'Holy Father, *keep* them' (vers. 11, 15), then '*sanctify* them' (ver. 17). But He is thinking there of the situation of His disciples, in the midst of the world; the apostle leads up to their future manifestation, at His coming. **The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** is the end of the apostle's thoughts in this letter, the goal of his readers' hopes. It will supply the final *test* of the worth of character, and of the completeness of the sanctification effected in believers. Then the whole work of Christ's servants will be brought to its issue and determination. 'The day will declare it' (1 Cor. 3. 13)"—C. B.

24. **Who also will do it**—"unless you quench the Spirit"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul knows that he does not implore God in vain. For God is faithful; He keeps what He promises; if He has called the Thessalonians to a participation in His kingdom, He will preserve them pure and faultless even to its commencement. (Comp. 2 Thess. 3. 3; 1 Cor. 1. 9; 10. 13)"—LUNEMANN.

SECTION VIII.—Vers. 25–28. THE CONCLUSION.—The conclusion of the Epistle is very brief. It contains no reference to the autograph signature, which S. Paul in 2 Thess. 3. 17, and in subsequent letters, is careful to notify. The urgent request **that the Epistle be read to all the brethren** is its notable feature.

25. "**Brethren, pray for us.** S. Paul has just prayed for his readers (ver. 23; comp. ch. 1. 2; 3. 10–13); he desires that they in turn should pray for him. 'Some ancient authorities,' very suitably, 'read *also*' (R.V. *margin*), 'pray also for us'—*i.e. as we do for you.* In 2 Thess. 3. 1, 2, he repeats this request in more definite form. (Comp. Eph. 6. 19; Col. 4. 3, 4; Phil. 1. 19; Rom. 15. 30), 'that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.' S. Paul, in all the strength of his gifts and his office, yet felt his dependence on the prayers of the Church, and realised through this means his fellowship with brethren in Christ, however distant"—FINDLAY.

27. **I charge you by the Lord**—"Christ, to whom proper Divine worship is here paid—**that this Epistle**—the first he wrote—**be read to all the brethren**—that is, in all the churches. They might have concealed it out of modesty, had not this been so solemnly enjoined; but what S. Paul commands under so strong an adjuration, Rome forbids under pain of excommunication"—WESLEY.

I adjure you (R.V.). The charge to read **this Epistle** is given in the strongest and most solemn language. ELLICOTT says: "That although the reason for such awful solemnity has never been very satisfactorily given, it certainly seems as if the contempt of discipline and partial alienation of the clergy and laity implied in vers. 12, 13, might suggest to S. Paul a doubt whether his Epistle would reach **all** the Thessalonian Christians. At anyrate, the adjuration marks his sense of the extreme *importance* of the letter, and perhaps the fact that this was his first pastoral letter may have made him more anxious to ensure its reception and success. It amounts to a claim to inspiration." (Comp. ch. 4. 15.) Wordsworth points out that this constant recitation of such adjuration constitutes a splendid guarantee for the genuineness and integrity of the Epistles. (Comp. Col. 4. 16; 2 Pet. 3. 15, 16.)

28. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.** "This is S. Paul's usual form of final benediction. He expands it later into the full Trinitarian blessing of 2 Cor. 13. 14, or shortens it into the brief 'Grace be with you' of Col. 4. 18. It contains all spiritual good that one Christian can wish another. Such grace is 'with' us, when it constantly attends us, when it forms the atmosphere we breathe, the light by which we see, the guiding and sustaining influence of our whole lives. (Comp. note on ch. 1. 1; and on *grace*, 2 Thess. 1. 12.) The liturgical **Amen** is added by the apostle in some of his letters, and was very naturally supplied by devout copyists in others. Here it is not authentic"—C. B.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

"THIS Epistle seems to have been written soon after the former, chiefly on occasion of some things therein which had been misunderstood. Herein he (1) congratulates their constancy in the faith, and exhorts them to advance daily in grace and wisdom; (2) reforms their mistake concerning the coming of our Lord; and (3) recommends several Christian duties.

"THE PARTS OF IT ARE FIVE—

I.	The Inscription,	Chap. i. 1, 2.
II.	Thanksgiving and Prayer for them,	,, ,, 3–12.
III.	The Doctrine concerning the Man of Sin,	,, ii. 1–12.
	Whence he comforts them against this trial,	,, ,, 13, 14.
	Adding exhortation and prayer,	,, ,, 15–17.
IV.	An exhortation to prayer, with a prayer for them,	,, iii. 1–5.
	An exhortation to correct the disorderly,	,, ,, 6–16.
V.	The Conclusion,	,, 17, 18."

—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.—Vers. 1–4. SALUTATION AND THANKSGIVING.—1, 2. **Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.** The company which despatched the First Epistle is not yet broken up. This proves that the Second Epistle was written before the end of the second missionary journey, for after that time we do not read of Silvanus being in the company of S. Paul.

3. "It is highly observable that the apostle wraps up his praise of men in praise to God; giving Him the glory. **Your faith groweth**—probably he had heard from them since his sending the former letter. **Abundeth**—like water that overflows its banks, and yet increaseth still"—WESLEY.

God's grace had wrought so great a change in the Thessalonians that the apostle feels himself under a *debt* of gratitude to Him for His mercy to them. Where **faith groweth, charity** will abound, and the increase of faith and love brings the heavenliness of praise and joy into the Church on earth.

4. **Which ye endure**—"that ye may be accounted worthy of the kingdom"—WESLEY.

Glory in you in the churches. He not only had personal joy over the faith and devotion of his converts, but he delighted to tell the glad tidings to others. He "boasted" to the Thessalonians about the Corinthians. (2 Cor. 9. 2.) **Your patience**—*i.e.* your "brave endurance," rather than your "submissiveness," as some have supposed.

SECTION II.—Vers. 5–12. THE APPROACHING RETRIBUTION.—5. **A manifest token.** "This is treated of in the sixth and following verses"—WESLEY.

"The heroic faith of the Thessalonians showed that God was on their side. By the courage He inspired in them the righteous Judge already showed what His judgment was in their case, and gave token of His final recompense. (Comp. 1 Thess. 1. 6; Phil. 1. 27, 28.) 'Stand fast—in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.' So the joy of S. Stephen, when before the Council his face shone 'as it had been the face of an angel' (Acts 6. 15); so the triumph of S. Paul and Silas singing Psalms in prison; so the rapture of Christian martyrs at the stake, were signs of God's presence with them and omens of retribution to their enemies"—C. B. "They suffer **for the kingdom**, not merely for the sake of winning it, but on its behalf, in defence of it, in consequence of being its citizens, to extend its dominion"—ELLICOTT.

6. **It is a righteous thing with God.** "However men may judge, to transfer the pressure from you to them. And it is remarkable that about this time, at the Passover, the Jews raising a tumult, a great number (some say thirty thousand) of them were slain. S. Paul seems to allude to this beginning of sorrows (1 Thess. 2. 16), which did not end but with their destruction"—WESLEY.

The apostle has just spoken (ver. 5) of "God's righteous judgment" as manifest in the unshaken faith and courage of His servants. That visible token points to their future and unrevealed reward—*on the admitted assumption*, on which he now dilates, that the retribution awaiting the persecutors and the persecuted from His hand is in truth **a righteous**

thing. Now the justice of the award is self-evident; since it is "affliction to them that afflict you, and to you the afflicted ease." Once besides S. Paul speaks of the future suffering of the wicked as "affliction," in Rom. 2. 9—"affliction and distress upon every soul of man that doeth evil." The term represents this suffering as of the nature of *a personal infliction.* It indicates the reversal that will take place in the other world between the position of the sufferers and inflicters of wrong. (Comp. our Lord's picture of Dives and Lazarus in Hades. "Now he (Lazarus) is comforted, and thou (Dives) art tormented," Luke 16. 25.) In Rev. 13. 10; Matt. 16. 52, the same principle of *retribution in kind* is illustrated. This is "just with God"; He must count it so; for it is a common rule of justice, and of all true justice He is the fountain. If this law demands that the inflicters of wrongful suffering shall suffer and smart for it, so it requires that faithful endurance shall win "relief."

7. **And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ** (R.V.). **Mighty angels**—they will attend their LORD to execute His purposes. (See Matt. 13. 41, 49; 24. 31.)

8. **Taking vengeance.** "Does God barely permit this, or (as 'the Lord' once 'rained brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven' Gen. 19. 24) does a fiery stream go forth from Him for ever? **Who know not God**—(the root of all wickedness and misery) who remain in heathen ignorance. **And who obey not**—this refers chiefly to the Jews, who had **heard the gospel**"—WESLEY.

"**Fire** is a symbol of Divine anger and majesty, in Scripture; and **flame** is fire in motion, leaping and blazing out. According to 2 Pet. 3. 7, 10, fire will be the means of destruction for the visible world at the day of the Lord; while in Heb. 1. 7, quoted from Ps. 104, this element is represented as a form of angelic manifestation. (See last note.) In 1 Cor. 3. 13, 'fire' is itself made the means of judgment. The **flaming fire** is the element **in** which the Lord Jesus is **revealed**, not the means by which He **takes vengeance** on the wicked. It is His awful robe of glory. The words which follow show why He must appear in majesty so dreadful: **taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ** — better, 'rendering vengeance to them' (R.V.). We must dissociate from 'vengeance' all notions of vindictiveness and passion; it is the inflicting of *full justice* on the criminal — nothing more, nothing less. In this sense it is written, 'Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will repay, saith the Lord' (Deut. 32. 35; Rom. 12. 19; Heb. 10. 30). The wronged are forbidden to avenge themselves, just because this is God's prerogative. Now 'the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son' (John 5. 22)—this, therefore, with the rest"—C. B.

9. **From the glory of His power.** "Tremble, ye stout-hearted. **Everlasting destruction**—as there can be no end of their sins (the same enmity against God continuing), so neither of their punishment; sin and its punishment running parallel throughout eternity itself. They must of necessity, therefore, be cut off from all good, and all possibility of it. **From the presence of the Lord**—wherein chiefly consists the salvation of the righteous. What unspeakable punishment is implied even in falling short of this, supposing that nothing more were implied in His **taking vengeance!**"—WESLEY.

"This is the only passage in S. Paul's Epistles in which everlasting damnation is openly declared. For the supposition that S. Paul did indeed, in this earliest of his Epistles, still teach everlasting damnation, but gave it up in later times, there exists no sufficient foundation. This *alone* admits of being maintained, that among the writers of the New Testament S. Paul is the one that lets this doctrine retire to the background most"—OLSHAUSEN. M. HENRY says: "Though sinners may be long reprieved, yet they will be punished at last. Their misery will be a proper punishment for their crimes. They did sin's work, and must receive sin's wages. Their punishment will be no less than destruction, not of their being but of their bliss, not that of the body alone but both as to body and soul. This destruction will be everlasting. They shall be always dying, and yet never die. The chains of darkness are everlasting chains, and the fire everlasting fire. Who knows the power of His anger? He is able to cast into hell."

10. **To be glorified in His saints** — "for the wonderful glory of Christ shall shine in them"—WESLEY.

"It will be a joyful day to some, and in that day of His triumph His saints shall have complete victory and happiness. His grace and power will then be manifested and magnified, when it shall appear what He hath purchased for, and wrought in, and bestowed upon, all those that believe in Him. As His wrath and power will be made known in and by the destruction of His enemies, so His grace and power will be magnified in the salvation of His saints"—M. HENRY.

11. **All the good pleasure of His goodness**—"which is no less than perfect holiness"—WESLEY.

That our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfil every desire of goodness and every work of faith with power (R.V.). This prayer answered in all the people of God would quickly bring a transformed and renewed world. We are called with a high and holy calling, called to the inheritance of the saints. Our concern should

be to be worthy of it, and prepared for it. Col. 1. 12, *Every desire of goodness.* Eph. 3. 20, "*Every work of faith with power.*" (Mark 9. 23; John 11. 25; 14. 12.) "In us the work of faith fulfil."

12. **That the name**—"the love and power **of our Lord may be glorified**—gloriously displayed in you"—WESLEY.

This is the highest and holiest aim of life, and all other things should be subordinate to it. Even our good works are to so shine before men that they may glorify God (Matt. 5. 16). The duty is abiding (1 Cor. 10. 31).

CHAPTER II.

SECTION III.—Vers. 1–12. THE REVELATION OF THE LAWLESS ONE.—1. **Our gathering together to Him**—"in the clouds"—WESLEY.

Touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (R.V.). The coming of Christ and the meeting with the beloved dead would not be so bright, so perfect, perhaps so soon, if the Thessalonians allowed themselves to be misled with regard to it.

2. **Be not shaken in mind**—"in judgment **—or terrified**—as those easily are who are immoderately fond of knowing future things. **Neither by** any pretended revelation from the **Spirit, nor by** pretence of any **word** spoken by me"—WESLEY.

To the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind (R.V.). "**Quickly** points, as probably in Gal. 1. 6, to the *speedy effect* of the disturbing cause. Startling declarations were made about the second advent; the Thessalonians must take care that they are not carried away by them. Let them resist the first impression of these sensational announcements, and put them to the test of cool judgment and inquiry, as men who 'prove all things' (1 Thess. 5. 21); they will find out how baseless they really are. **Nor yet**, he continues, **be kept in alarm.** The former clause describes the overthrow of one's mental equilibrium; this deprecates a continued agitation, a nervous, fluttered condition of mind. The word occurs in the like connection in Matt. 24. 6; Mark 13. 7, 'When ye shall hear of wars, etc., **be not troubled**'—*i.e.* 'alarmed, discomposed.' From the words that follow it is evident that various attempts were made to disturb the Church upon this subject; and while some would be startled at once out of their self-possession, others, less excitable, would still by the recurrence of the rumours be kept in perturbation"—C. B.

3. **Unless the falling away**—"from the pure faith of the gospel **come first.** This began even in the apostolic age. But **the man of sin, the son of perdition**—eminently so called, is not come yet. However, in many respects, the pope has an indisputable claim to those titles. He is, in an emphatical sense, 'the man of sin,' as he increases all manner of sin above measure. And he is, too, properly styled, 'the son of perdition,' as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers, destroyed innumerable souls, and will himself perish everlastingly. He it is that **opposeth** himself to the emperor, once his rightful sovereign; and that **exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped** — commanding angels, and putting kings under his feet, both of whom are 'called gods' in Scripture; claiming the highest power, the highest honour; suffering himself, not once only, to be styled God or Vice-God. Indeed no less is employed in his ordinary title, 'Most Holy Lord,' or, 'Most Holy Father.' **So that he sitteth**—enthroned **—in the temple of God**—mentioned Rev. 11. 1. **Declaring himself that he is God**—claiming the prerogatives which belong to God alone" —WESLEY.

Let no man beguile you (R.V.). "**Beguile you**, as the Revisers commonly render this Greek verb, and the A.V. in 2 Cor. 11. 3; 1 Tim. 2. 14; and Rom. 7. 11 (comp. Gen. 3. 13, 'the serpent *beguiled* Eve'). It implies a thorough, commonly a wicked, deception. (Comp. also Rom. 16. 18.) The kindred noun ('deceit') appears in ver. 10. **In any wise** (R.V.) points to the variety of ways ('by spirit, word,' etc., ver. 2) in which the readers were being plied with this delusion. **For** that day shall not come, **except there come a falling away first.** The R.V. supplies the ellipsis more simply, 'For it will not be.' The apostle's mind becomes absorbed in his description of 'the Man of Lawlessness' (ver. 4), and he forgets to complete the sentence; but his meaning is clear enough. For a similar dropped, or broken sentence, comp. 1 Thess. 2. 11. His manner is that of a speaker rather than a studied writer, and such lapses are natural in the freedom of conversation. 'A falling away' is a mistranslation. The apostle uses the definite article; he refers to 'the apostasy' of which he had spoken distinctly to his readers (ver. 5). This word in common Greek denotes a military or political revolt, a 'defection.' Here this ominous expression appears for the first time within the Christian Church, as signifying 'revolt from Christ,' the faithless defection of men 'denying the Lord that bought them' (2 Pet. 2. 1). It is sad to find such a prediction in the earliest writings of the New Testament. It originated, doubtless, in the words of Christ (Matt. 24. 10–13), 'Then shall many stumble. Many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of the many shall wax cold.' (Comp. the mournful prophecy of Moses concerning the future of his people, Deut. 31. 28, 29, etc.) This presentiment of S. Paul grew in distinctness and was expressed with increasing emphasis, as time went on. (Comp. Rom. 16. 17–20; Acts 20. 29, 30; Eph. 4. 14; 1 Tim. 4. 1, etc.) Such words as those of 1 Cor. 16. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord, let him be anathema,' and

Col. 2. 19, 'Not holding fast the Head,' show that in his view personal loyalty to Christ was the safeguard of Christianity"—FINDLAY.

6. **And now ye know**—"by what I told you when I was with you—**that which restraineth**—the power of the Roman emperors. When this is **taken away the wicked one will be revealed. In his time**—his appointed season, and not before"—WESLEY.

And now ye know that which restraineth to the end that he may be revealed in his own season (R.V.). "The meaning is, **And now**—to pass on to another point—**ye know what hindereth**, viz. wherein it consists, and why the appearance of Antichrist is still prevented, that it should be revealed in its *appointed* time, marked out by God. The Thessalonians knew this point from the apostle's oral instructions, so that they required only to be reminded of it"—MEYER.

7. "He will surely be revealed. **For the mystery**—the deep, secret power—**of iniquity**, just opposite to the power of godliness, already worketh. It began with the love of honour, and the desire of power; and is completed in the entire subversion of the gospel of Christ. This 'mystery of iniquity' is not wholly confined to the Romish Church, but extends itself to others also. It seems to consist of (1) human inventions added to the written word; (2) mere outside performances put in the room of faith and love; (3) other mediators besides the Man Christ Jesus. The two last branches, together with idolatry and bloodshed, are the direct consequences of the former, viz., the adding to the word of God. **Already worketh**—in the Church. **Only he that restraineth**—that is, the potentate who successively has Rome in his power. The emperors, heathen or Christian; the kings, Goths or Lombards; the Carlovingian or German emperors"—WESLEY.

For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way (R.V.). "Lawlessness hath indeed been **at work** ever since man fell from God by sin. But this **mystery of lawlessness** is surely some embodiment of the universal principle of sin which it has assumed in times recent to S. Paul (**doth already work**), and which contained, in his belief, the germ and potency of the supreme revelation of evil reserved for the eve of Christ's advent. A 'mystery' is not some secret knowledge or practice reserved to a select few, like the mysteries of Greek paganism; it is, in S. Paul's dialect, the counterpart of 'revelation,' and the word here takes up again the 'revealed,' of ver. 6, 'until he be "revealed," I say; for the "mystery" (the thing to be revealed) doth already work.' It denotes something by its nature above man's knowledge, which can only be understood when and so far as God reveals it. (Comp. note on 'revelation,' ch. 1. 7; also the various 'mysteries' of Col. 2. 2, 3; Eph. 3. 4–6; Rom. 11. 25, etc.) So monstrous and enormous are the possibilities of sin in humanity, that with all we know of its present and its past effects, the character of the man of lawlessness must remain beyond comprehension, — till he be 'revealed in his season'"—FINDLAY.

8. **And then**—"when every prince and power that restrains is taken away—**will that wicked one**—emphatically so called, **be revealed**—**whom the Lord will soon consume with the spirit of His mouth**—His immediate power. **And destroy**—with the very first appearance of His glory"—WESLEY.

And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation of His coming. And then. "Then at length, when the obstructor is gone, two things shall happen—(1) the lawless one shall be revealed, and (2) then the Lord will come and destroy him. The purpose with which S. Paul began this chapter was to show relatively the date of our Lord's advent; but he is now so engrossed in describing the events which must precede it, that when he does mention the advent again he does so in a parenthetical relative clause. **That wicked** — or, 'the lawless one.' The English version has again obscured the passage by not keeping the same word as in ver. 7. The general tendency to 'lawlessness' or 'rebellion' will be brought to a head in the person of 'the lawless one' or 'the rebel,' just as the 'obstruction' is impersonated in 'the obstructor.' The publication of the 'secret of rebelliousness' will be effected by the manifesto of the rebel-in-chief. Of course, this rebel is the same person with the man of sin, the change of title being due to the particularising of his sin by the word 'lawlessness' in ver. 7; the specification of the *time* is the only additional intelligence, all the emphasis of the sentence, therefore, rests on 'And then'"—ELLICOTT.

9. **Whose coming is after the working of Satan** — "the operation of God's spirit sends His messengers: the operation of Satan's spirit sends his emissaries. The one comes *according to the energy* or inward powerful *working of God;* the other comes according to the energy or inward working of Satan. **Lying wonders**—like the so-called miracles of the Egyptian magicians. They were **lying signs**; only 'appearances' of what was *real*, and done to give credit to presumption and imposture"—CLARKE.

10. **Because they received not the love of the truth**—"therefore God suffered them to fall into that 'strong delusion'"—WESLEY.

Deceivableness (R.V. "Deceit"). **In them that perish** (R.V. "For them that are perishing"). **And with all deceivableness.** "Deceivableness" does not mean "readiness to *be deceived*," but, according to old English usage, has an active meaning; the words

include and expand the list just given: "in all sham power and signs and wonders, and, in fact, in every iniquitous fraud." **In them that perish**—rather "for them." These are not the persons who exercise the fraud, but the objects of it.

11. **Therefore God shall send them**—"that is, judicially permit to come upon them—**strong delusion**"—WESLEY.

God sendeth them a working of error (R.V.). "God punishes sin *by means* of sin, *therefore* it is He sends to the lost ones, who through their fault did not allow the love of truth to be stirred up in their hearts, a strong delusion, that they may believe a lie"—OLSHAUSEN.

12. **That they all may be condemned**—"that is, the consequence of which will be, that they **all** will **be condemned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness**—that is, who believed not the truth, because they loved sin"—WESLEY.

That they might all be judged (R.V.). "**That they may be judged** is what the apostle says. Here is the further, judicial purpose of the great imposture. God intends that men who are so disposed should 'believe the lie,' so that their false belief may be a touchstone and demonstration of their falseness. Men without love of truth naturally believe the lie when it comes; there is nothing else for them. And this is a terrible judgment upon them. As Christ came at first 'for judgment into this world' (John 9. 39, etc.), by His presence discriminating the lovers of truth and falsehood, so it will be with Antichrist at his coming. He will attract his like; and this attraction will be the exposure of their hatred of the truth. (Comp. Rom. 2. 8.) 'To those who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.' This is not yet the last judgment, and it is possible that some under this retribution may yet repent, seeing how shameful is the delusion into which they have fallen by rejecting Christ"—FINDLAY.

13. **God hath from the beginning**—"of your hearing the gospel—**chosen you to salvation**—taken you out of the world, and placed you in the way to glory"—WESLEY.

"And this choice is **unto salvation**, in the utmost sense of the word, extended in ver. 14 to 'the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Comp. 1 Thess. 2. 12; 3. 13; 5. 9.) This salvation rests on God's election; at the same time it has its *human conditions:* **salvation** (experienced) **in sanctification of spirit and faith in the truth**. God chooses none to salvation apart from these qualifications; the end implies the way. It is believing and sanctified men who wear 'for a helmet the hope of salvation' (1 Thess. 5. 8). (Comp. 1 Pet. 1. 2, 'Elect . . . in sanctification of spirit,' *or* the Spirit.) **Chosen unto salvation** stands in contrast with 'son *of perdition*' and 'the *perishing*,' vers. 3, 10; **sanctification of spirit** and **belief in truth** on the part of God's elect, with the 'pleasure in unrighteousness' and 'belief in the lie' that marks the dupes of Antichrist. These are the moral pre-conditions of final salvation and perdition respectively"—C. B.

14. **To which**—"faith and holiness—**He hath called you by our gospel**—that which we preach, accompanied with the power of His Spirit"—WESLEY.

By our gospel—"*i.e.* of course, 'by our bringing you the happy message'—the historical delivery of the message is dwelt on rather than its contents. **To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord.** Almost all the ancient commentators render it, 'for obtaining of glory to our Lord'; and S. Chrysostom says beautifully: 'No small thing this either, if Christ esteems our salvation His glory. It is, indeed, a glory to the lover of men that the number of those who are being saved should be large.' But this version is not so easy grammatically as our own, nor does it suit so well with the context. S. Paul is encouraging his readers with the same thought of their destiny which he has put forward in ch. 1. 11, 12—the identity of the joy of the Redeemer and the redeemed (Matt. 25. 23). It is well to be observed that God did not call them straight 'to the glory of our Lord,' but 'to the obtaining' of the same. This 'obtaining' does not mean an otiose receiving of glory in the last day, but a laborious course of 'earning' or 'purchasing' it during this life. The word is the same as that used in 1 Thess. 5. 9"—ELLICOTT.

15. **Hold**—"without adding to, or diminishing from, **the traditions which ye have been taught**—the truths which I have delivered to you—**whether by word or by our Epistle**; he preached before he wrote. And he had written concerning this in his former Epistle"—WESLEY.

S. Paul now calls upon his readers, for the attainment of this end, not to let themselves be led astray (with reference to ch. 2. 2), and to hold fast the doctrines which had been delivered to them. If the gospel is changed (Gal. 1. 6, 7) it must lose its efficacy.

16. **Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father.** "This remarkable invocation corresponds both in form and place in the Epistle to that of 1 Thess. 3. 11. But here *Christ's* name comes first, a circumstance indicating the Divinity with which the writer invests it. 'Where now are those who would lower the Son of God?' (Chrysostom). (Comp. 2 Cor. 13. 14.) **God our Father, who loved us and gave**, etc. There is the tenderest connection of thought in these words. God's fatherly love prompts His great gifts. (See the words of Christ in Matt. 7. 11; Luke 12. 32.) 'Your Father who is in heaven shall give (you) good things,' etc. (Comp. John 3. 16; 1 John 3. 1; also Rom. 5. 8.) While the

Thessalonians are 'beloved of God' (1 Thess. 1. 4), they are also 'beloved by the Lord' (ver. 13); and this clause, though singular, may include *Christ* in its reference, He and the Father being one in **love** as in **comfort** (ver. 17). In His love the Father had already given the readers gladness of heart in trouble (ch. 1. 4; 1 Thess. 1. 6), such as the apostle often acknowledges in his own case (*e.g.* in 2 Cor. 1. 4–6)—an '*eternal* comfort,' which the sorrows of time will never waste. To know that God loves us is in itself a comfort infinitely rich"—C. B.

17. **Comfort your hearts.** "(Comp. ch. 3. 5; 1 Thess. 3. 13; and the similar expression in Col. 2. 2.) The 'heart' is the inward man, the seat of our thoughts and emotions (see note, 1 Thess. 2. 4); there doubt and fear arise, which can be allayed only by Divine comforting"—C. B.

CHAPTER III.

THE practical portion is introduced in the same manner as in the First Epistle (ch. 4. 1).

1. **May run**—"go on swiftly, without any interruption — **and be glorified** — acknowledged as Divine, and bring forth much fruit" —WESLEY.

Pray for us. S. CHRYSOSTOM remarks, "Himself had prayed for them; now he asks them to pray for him"; and ELLICOTT asks, "How much of a Christian teacher's power, increasing as time goes on, comes from the accumulation of intercession from his spiritual children?" S. Paul leaves people praying for him everywhere. (Rom. 15. 30; 2 Cor. 1. 11; Eph. 6. 18, 19; Col. 4. 3; 1 Thess. 5. 25; comp. Heb. 13. 18.) In all these cases the request is for active help in his work of evangelising. **And be glorified.** The word does not mean merely "obtain applause," as a successful runner; it always implies the recognition or acknowledgment of inherent admirable qualities.

2. **All men have not faith**—"and all men who have not are more or less **unreasonable and wicked men**"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Rom. 15. 31.) S. Paul gives thanks for such deliverances in 2 Cor. 1. 10; 2 Tim. 3. 11; 4. 17. **Unreasonable and wicked men.** Probably the unbelieving Jews of Corinth. (See Acts 18. 6, 9, 12.) From these Jews he was, though narrowly, delivered. It was, perhaps, in direct answer to the prayers for which S. Paul here asks that he received the vision and assurances of our Lord, and that Gallio was moved to quash so abruptly the proceedings of the Jews.

3. **Who will stablish you**—"that cleave to Him by faith—**and guard you from the evil one**—and all his instruments"—WESLEY.

Evil (R.V. "Evil One"). **But the Lord is faithful**—"but whether men have faith or not, the Lord is faithful. This characteristic of God is named because God stands pledged to all who believe in Him. **Who shall stablish you**—How soon S. Paul reverts from his own needs to theirs! He does not continue as we should expect, with 'who will preserve *us*'"—ELLICOTT.

4. **We trust in the Lord concerning you** —"thus only should we trust in any man"— WESLEY.

"**The Lord** is not, as the English phrase may suggest, the *object* of this confidence,—ver. 3 declared the apostle's trust in Him,—but the ground on which rests his confidence in the Thessalonian church. His relations with them and feelings towards them have the common relationship of both to Christ for their foundation and background, their vital underlying bond. (Comp. 1 Thess. 3. 2; 4. 1, 16; 5. 12; and ver. 12 below.) No idiom is more frequent or characteristic of S. Paul than this—**in the Lord, in Christ.** But it is 'to **you**' that his confidence is now directed: the construction of the Greek is identical with that of 2 Cor. 2. 3, 'having confidence in you all.' Let us accordingly read here, **In the Lord we have confidence in you.** Such is the trust that all true Christians should give to each other"—C. B.

5. **Now the Lord** — "the Spirit, whose proper work this is—**direct**—lead you straight forward—**into the patience of Christ**—of which He set you a pattern"—WESLEY.

And into the patience of Christ (R.V.) "May He **direct** (or guide') you **as Lord** of His people, Shepherd of the sheep. (John 10.) The apostle expects his Thessalonian flock to follow *his* directions (ver. 4); but above both himself and them is the supreme director of hearts, whose guidance he invokes. **Patience of Christ.** 'Patience' (or 'endurance') is what the Greek noun signifies in ch. 1. 4; 1 Thess. 1. 3 (see note); and in other numerous examples of its use in the New Testament. For the way in which 'Christ's endurance' is made a model for our own, see 1 Pet. 2. 19–24; 3. 17, 18; 4. 1, 2; and Heb. 12. 2, 3. Elsewhere S. Paul speaks of His 'sufferings' as shared by His people (2 Cor. 1. 5; Phil. 3. 10, etc.); and if the sufferings, surely 'the patience.' The Thessalonians were eagerly awaiting His return (1 Thess. 1. 10; 2 Thess. 2. 1, 2); let them wait for it in His patient spirit. Had the apostle wished to speak of 'waiting for' the glorified Christ, he would surely have called Him, as so often in these Epistles, 'the Lord Jesus.' **Christ** is in this place the patient Christ, who 'endured the cross' and the 'contradiction of sinners,' fulfilling the prophetic ideal of Jehovah's suffering Servant. (Isa. 53.; comp. 1 Pet. 2. 21–25; Matt. 11"—C. B.

6. **That walketh disorderly**—"particularly by not working. **Not according to the tradition he received of us**—the admonition we gave, both by word of mouth, and in our former Epistle"—WESLEY.

"Here S. Paul delivers a command, and that, too, in his apostolical authority, in the name of Christ Himself. We perceive what moral injury the errors of the Thessalonians had brought on the church. What in 1 Thess. 5. was but briefly hinted at required now an open and very severe denunciation. On account of the supposed proximity of the kingdom of God, working had been given up by many, who now wandered about in fanatical idleness. However, there was yet a number of quiet persons also in Thessalonica who had not permitted themselves to be carried away. It is to be presumed these were the elders. For that reason, too, S. Paul turns to them first, and calls upon them to give up communion with the brethren that walked in a disorderly manner"—OLSHAUSEN.

7. **For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us** (R.V.). **You know of yourselves**—"'without our needing to tell it all again.' Such references are frequent in these Epistles. **How you ought to imitate us**—points beyond the mere duty to *the spirit and manner* of the imitation desired, 'with what diligence and devotion.' **To be disorderly** is a word applied to 'soldiers out of rank.' Officers in the army are as much subject to its discipline as the rank and file; and the Apostle Paul felt it to be due to the churches over which he presided, that he should set an example of a strictly ordered and self-denying life"—C. B.

8. **Might not burden any of you** (R.V.). **Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought**—"this clause follows up and makes application of the last, showing by contrast in what lay the chief complaint against the 'brethren walking disorderly.' They would not work for their bread, and seemingly expected the church to support them. The church officers very properly resisted this demand, telling them to return to their occupations; so the apostle himself had directed in 1 Thess. 4. 11, 12. He tries to make these ill-conducted men feel by his own example the disgrace of living, without an effort, at the cost of others; **neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand** (R.V.). There was a manly pride about S. Paul in this matter. (Comp. 2 Cor. 11. 9, 10, and 1 Cor. 9. 15, 'No man shall stop me of my glorying'"—C. B.

9. **Not because we have not the right—an example**—*lit.* "a model." Whatever reasons these Thessalonians might have for giving up work, S. Paul had the same, and more.

10. **Neither let him eat**—"do not maintain him in idleness. **If any would not work.** The word 'would' stands for 'is not willing'"—WESLEY.

Refuses. To any weakness or incapacity for work, except in himself, S. Paul would be very tender; the vice consists in the defective **will. Let him not be fed.** The Thessalonians are not to be misled into a false charity, giving food in Christ's name to persons who are capable of working and able to get work, and are too indolent to do so"—ELLICOTT.

11. **Doing nothing, but being busybodies**—"to which idleness naturally disposes"—WESLEY.

"This disorder was not merely negative, consisting in refusal to work; mischief and idleness are proverbially companions; and we are not surprised to find the apostle adding the further condemnation, **that work not at all, but are busybodies** (R.V.). There is a play of words in the Greek, which gives to this reproach a keener edge, 'whose one business is to be busybodies'; or rendered still more freely, 'minding everybody's business but their own'—*idly busy* with the concerns of others. These mischief-makers the apostle had already bidden to 'study to be quiet and to do their own work' (1 Thess. 4. 11). For the same disposition S. Paul in 1 Tim. 5. 13 reproves certain 'younger widows'—'not only idlers, but tattlers also and busybodies'"—FINDLAY.

12. **Work quietly**—"letting the concerns of other people alone"—WESLEY.

These idle meddlers, a burden and scandal to the church, the apostle "charges, and appeals" to them, on the ground of their relationship to Christ, and with all the weight of Christ's authority committed to him, that **working with quietness, they eat their own bread**—not the bread of their honest and laborious brethren.

13. **But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.** "From this do-nothing or ill-doing faction of the church the apostle turns to the rest, who were busy in 'well doing,' and bids them persevere. (Comp. ch. 2. 17, and note; also 1 Thess. 1. 3; 4. 1, 10, for the diligent and honourable character which in the main this church bore)"—C. B.

"Religion is no ignominious, disgraceful thing. Wise men measure things by the end, and the end of a religious life is a kingdom, eternal and glorious"—WATSON.

14. **Have no company with him**—"no intimacy, no familiarity, no needless correspondence"—WESLEY.

And if any man—"an appeal to the right-minded, not only to preserve themselves, but to join with the overseers of their church in enforcing discipline, as in 1 Thess. 5. 12–15. **Note that man**—'**agree** to set a mark upon him, to make a marked man of him.' The notion is that of making him easily recognisable, so that no Christian should 'have company' with him unawares. (Comp. Gen. 4. 15.) The word and thought in Rom. 16. 17 are slightly different. The best text goes on abruptly, without conjunction, **Note that man; have no company with him.** This social extrusion from good men's conversation, not to speak of the sacraments, would to a Christian in a heathen city be indeed a deliver-

ing to Satan, a thrusting into outer darkness" —ELLICOTT.

15. **Admonish him as a brother**—"tell him lovingly of the reason why you shun him"—WESLEY.

"Such admonitions were used among the rabbis to one not formerly excommunicated, nor excluded from the fold. The circumstances are different from the complete estrangement spoken of in Matt. 18. 17. It has been well said that 'excommunication is not like poison given to an enemy for destruction, but like medicine administered to a brother for restoration'; and that 'the fact of a man's having been a brother should work in our hearts a memory of the old fraternity'"—GROTIUS.

16. **The Lord of peace**—"Christ—**give you peace by all means** — in every way and manner"—WESLEY.

Or, **Now He, the Lord of the peace, give you His peace**—a reference to the peace which Christ promised. (John 14. 27.) Again, a prayer to Christ. **Peace always by all means**—at every time, and in every kind of it; *internally*, peace in their own souls, peace from schism and dissension among themselves; *externally*, peace from persecution and the strife of tongues. **The Lord be with you all**—the old liturgical form, Latin and Greek, which took the place of Num. 6. 24 in the old rite. It most probably refers to the great promise, "I am with you alway" (Matt. 28. 20), and implies, "May that promise be fulfilled."

17. "To avoid fraud, which had large facilities in the epistolography of his day, S. Paul was used to send round a specimen of his handwriting, which was easily recognised (1 Cor. 16. 21; Col. 4. 18); probably the writing was so peculiar as to be a safeguard against forgery. (See Renan, *S. Paul*, p. 233.) **In every Epistle.** It is a precarious inference that S. Paul had *then* written many Epistles. He may at least be giving a rule for the future" —S. C.

18. With some slight variations in form the **grace** closes all the Pauline Epistles (and that to the Hebrews), and is peculiar to them. "Such a preacher of Divine grace was S. Paul" —ESTIUS.

The history of the world is one; the first century lives over again in the nineteenth. All the factors of evil co-operate, as do those of good. There are, in truth, but two kingdoms—of Satan and of Christ; though to our eyes their forces lie scattered and confused, and we distinguish ill between them. But the course of time quickens its pace, as if nearing some great issue. Science has given an immense impetus to human progress in all directions, and moral influences propagate themselves with greater speed than heretofore. There is going on a rapid interchange and interfusion of thought, a unifying of the world's life, and a gathering together of the forces on either side to "the valley of decision," that seem to portend some world-wide spiritual crisis, in which the glorious promises, or dark forebodings of revelation, or both at once, will be anew fulfilled. But still Christ's words stand, as S. Augustine said, to "put down the fingers of all the calculators." *It is not for us to know times or seasons.* What backward currents may arise in our secular progress, what new seals are to be opened in the book of human fate, and through what cycles the evolution of God's purpose for mankind has yet to run, we cannot guess.

The first disciples deemed themselves to live already in the dawn of the world's closing day. We in its later hours keep watch for the Lord, who said, "Behold, I come quickly," yet seems to tarry. Be it ours, none the less, with unwearied love and faith, to repeat the cry which has never ceased from the lips of the Church, the Bride of Christ:

COME, LORD JESUS!

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

"THE mother of Timothy was a Jewess, but his father was a Gentile. He was converted to Christianity very early; and while he was yet but a youth was taken by S. Paul to assist him in the work of the gospel, chiefly in watering the churches which he had planted.

"He was therefore properly, as was Titus, an itinerant evangelist, a kind of secondary apostle, whose office was to regulate all things in the churches to which he was sent; and to inspect and reform whatsoever was amiss either in the bishops, deacons, or people.

"S. Paul had doubtless largely instructed him in private conversation for the due execution of so weighty an office. Yet to fix things more upon his mind, and to give him an opportunity of having recourse to them afterward, and of communicating them to others, as there might be

occasion, as also to leave Divine directions in writing, for the use of the Church and its ministers in all ages, he sent him this excellent pastoral letter, which contains a great variety of important sentiments for their regulation.

"Though S. Paul styles him his 'own son in the faith,' yet he does not appear to have been converted by the apostle; but only to have been exceeding dear to him, who had established him therein; and whom he had diligently and faithfully served, like a son with his father in the gospel. (Phil. 2. 22.)

"THE EPISTLE CONTAINS THREE PARTS—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1-2.

II. The instruction of Timothy how to behave at Ephesus, wherein—

1. In general, he gives him an injunction to deliver to them that taught the Law in a wrong manner, and confirms at the same time the sum of the gospel as exemplified in himself, ... ,, ii. 20.

2. In particular—

(1) He prescribes to men, a method of prayer, . . ,, ,, 1-8.
To women, good works, and modesty, . . ,, ,, 9-15.

(2) He recounts the requisites of a Bishop, . . ,, iii. 1-7.
The duties of Deacons, . . . ,, ,, 8-10.
,, of Women, ... ,, ,, 11-13.

(3) He shows what Timothy should teach, Chaps. iii. 14—iv. 1-6.
,, what he should avoid, . . . Chap. iv. 7-11.
,, what follow after, . . . ,, ,, 12-16.
How he should treat men and women (ch. v. 1, 2), widows (3-16), elders (17-19), offenders (20, 21), himself (22, 23), those he doubts of (24, 25), servants (vi. 1, 2).

(4) False teachers are reproved (3-10), Timothy is admonished and quickened (11, 12), and also charged (13-16), precepts are prescribed to be enforced on the rich (17-19).

III. The Conclusion, ... ,, vi. 20, 21."
—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

1. ADDRESS AND SALUTATION.—**Paul an apostle.** "Familiarity is to be set aside where the things of God are concerned—**according to the commandment of God**—the authoritative appointment of God the Father—**our Saviour**—so styled in many other places likewise, as being the grand orderer of the whole scheme of our salvation. **And Christ our hope**—that is, the author, object, and ground of all our hope"—WESLEY.

An apostle by the commandment of God—"'not of man, neither by man' (Gal. 1. 1). The designation **God our Saviour**, not in the sense of Preserver, but of Redeemer in Jesus Christ, is almost peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles. (1 Tim. 2. 3; 4. 10; Tit. 1. 3; 2. 10; 3. 4.) It occurs, however, in Jude 25, and in the hymn of the Virgin Mary in Luke 1. 47. The *idea* is found in S. Paul's other Epistles, *e.g.* 2 Cor. 5. 19. **Our hope.** The object, foundation, and substance of our hope. So Col. 1. 27, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' In Eph. 2. 14, Christ is called 'our Peace'"—S. C. "It was by the express command of God that S. Paul went to the Gentiles, preaching the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. **Jesus Christ—our hope.** Without Jesus the world was *hopeless;* the *expectation* of being saved can only come to mankind by His gospel. He is called our **hope**, as He is called our 'life,' our 'peace,' our 'righteousness,' etc., because from Him these and all other blessings proceed"—CLARKE.

2. **Grace, mercy, peace.** "S. Paul wishes 'grace' and 'peace' in his Epistles to the churches. To Timotheus he adds 'mercy,' the most tender grace towards those who stand in need of it. The experience of this prepares a man to be a minister of the gospel"—WESLEY.

"**My own son in the faith.** In the relation of S. Paul to Timothy we have one of those beautiful friendships between an older and a younger man which are commonly so helpful to both. In this respect the friendship between S. Paul and Timothy reminds us of that between S. Peter and S. John. In each case the friend who took the lead was much older than the other; and (what is less in harmony with ordinary experience) in each case it was the older friend who had the impulse and the enthusiasm, the younger who had the reflectiveness and the reserve. These latter qualities are perhaps less marked in Timothy than in S. John, but nevertheless they are there, and they are among the leading traits of his character. Of the affection with which S. Paul regarded him we have evidence in the whole tone of the two letters to him. Of all whom he ever converted to the faith Timothy seems to have been to S. Paul the disciple who was most beloved and most trusted"—PLUMMER.

3. **Charge some to teach no other doctrine**—"than I have taught. Let them put nothing in the place of it, add nothing to it"—WESLEY.

Other doctrine—*i.e.* "other than the truth." When the apostle and his disciple Timothy revisited Ephesus, after the Roman imprisonment, they found the church there distracted with questions raised by Jewish teachers. The "doctrine" these men were teaching, and which S. Paul so bitterly condemns, seems to have been no settled form of heresy, but rather dangerous traditions from Jewish sources.

4. **Neither give heed**—"so as either to teach or regard them—**to fables**—fabulous Jewish traditions—**and endless genealogies**—not those delivered in Scripture, but the long intricate pedigrees whereby they strove to prove their descent from such or such a person—**which afford questions**—which lead only to useless and endless controversies"—WESLEY.

"Many, no doubt, employed their time in inquiring *who* were their *ancestors*, which they should have spent in obtaining that grace by which, being *born from above*, they might have become the *sons and daughters of God Almighty*"—CLARKE. "This is a strong caution against the rabbinical mode of teaching, as is intimated to Titus in ch. 1. 14, where they are called Jewish fables"—SUTCLIFFE. "It is a great sign of knowledge not to be curious about everything, nor to wish to know all things"—CHRYSOSTOM. "The way to make us mere fools is to affect to know more than God would have us. Adam's tree of knowledge made him and his posterity fools. Curiosity was the bait whereby the devil caught our first parents and undid us all"—BROOKS.

5. **Whereas the end of the commandment**—"of the whole Christian institution—**is love**—and this was particularly the end of the commandment which Timotheus was to enforce at Ephesus (vers. 3, 18). The foundation is faith; the end, love. But this can only subsist in **an heart purified** by faith, and is always attended with a **good conscience**"—WESLEY.

"The aim of the commandment, or precept, not of the Law only, nor of the gospel merely, but of all practical teaching, as opposed to fables, etc., is **love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience**—a conscience which trusts that its guilt is removed and that it is reconciled to God (Heb. 9. 9, 14), and which is being trained to be void of offence towards God and towards men (Acts 24. 16); and **out of faith unfeigned**, which is the root of love (Gal. 5. 16), and which purifies the conscience (Acts 15. 9). Unless faith is real, the guilt is not removed and the training of the conscience is not attempted"—S. C.

6. **From which**—"love and a good conscience—**some are turned aside.** An affectation of high and extensive knowledge sets a man at the greatest distance from faith, and all sense of Divine things. **To vain jangling**—and of all vanities, none are more vain than dry, empty disputes on the things of God"—WESLEY.

This sentence is rendered more accurately: **From which some, having gone wide in aim, have turned themselves aside.** These words seem to tell us that these teachers had once been in the right direction, but had not kept in it; indeed, from the whole tenor of S. Paul's directions to Timothy it is clear that these persons not only had been, but were still, reckoned among the Christian congregations of the Ephesian church. The presiding presbyter appointed by S. Paul could have exercised no possible authority over any not reckoned in the church's pale. CLARKE says, of the term **vain jangling**, "that the meaning is 'empty' or 'vain talking'; discourses that turn to no profit; many words and little sense; and that sense not worth the pains of hearing."

7. "**Understanding neither the** very **things they speak**, nor the subject they speak of"—WESLEY.

A wise teacher must understand what he teaches, and must, at the same time, be clear in his own mind that what he teaches is true; then he may, as HOFMANN says on this verse, "express himself with confidence regarding anything."

8. "**We grant the** whole Mosaic **Law is good**, answers excellent purposes, **if a man use it** in a proper manner. Even the Ceremonial is good, as it points to Christ; and the Moral Law 'is holy, just, and good,' in its own nature; and of admirable use both to convince unbelievers, and to guide believers in all holiness"—WESLEY.

But we know—better, "Now we know"—a strong expression of his knowledge, learned in the school of the Holy Ghost. He spoke with the conscious authority of an apostle, confident of the truth of what he preached and

taught. **That the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully.** "The Law is good," S. Paul declared with apostolic authoritative knowledge, "should a man—*i.e.* a teacher of the Law—make use of it lawfully"; if he should use it so as to make men conscious of their sins, conscious of themselves they deserve no mercy, only punishment. To press this sorrowful knowledge was the Law's true work upon men. It was never intended to supply materials for casuistry and idle, profitless arguments. It was never meant as a system out of which man might draw material for self-deception. It was never meant as a system through which a man might imagine that by a compliance, more or less rigid, with its outer ritual he was satisfying all the higher requirements of justice and truth. It was given to lead men to Christ, and Christ is the end of that Law for justification to everyone that believes. Those who did not use the Law in reference to this end did not use it "lawfully," they did not construe it according to its original design.

9. **The Law doth not rise against a righteous man**—"doth not strike or condemn him—**but against the lawless and disobedient.** They who despise the authority of the Lawgiver violate the first commandment, which is the foundation of the Law, and the ground of all obedience. **Against the ungodly and sinners**—who break the second commandment, worshipping idols, or not worshipping the true God. **The unholy and profane**—who break the third commandment by taking His name in vain"—WESLEY.

"**The Law**—better 'law'—Law in general, including of course the Mosaic Law. **A righteous man**, *i.e.* for a just and virtuous man, the opposite of the character which follows: not here a justified man, true though it is that justice and virtue and all Christian graces follow after justification and are the fruits of faith. If all were righteous, there would be no need of Law. **Lawless and disobedient**—who break the Law. **Ungodly and sinners**—who rebel against God; **unholy and profane**—in their own impure lives"—S. C. "A virtuous and honest man does not need to know what the laws are. The greatest proportion of men live and die without hearing once in all their life a tenth or a hundredth part of the laws that pertain to good conduct. They do right of their own accord, and therefore the Law has no force on them. So it is in respect to true manly living. As far as a real, upright man goes, he goes voluntarily. He does from spontaneity and from choice what men lower down do from necessity, or from fear of punishment. The consequence is, that men live toward freedom in proportion as they live towards fidelity"—BEECHER.

10. **Menstealers**—"the worst of all thieves, in comparison of whom, highwaymen and housebreakers are innocent. What then are most traders in negroes, procurers of servants for America, and all who list soldiers by lies, tricks, or enticements?"—WESLEY.

CLARKE says: "**Liars** are they who speak for *truth* what they know to be *false;* and even they who tell *the truth* in such a way as to lead others to draw a contrary meaning from it." **And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.** In this broad and general summary, with which S. Paul concludes his dreadful catalogue, the prohibition of the tenth commandment against "covetousness" is doubtless included. In the words "sound doctrine"—an expression peculiar to this group of Epistles—a sharp contrast is suggested to the "sickly and unhealthy" teaching of the false teachers, with their foolish legends and allegories—a teaching which suggested controversy and useless disputes, and had no practical influence at all upon *life.*

11. **According to the glorious gospel**—"which, far from 'making void,' does effectually 'establish the Law'"—WESLEY.

"All that S. Paul had been saying concerning the Law—its true work and its only work—was no mere arbitrary conception of his own; it was simply a repetition of the teaching of the gospel which his Master had entrusted to him, the gospel which taught so clearly that the Law was for the condemnation of sinners—that it was for those alone who do not accept the easy yoke and the light burden of the Lord Jesus. **Of the blessed God.** The whole sentence is more accurately translated, 'according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God.' (Comp. 2 Cor. 4. 4.) 'The glory of the blessed God,' whether as shown in the sufferings of Christ or in the riches of His great mercy, is that which is contained in and revealed by the gospel; in other words, the 'contents' of the gospel is the glory and majesty of God. God is called here 'blessed,' not only on account of His eternal and changeless perfection, but also on account of His blessed gift of forgiveness, offered to all sinners who accept His gospel of love"—ELLICOTT.

12. "**I thank Christ, who hath enabled me, in that He accounted me faithful, having put me into the ministry.** The meaning is, I thank Him for putting me into the ministry, and enabling me to be faithful therein"—WESLEY.

"The mention of the great trust committed to him awakens a train of grateful memories in the apostle's mind, which he pours out in one of his characteristic digressions; a digression, however, which has indirectly an important bearing on his subject, showing how in his own case the gospel did what the Law could not do—transformed a blasphemer into a saint. **I thank Christ Jesus who put power into me.** The object of his thanksgiving was—'He accounted me faithful'—faithfulness being the Divinely-required qualification for the work—**appointing me to the ministry.** (Comp. 1 Thess. 2. 4.) **As we were allowed**—rather

'approved'—of God to be put in trust with the gospel"—S. C.

13. **A blasphemer**—"of Christ. **A persecutor**—of His Church. **A reviler**—of His doctrine and people. **But I obtained mercy.** He does not say, because I was unconditionally elected; but **because I did it in ignorance.** Not that his ignorance took away his sin; but it left him capable of mercy; which he would hardly have been, had he acted thus contrary to his own conviction"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul had been **a blasphemer**, for he had thought that he 'ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth'; and he had been a persecutor, for he had punished believers 'oftentimes in all the synagogues,' and 'strove to make them blaspheme.' That is ever the persecutor's aim;—to make those who differ from him speak evil of what they reverence but he abhors; to say they renounce what in their heart of hearts they believe. There is, therefore, thus far an ascending scale in the iniquity which the apostle confesses. He not only blasphemed the Divine name himself, but he endeavoured to compel others to do the same. The third word, although the English version obscures the fact, continues the ascending scale of self-condemnation. **Injurious** does scant justice to the force of the Greek word used by the apostle, although it is not easy to suggest a better rendering. The word is very common in classical authors, but in the New Testament occurs only here and in Rom. 1. 20, where the A.V. translates it 'despiteful' and the R.V. 'insolent.' It indicates one who takes an insolent and wanton delight in violence, one whose pleasures lie in outraging the feelings of others. S. Paul, in his misguided zeal, had punished innocent people, and he had inflicted punishment, not with pitying reluctance, but with arrogant delight. Here surely is a proof that no sinner need despair"—PLUMMER.

14. **And the grace**—"whereby I obtained mercy—**was exceeding abundant with faith**—opposite to my preceding *unbelief*. **And love**—opposite to my *blasphemy*, *persecution* and *oppression*"—WESLEY.

Grace—*i.e.* "free mercy." **With faith**—*i.e.* "bringing with it faith and love to God and man," which have their root **in Christ Jesus**; faith and love being, as Calvin says, signs and testimonies of the grace of God. The generous compassion shown to S. Paul is not exceptional; it is typical. And it is a type, not to the few, but to many; nay, to all. MEYER says: "The last words (ver. 13) might be so explained as to weaken seemingly the Divine grace; and therefore the apostle feels bound to set forth its abundant riches. His mind was penetrated by the unbounded greatness of the grace he had experienced." OOSTERZEE adds: "It is as though he wrestles with speech in order to find some sufficient expression for the feeling which quite overpowers him."

15. **This is a faithful saying**—"a most solemn preface—**and worthy of all acceptation**—well-deserving to be accepted, received, embraced, with all the faculties of our whole soul—**that Christ**—promised—**Jesus**—exhibited—**came into the world to save sinners**—all sinners without exception"—WESLEY.

"**This is a faithful saying.** This expression is found only in the Pastoral Epistles, in which it occurs in 1 Tim. 3. 1; 4. 9; 2 Tim. 2. 2; Titus 3. 8. A comparison of these passages will hardly bear out the opinion that these 'faithful sayings' are always quotations from hymns or liturgical formularies, although the present passage, with ch. 4. 9, and 2 Tim. 2. 2, may be Christian maxims or sayings in use in the churches. Their occurrence, therefore, may be another indication that these three Epistles were written late in the apostle's ministry; and it certainly leads towards the conclusion that they were all written about the same time. **That Christ Jesus**, etc. With a definite allusion to the pre-existence before 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' **Of whom I am chief**—*lit.* 'first'; not, however, in time, but in excess. 'Not because he sinned first, but because he sinned most,' says AUGUSTINE. The tense is instructive: of whom I *am* chief, not I *was*. A pardoned sinner is a sinner still"—S. C. The man who would keep his soul awake must never lose the sense of his own need.

16. "**For this cause** God showed me **mercy**, that **all** His **longsuffering** might be shown, and that none might hereafter despair"—WESLEY.

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy. "In spite of this deep consciousness of his guilt, faith and confidence in his own salvation seem never to have wavered. He speaks of *this* with all certainty, and proceeds to tell us with great clearness why Christ saved him, the chief of sinners. **That in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering.** If Christ could show mercy to him, surely in after times the greatest of sinners need never doubt the Redeemer's power and will to save. S. Paul's conversion foretold many a patient waiting on the part of the Lord, much longsuffering, which would never hurry to punish His enemies, but which would tarry long, in the hope of the sinner repenting while it was yet time. **For a pattern.** Men were to learn that such conversions as his were to be looked forward to as no uncommon occurrences—conversion of blasphemers, of persecutors, whom the Lord would tarry long for, till they, too, coming to the knowledge of the truth, should acknowledge Him. Thus to *all* sinners was S. Paul a pattern—an example of the Lord's longsuffering, of His patient waiting. His gracious Master had dealt with him like a king, who, when judging the case of a rebel city, pardons the chief rebel. If God would redeem Saul the persecutor, none need despair of finding mercy'—ELLICOTT.

17. **The King of Eternity**—"a phrase frequent with the Hebrews. How unspeakably sweet is the thought of eternity to believers!"—WESLEY.

The apostle breaks forth in a doxology, as in Rom. 16. 25–27; 1 Tim. 6. 16. **Now unto the King.** The wonderful chain of thought (vers. 12–16) which so well illustrates the great assertion of ver. 15—"that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners"—S. Paul closes with a noble ascription of praise and thankfulness to the great God. This doxology is addressed to no one Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, but is—as has been said with great truth—"a grand testimony to the monotheism of S. Paul: the Godhead, the Trinity of His worship, is a sublime Unity. To this Eternal, Incorruptible One be glory and honour unto the ages of the ages. Amen."

18. **This charge I commit to thee**—"that thou mayest deliver it to the church. **According to the prophecies concerning thee**—uttered when thou wast received as an evangelist (1 Tim. 4. 14); probably by many persons (1 Tim. 6. 12); **that,** being encouraged **by them, thou mightest war the good warfare**"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul again addresses himself to Timothy direct. **According to the prophecies.** This may refer to some predictions by inspired men, relative to what Timothy should be; and he wishes him to act in all things conformably to those predictions. It was predicted that he should have this high and noble calling; but his behaviour in that calling was a matter of *contingency*, as it respected the *use* he might make of the grace of his calling. He is therefore urged to **war a good warfare.** He was now called to that estate to which the prophecies referred; and now he is to act *worthily* or *unworthily* of that calling, according as he *fought* or *did not fight* the good warfare, and according as he *held* or did *not hold* faith and a good conscience"—CLARKE.

19. **Holding fast faith**—"which is as a most precious liquor. **And a good conscience**—which is as a clean glass. **Which**—namely, a good conscience—**some having thrust away.** It goes away unwillingly: it always says, 'Do not hurt me.' And they who retain this do not **make shipwreck of their faith.** Indeed, none can make shipwreck of faith who never had it. These, therefore, were once true believers: yet they fell not only foully, but finally; for ships once wrecked cannot be afterwards saved"—WESLEY.

Faith and a good conscience are ever closely bound together. A bad conscience is a source of unbelief, and faith purifies the conscience. **Having put away**—rather, "having thrust from them," wilfully and deliberately, "as a troublesome monitor"—BENGEL. In this manner Timothy is to discharge his office. S. Paul had just spoken of the Christian's warfare. So he here refers to the Christian armour. **Faith** and a **good conscience** constitute a grand defence, and he who can **put away** such protection may well be said to have brought upon himself all the perils of **shipwreck.** We cannot afford to "put away" any shield which God has made possible to us. A ship without helm or compass is not more helpless in a storm than a man who is without "faith" and a good conscience amid the perils of spiritual warfare.

20. **Whom**—"though absent—**I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme**—that by what they suffer they may be in some measure restrained, if they will not repent"—WESLEY.

It is scarcely doubtful that S. Paul delivered Hymenæus and Alexander to Satan, in order that Satan might have power to afflict their bodies (just as he was allowed power over the body of Job), with a view to their spiritual amelioration. This personal suffering following close upon their sin, and declared by the apostle to be a punishment for it, would teach them to abandon it. Satan is always ready to inflict suffering. It hardens and exasperates some men, while it humbles and purifies others. In the case of these two blasphemers he would hope to induce them to blaspheme all the more. The true end and purpose of this, as of all Divine punishments, was not revenge for the sin, but the ultimate recovery of the sinner.

CHAPTER II.

CHURCH REGULATIONS.—1. *Public worship.* **1. I exhort therefore**—"seeing God is so gracious. In this chapter he gives directions (1) With regard to public prayers; (2) With regard to doctrine. **Supplication** is here the imploring help in time of need: **prayer** is any kind of offering up our desires to God. But true prayer is the vehemency of holy zeal, the ardour of Divine love, arising from a calm, undisturbed soul, moved upon by the Spirit of God. **Intercession** is prayer for others. We may likewise **give thanks for all men,** in the full sense of the word, for that God 'willeth all men to be saved,' and Christ is the Mediator of all"—WESLEY.

First of all—first in order of direction, and perhaps of importance—not in regard to the time when prayer was to be used, as Chrysostom, who refers the passage to the daily *morning* prayer; but *whenever* common prayer is used **I exhort,** etc. **Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be given for all men**—"not merely for ourselves or for the Church. It is difficult to establish a clear distinction between the three words used by the apostle for prayer. Perhaps, as suggested by Ellicott, the idea most prominent in 'supplications' is that of want; in 'prayers,' that of solemn devotion; in 'intercessions,' that of individual earnest pleading with God. In this passage they all imply intercessions, in the ordinary sense of the word, as they are all, as

well as thanksgiving, to be made for all men"—S. C. "It is not merely the natural influence of public worship on those who offer it of which we ought to think. We believe that in the mystery of the relations which God has established between Himself and us, He has given us the power to widen and deepen the channels of His own bounty, and that this power is greatest when we pray *together*. God has made men dependent on the acts to which our sympathy prompts us, and we need not be surprised that He has made them dependent on our prayers too"—Dr. DALE. "Let us never forget that not only **prayers** but **thanksgivings** are to be offered **for all men**, and that the truest gratitude is shown, not in words or feelings, but in conduct. We should send good deeds after good words to heaven"—PLUMMER.

2. **For all that are in authority**—"seeing even the lowest country magistrates frequently do much good or much harm. God supports the power of magistracy for the sake of His own people, when, in the present state of men, it could not otherwise be kept up in any nation whetever. **Godliness**—inward religion; the true worship of God. **Honesty**—a comprehensive word, taking in the whole duty we owe to our neighbour"—WESLEY.

Without any special reference to the Roman emperors, the expression simply directs that prayer should be offered in all Christian congregations for the supreme authorities of the Roman empire. "**That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.** What now is the special object of this prayer for those in high authority and power? First, that through *their* wise rule the Christians might enjoy peace; and, second, that the temper of the people who prayed thus for the ruling powers might be so affected by the constant repetition of such prayers, that all thoughts of revolt and resistance would be gradually stamped out. S. Paul knew whom he was addressing. The Christian congregations of his age were largely made up of Jews. An intense longing to throw off the yoke of Rome pervaded the whole nation. The terrible events of the year 70 (only four or five years at most from the time of writing this Epistle) show how deep seated was their hatred of the stranger. **In all godliness and honesty.** The word rendered 'honesty' is better translated *gravity*, or decorum. These words are only used by S. Paul in his Pastoral Epistles, where 'godliness' occurs nine times, and 'gravity' three times. The sphere, so to speak, in which S. Paul's ideal Christian must walk during his quiet, unobtrusive pilgrimage, was reverence and decorum"—ELLICOTT.

3. **For this**—"that we pray for all men. Do you ask, 'Why are not more converted?' We do not pray enough. **Is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour**—who has actually saved us that believe, and **willeth all men to be saved.** It is strange that any whom He has actually saved should doubt the universality of His grace!"—WESLEY.

"The connection is, For the practice which I enjoin of praying for all men, including kings and magistrates, although heathen and possibly persecutors, is both **good** in itself and **acceptable in the sight of our Saviour, God, whose will it is that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.** Our prayers should be as comprehensive as God's will. **The knowledge**—*i.e.* 'the full knowledge.' Salvation is in virtue and aim universal. Christ died for all, and His blood cleanseth from all sin. God's will, thus revealed, is for 'all men to be saved.' But He does not will to save all men irrespective of their own acceptance of the terms of salvation. He wills them to be saved on certain conditions; to come to the full knowledge of the gospel; knowledge—*i.e.* not merely intellectual but moral, influencing the affections and life. This full knowledge, then, will include penitence, faith, love, and obedience"—S. C.

4. "**Who willeth** seriously **all men**—not a part only, much less the smallest part—**to be saved**—eternally. This is treated of, vers. 5, 6. **And**, in order thereto, **to come**—they are not compelled—**to the knowledge of the truth**—which brings salvation. This is treated of, vers. 6, 7"—WESLEY.

"In other words, through the sacrifice and the death of Christ **all** are rendered capable of salvation (*salvabiles*); that some are indisputably not saved, is not due to any outward circumscription or inefficacy of the Divine will, but to man's rejection of the special means of salvation which God has been pleased to appoint, and to which it is His Divine will that man's salvation should be limited. Redemption is universal, yet conditional—all *may* be saved, yet all *will* not be saved, because all will not conform to God's appointed condition"—ELLICOTT. God's purpose of salvation extends to all, and therefore the prayer of Christians must include all. WIESINGER says: "The apostle does not mean specially to give a reason for prayer for the conversion of all men, but for prayer generally as a duty of universal love to men."

5. "**For**—the fourth verse is proved by the fifth; the first by the fourth. **There is one God**—and they who have not Him, through the one Mediator, have no God. **One Mediator also.** We could not rejoice that there is a God, were there not a Mediator also: One who stands between God and men, to reconcile man to God, and to transact the whole affair of our salvation. This excludes all other mediators, as saints and angels, whom the papists set up and idolatrously worship as such: just as the heathens of old set up many mediators, to pacify their superior gods. **The Man**—therefore all men are to apply to this Mediator, 'who gave Himself for all'"—WESLEY.

"Confirmatory of the position that God's

will is that **all** should be saved. The *universality* of the dispensation is proved by the unity of the Dispenser"—ELLICOTT. "The apostle wishes to confirm the idea of the universality of the Divine purpose of salvation as true and necessary: he does this first by pointing to the unity of God. There is a quite similar connection of ideas in Rom. 3. 30; emphasis is laid on God's unity in another connection in 1 Cor. 8. 6, and, in a third connection, in Eph. 4. 6. From the unity of God it necessarily follows that there is only one purpose regarding all; for if there were various purposes for various individuals, the Godhead would be divided in its nature. As there is one God, however, so also there is one Mediator"—HUTHER. **For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.** "For." This gives the reason why it is good and well-pleasing in the sight of God that Christians should pray for all—for there is one Saviour, God the Father, who wills that all should be saved, and there is one Mediator, Christ Jesus, who has given Himself as ransom for all. Surely, then, to us who call ourselves by the name of Christ, the fate of the heathen who as yet know not Christ cannot be a matter of indifference. We must in our praise and prayer include these strangers whom the Father wills should come to Him, for whose sake the Son has given His life. **The Man Christ Jesus.** S. Paul, with special emphasis, speaks of the "one Mediator between God and men" as "the Man Christ Jesus," no doubt wishing to bring into prominence the true humanity of the Lord.

6. **Who gave Himself a ransom for all.** "Such a ransom, the word signifies, wherein a like or equal is given; as an eye for an eye, or life for life: and this ransom, from the dignity of the person redeeming, was more than equivalent to all mankind. **To be testified of in due season**—*lit.* 'in His own seasons'; those chosen by His own wisdom"—WESLEY.

We have here, in a few words, the inspired description of the manner in which the Mediator performed His office and work; He yielded up Himself to death as the price of the redemption of all mankind—His life in exchange for their forfeited lives. The teaching is very definite. It asserts, that without pleading the death of Christ, we may, if we please, approach and find access to the Father, and such teaching, as this passage shows, is irreconcilable with gospel truth. **To be testified in due time.** Letter rendered, "witness of which was to be borne in its own times." The meaning of the words is, "Jesus Christ in the eternal counsels, gave Himself to death as the price of the redemption of fallen man; at the appointed and fitting season He endured this death—this death was the witness to the truth of the tremendous offering made in the counsels of the eternal and ever-blessed Trinity." So S. Chrysostom, who asserts that "the witness to be borne" was given in the death and suffering of the Lord.

8. **I will**—"a word strongly expressing his apostolical authority—**therefore**—this particle connects the eighth with the first verse—**that men pray in every place**—public and private. Wherever men are, there prayer should be. **Lifting up holy hands**—pure from all known sin. **Without wrath**—in any kind, against any creature. And every temper or motion of our soul that is not according to love is 'wrath.' **And doubting**—which is contrary to faith. And wrath, or unholy actions, or want of faith in Him we call upon, are the three grand hindrances of God's hearing our petitions. Christianity consists of faith and love, embracing truth and grace: therefore, the sum of our wishes should be, to pray, and live, and die, without any wrath or doubt"—WESLEY.

Men, said S. Paul, in every place where a congregation in the name of Christ was gathered together, were to be the offerers of prayer. The word "everywhere" seems a memory of the Lord's words to the woman of Samaria, "Believe Me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." **Lifting up holy hands.** It was the Jewish practice, not only in taking a solemn oath—or in blessing—but also in prayer, to lift up the hands. (Comp. Ps. 28. 2; 63. 4.) This seems to have been generally adopted by the early Christians as the attitude in prayer. See CLEM. ROM., *To the Corinthians*, ch. 29. "Holy hands"; see Ps. 24. 4; 26. 6; "holy"—that is, unstained with wanton sins. **Without wrath and doubting.** "Here allusion is doubtless made to religious disputes and contentions among the believers themselves—'doubting' is better translated by 'disputing.' These angry feelings can have no place in the heart of one who really prays, whether in public or in private"—ELLICOTT. **Without wrath and disputing**—"that is, in the spirit of Christian peace and trust. Ill-will and misgiving respecting one another are incompatible with united prayer to our common Father. The atmosphere of controversy is not congenial to devotion. Christ Himself has told us to be reconciled to our brother before presuming to offer our gift on the altar. In a similar spirit S. Paul directs that those who are to conduct public service in the sanctuary must do so without angry feelings or mutual distrust. To keep one's tongue and one's temper in due order is to all of us one of the most constant and necessary duties of the Christian life; and the neglect cannot fail to be disastrous to the reality and efficacy of our devotions"—PLUMMER. "In the Pastoral Epistles, special stress is laid on peaceableness as a Christian virtue. (Ch. 3. 3; Tit. 3. 2; 2 Tim. 2. 24)"—HUTHER.

9. **With sobriety**—"which, in S. Paul's sense, is the virtue which governs our whole life according to true wisdom. **Not with curled**

hair, not with gold—worn by way of ornament. **Not with pearls**—jewels of any kind: a part is put for the whole. **Not with costly raiment.** These four are expressly forbidden by name to all **women** (here is no exception) **professing godliness**; and no art of man can reconcile with the Christian profession the wilful violation of an express command"—WESLEY.

"The apostle is continuing directions for public worship. **Women**, who as well as the men will be present; **adorn themselves in modest apparel.** The meaning may perhaps reach somewhat beyond dress and ornament, to demeanour and deportment. **Shamefacedness**—a shrinking from all that is indelicate and unbecoming. **Sobriety**—sobermindedness, the well-balanced state of mind which results from habitual self-restraint. **Broided hair.** (Comp. 1 Pet. 3. 3.) **Gold or pearls.** There would seem to have been in the Ephesian church women of property who could afford such ornaments"—S. C.

10. **With good works.** The apostle, still speaking of woman's true part in public divine service—argues that their "works" should be in accord with their "words" of prayer—tells them that a woman's truest and most beautiful ornament consisted in those tender works of mercy and pity—her peculiar province—in other words, that they, like Dorcas of Joppa, whose praise is in the Book of Life, "should be full of good works and almsdeeds." (Acts 9. 36.)

11. The thought of public ministration is still in the apostle's mind when he gives this injunction. The very questioning on difficult points is forbidden them at the public assembly (1 Cor. 14. 35), so averse was S. Paul to anything which might mar the quiet solemnity of these meetings for prayer and praise and authoritative instruction.

12. **To usurp authority over the man**—"by public teaching"—WESLEY.

S. Paul caught well the spirit of his Master here. He raised once and for ever the women of Christ out of the position of degradation and intellectual inferiority they had occupied in the various pagan systems of the East and West, and taught with all the weight of an apostle — of an accredited teacher of Divine wisdom—that woman was a fellow-heir with man of the glories of the kingdom, where sex would exist no longer; but, while teaching this great and elevating truth, S. Paul shows what is the only proper sphere in which woman should work, and in which she should exercise her influence and power; while man's work and duties lay in the busy world without, woman's work was exclusively confined to the quiet stillness of home.

13. **First**—"so that woman was originally the inferior"—WESLEY.

This teaching of S. Paul's respecting the public position of woman as regards man, in which he shows that she is to hold a subordinate place — is based upon no arbitrary human speculation, but upon God's original order in creation—that Divine order which first created man, and, after man's creation, formed woman as his helpmeet.

14. **And Adam was not deceived** — "the serpent deceived Eve: Eve did not deceive Adam, but persuaded him. 'Thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife' (Gen. 3. 17). The preceding verse showed why a woman should not 'usurp authority over the man'; this shows why she ought not 'to teach.' She is more easily deceived, and more easily deceives. **The woman being deceived transgressed** — 'the serpent deceived' her (Gen. 3. 13), and she transgressed"—WESLEY.

And Adam was not deceived. Priority in creation was the ground alleged by S. Paul as the reason why the woman was never to exercise authority over man, the eldest born of God. "Adam was not deceived"; the apostle now refers to the general basis of his direction respecting the exclusion of women from all public praying and teaching contained in vers. 9–12. The argument here is a singular one—Adam and Eve both sinned, but Adam was not deceived. He sinned, quite aware all the while of the magnitude of the sin he was voluntarily committing. As the apostle remembers the Old Testament story of the Fall, there comes into his thoughts the cunning serpent by which Eve, not Adam, let himself be ensnared. HUTHER says: "As to the thought itself, expositors find the force of this second reason to be in the fact that in the Fall the weakness of the woman, her proneness to temptation, was manifested, and that consequently it is not seemly for the woman to have mastery over the man. But did the man resist the temptation more stoutly than the woman? S. Paul nowhere gives any hint of that. The significant part of the Mosaic narrative to him is rather this, that the judgment of God was passed upon the woman because she had let herself be **betrayed** by the serpent, and it is in accordance with this judgment, that the husband is made lord over the wife."

15. **Yet she**—"that is, women in general, who were all involved with Eve in the sentence pronounced (Gen. 3. 16)—**shall be saved in childbearing**—carried safe through the pain and danger which that sentence entails upon them for the transgression; yea, and finally saved, **if they continue in** loving **faith** and holy wisdom"—WESLEY.

"The key to this difficult passage must be found in Gen. 3. 16. The sentence on the woman was twofold. She was to be in subjection to the man: 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee'; and she was to bring forth children in sorrow. But this latter part of her doom contained in two ways the conditions of her salvation. In the first place, in bearing its sorrows and ful-

filling its resulting duties patiently and faithfully, she would be discharging the functions which God had specially allotted to her. As labour, which was the man's sentence, has become man's duty, in doing which aright he is to serve God, so the mother's duties and sufferings are the woman's special function and probation, through which, as a condition, she will be saved. But, secondly, the woman's sentence of childbearing involved the appointed means of her own and of the world's salvation. *Her* seed was to bruise the serpent's head. And thus in a deeper sense, but consistent with the former, she will be **saved through childbearing**, as the instrument of the incarnation of Him who, 'when the fulness of time was come,' was 'born of a woman.' But her salvation was conditional, **if they** (*i.e.* 'the sex') **continue in faith and charity** (*i.e.* love) **and holiness with sobriety**, the sobermindedness recommended in ver. 9 as woman's true ornament"—S. C.

CHAPTER III.

CHURCH REGULATIONS.—*Qualifications of bishops and deacons.*—1. **He desireth a good work**—"an excellent, but laborious, employment"—WESLEY.

"The office of a presbyter of the church in the days of S. Paul was a difficult and dangerous post. It involved much labour; it was full of risk; it meant a hard and severe life; yet, from the Christian's standpoint, it was a work, if faithfully performed, of all toils the most beautiful, the most honourable, the most noble"—ELLICOTT.

2. **Therefore**—"that he may be capable of it—**a bishop**—or pastor of a congregation—**must be blameless**—without fault or just suspicion—**the husband of one wife**—this neither means that a bishop 'must' be married, nor that he 'may not' marry a second wife; which it is just as lawful for him to do as to marry a first, and may in some cases be his bounden duty. But whereas polygamy and divorce on slight occasions were common both among the Jews and heathens, it teaches us that ministers, of all others, ought to stand clear of those sins. **Vigilant, prudent**—lively and zealous, yet calm and wise. **Of good behaviour**—naturally flowing from that vigilance and prudence"—WESLEY.

Vigilant. The Greek word here is more accurately rendered "sober." The presbyter or elder should be sober-minded, self-restrained, temperate (not merely in wine, but in all things). **Sober**—better rendered "discreet." **Of good behaviour**—rather "orderly." This word refers to outward conduct, to behaviour in public. The Christian office-bearer must not only be wise and self-restrained in himself, but his outward bearing must in all respects correspond to his inner life. **Given to hospitality.** In the early days of Christianity, when Christians travelling from one place to another were in the habit, when it was possible, of resorting to the houses of their brethren in the faith, to avoid consorting with idolaters in the public inns, it was of no slight importance that the presiding elders in a congregation should be men who loved to entertain strangers and others, from whom nothing could be expected in return. **Apt to teach.** The elder should possess something more than a willingness, or glad readiness, to teach the less instructed the mysteries of the faith. He ought also to have the far rarer qualification of a power to impart knowledge to others. Zeal is not by any means the only, or even the principal, qualification to be sought for in a minister of the word.

3. **Not given to wine**—"rather 'violent over wine,' and hence violent in a manner from any other cause. To object to these prohibitions as obvious in themselves and unnecessary in a Christian community is to forget the low tone of morality in Grecian society, in which such habits carried little or no reproach"—S. C. Drunkenness is scarcely alluded to here. It is rather a warning against choosing for the sacred office one given to frequenting noisy banquets, where wild and imprudent words are often spoken. **No striker.** Probably something more than merely brawling and fighting may be here included. Not only must the pattern minister of the Lord never smite his brother believer, but he must also never wound his soul with cutting, unkind words.

4, 5. **Having his children in subjection with all seriousness**—"for levity undermines all domestic authority; and this direction, by a parity of reason, belongs to all parents"—WESLEY.

"Beside the moral qualities which have respect to himself personally, regard is also to be had, as in Tit. 1. 6, to his character relatively to those belonging to him,—his qualities as the head of a family. The Christian influence which he is able to exercise in his own house will show to what extent a successful influence on the house of God may be expected from him. **His own** is therefore to be understood in opposition to the house of God. (Comp. ch. 5. 15.) That which qualifies for ruling one's own house qualifies also for an efficient discharge of official duties. Hence the inference from the one to the other. The office only gives a wider sphere of active duty, but it is the same energy of a Christianly moral character that must be brought into exercise here, as in the narrower sphere of the family"—OLSHAUSEN.

6. **Lest being puffed up**—"with this new honour, or with the applause which frequently follows it—**he fall into the condemnation of the devil**—the same into which the devil fell"—WESLEY.

Not a novice—"*i.e.* 'a recent convert.' For the ordination of such there was no necessity, if, as is probable, the gospel had been

preached at Ephesus for at least twelve or thirteen years. **Lifted up with pride**—perhaps, 'obscured, blinded by pride'; some render, 'swollen, puffed up.' The word is of somewhat doubtful meaning In our version it is translated 'proud' in 1 Tim. 6. 4, and 'high-minded' in 2 Tim. 3. 4"—S. C.

7. **He ought also to have a good report**—"to have had a fair character in time past—**from them that are without**—that are not Christians. **Lest he fall into reproach**—by their rehearsing his former life, which might discourage and prove a snare to him"—WESLEY.

"Another special qualification, mentioned only here, is the good reputation among those without the Church. **To have a good report.** The apostle ascertained this with respect to Timothy himself ere he connected himself with him. (Acts 16. 2.) This passage represents the devil as the immediate author of that which is done by others"—WIESINGER.

8. **Likewise the deacons must be serious**—"men of a grave, decent, venerable behaviour. But where are presbyters? Were this order essentially distinct from that of bishops, could the apostle have passed it over in silence? **Not desirous of filthy gain**—with what abhorrence does he everywhere speak of this! All that is gained (above food and raiment) by ministering in holy things is 'filthy gain' indeed; far more filthy than what is honestly gained by raking kennels, or emptying common sewers"—WESLEY.

"We have here the character of deacons. These had the care of the temporal concerns of the Church—that is, the maintenance of the ministers and provision for the poor. They served tables, while the ministers or bishops gave themselves only to the ministry of the word and prayer. (Acts 6. 2, 4.) Of the institution of this office, with that which gave occasion to it, we have an account in Acts 6. 1–6"—M. HENRY. The name **deacon** occurs again in the New Testament only at Phil. 1. 1 and Rom. 16. 1, in the latter passages as an appellation of Phebe—hence, deaconess. Among the qualifications here enumerated, that of moral propriety of conduct in general, stands first. (Tit. 2. 2.) He then mentions certain prevailing vices from which a deacon must be free. **Doubletongued**—"saying one thing to one man, another to another"—THEODORET. **Not greedy of filthy lucre.** The administration of the alms of the Church, for which the order of deacon was originally instituted, was still one of its principal duties—hence the especial necessity of freedom from covetousness and of honesty in money matters, as a qualification.

9. **Holding fast the faith in a pure conscience**—"steadfast in faith, holy in heart and life"—WESLEY.

Holding the mystery, etc. "Their faith's mystery"—having their belief in the revealed gospel contained, as it were, in a "pure conscience," a heart of integrity and purity. "A mystery is that which, unknown or incomprehensible previously, has now been revealed; and, when revealed, it has become the object of faith"—S. C. "A low and normal action of fear leads to forecast; its morbid action is a positive hindrance to effort"—BEECHER.

10. **Let these be proved first**—"let a trial be made how they behave. **Then let them minister**—"let them be fixed in that office"—WESLEY.

The professed servant of the Lord must show a high example in self-control, and the deacons must first be **proved** blameless. The trial to which the future deacon was to be subjected consisted not in a period of probation, but in a previous inquiry as to whether the requisite qualifications, laid down by the apostle, were found in him, as is evident from the expression, **being blameless**, which denotes the result of the inquiry.

11. **Faithful in all things**—"both to God, their husbands, and the poor"—WESLEY.

Faithful in all things. These deaconesses, from their position, would become the depositaries of many a household secret; to those confiding in them in moments of trouble they must be true; scrupulously honest also in their distribution of alms; faithful, too, in the holy instruction they would be often called on to give in the course of their ministrations.

13. **They purchase a good degree**—"or step, towards some higher office—**and much boldness**—from the testimony of a good conscience"—WESLEY.

"The **good degree** they are now purchasing by earnest, patient work may refer to advancement to the higher ministries of the Church, but, more probably, has reference to their future position in the blessed life to come. This is one of the passages not unfrequent in S. Paul's Epistles, where degrees of glory among the redeemed are clearly spoken of. The plain words of S. Paul and his Master teach the people of God, that although the great act of redemption alone belongs to Christ, that through His merits only men obtain salvation, still His own will in a great measure determine, by their works and days on earth, the position they will occupy in His kingdom. *Faith* was the foundation of the **great boldness**, and **the faith** rested on Jesus Christ"—ELLICOTT.

14, 15. **That thou mayest know how to behave.** "This is the scope of the Epistle—**in the house of God**—who is the Master of the family—**which is**—as if he had said, By the house of God, I mean **the Church**"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul here makes a pause in the Epistle. He has brought to a close some of the principal directions which he has to give respecting the preservation of pure doctrine, the conduct of public worship, and the qualifications for the ministry; and, before proceeding to other topics, he halts in order to insist upon the importance

of these things, by pointing out what is really involved in them. Their importance is one main reason for his writing at all. It may be a long time before the two friends meet again face to face. The way in which Christians ought to behave themselves in the house of God is not a matter which can wait indefinitely. God's house must have regulations to preserve it from unseemly disorder. The congregation which belongs to the living God must have a constitution to preserve it from faction and anarchy. God's household is not only a community, which in a solemn and special way belongs to the living God: it is also the **pillar and ground of truth.** These considerations show how vital is the question, In what way ought one to behave oneself in this community"—PLUMMER.

16. **The mystery of godliness**—"afterwards specified in six articles, which sum up the whole economy of Christ upon earth. **Is the pillar and ground** — the foundation and support *of* all *the truth* taught in His Church. **God was manifest in the flesh**—in the form of a servant, the fashion of a man, for three and thirty years. **Justified by the Spirit**—publicly 'declared to be the Son of God,' by His resurrection from the dead. **Seen**—chiefly after His resurrection. **By angels**—both good and bad. **Preached among the Gentiles**—this elegantly follows. The angels were the least, the Gentiles the farthest, removed from Him; and the foundation both of this preaching and of their faith was laid before His assumption. **Was believed on in the world**—opposed to heaven, into which He was **taken up.** The first point is, 'He was manifested in the flesh'; the last, 'He was taken up into glory'"—WESLEY.

"It is not a mere enumeration of successive incidents which we have here, by a representation of the **great mystery** of faith. And what can be said against the order which is followed in this representation, which begins with the revelation of the Saviour, and advances to His being made known, and thence to His being glorified? It is not the apostle's design to represent merely the cardinal doctrine from which the seducers would deviate, but rather the great mystery of all piety, of which the Church is the bearer"—FULTON. "Christianity is a **mystery**, not of philosophy or speculation, but of **godliness**, designed to promote godliness. The mystery of godliness is *Christ*, and here are six things concerning Christ which make up the mystery of godliness. Godliness is a mystery in all its parts and branches, from the beginning to the end, from Christ's incarnation to His ascension. Being a mystery, we should rather humbly adore it, and piously believe it, than curiously pry into it, or be too positive in our explications of it, and determinations about it, further than the Holy Scriptures have revealed it to us"—M. HENRY. "We are far from suppressing our conviction that this is a great mystery. We rejoice, on the contrary, in its incomprehensibility. It is the greatness which forms the mystery of the fact; the matchless love and condescension constitute the very nucleus of the difficulty. It could only be brought within the sphere of our comprehension by a contraction of its vast dimensions, by a depression of its natural grandeur. A prostration of it to the level of our feeble capacities would only render it incapable of being the magnet of souls, the attraction of hearts, the wonder of the universe"—ROBERT HALL.

CHAPTER IV.

1. **But the Spirit saith**—"by S. Paul himself to the Thessalonians, and probably by other contemporary prophets — **expressly** — as concerning a thing of great moment, and soon to be fulfilled. **That in the latter times**—these extend from our Lord's ascension till His coming to judgment. **Some**—yea, many, and by degrees the far greater part—**will depart from the faith**—the doctrine once delivered to the saints—**giving heed to seducing spirits**—who inspire false prophets"—WESLEY.

"The **words of the Spirit** here allude to a mysterious power, to a Divine gift, traces of which occur again and again in the New Testament pages. Among the supernatural signs which were vouchsafed to the first generation of believers, and, with very rare exceptions, only to the first generation — to men and women, many, if not most of whom, had seen Jesus, and had personal contact with Him—must be reckoned those mysterious intimations of the will of the Holy Spirit which guided and encouraged the Church of the first days. That intimation came in varied forms: to the Twelve in the form of fiery tongues (Acts 2. 1–12); to a more numerous company (Acts 4. 31); to S. Peter on the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10. 10–16, 19, 20); to S. Paul on three occasions in the course of his second missionary journey (Acts 16. 6, 7, 9, 10); through the medium of the prophet Agabus (Acts 21. 11). S. Paul alludes to many such voices of the Spirit and heavenly intimations, when speaking to the elders of Miletus. (Acts 20. 23.) One of these special revelations, made to himself, he here quotes"—SPENCE.

2. **These will depart from the faith, by the hypocrisy of them that speak lies, having their own consciences** as senseless and unfeeling as flesh that is **seared with an hot iron**"—WESLEY.

"**Having their conscience seared** — *i.e.* 'the liars.' The translation may be, 'men branded on their own consciences,' as slaves were with their master's brand—the self-convicted slaves of sin. Our English Version has taken the idea of the loss of sensibility produced by the burning. Perhaps the 'branding' might convey both associations to a

reader accustomed to see the effects of the practice"—S. C.

3. "**Forbidding** priests, monks, and nuns **to marry, and commanding** all men **to abstain from** such and such **meats** at such and such times. **Which God hath created to be received by them that know the truth**—that all meats are now clean—**with thanksgiving**—which supposes a pure conscience"—WESLEY.

"It has been asked why, in these solemn warnings against a false asceticism, which S. Paul foresaw might and would be substituted for a really earnest, God-fearing life, the question of celibacy was dismissed with one short sentence, while the apparently less-important question of abstaining from particular kinds of food was discussed with some detail. The reason is easily discoverable. The counsel to abstain from marriage was a strange and unnatural suggestion, one contrary to the plain scheme of creation. Any teaching which taught that the celibate's life was a life peculiarly pleasing to God would, at the same time, throw a slur upon all home and family life, and the apostle felt that men's ordinary common sense would soon relegate any such strange teaching to obscurity; but with the question of abstaining from meats—that was connected with the precepts of the Mosaic Law, which dealt at some length (probably from reasons connected with the public health) with these restrictions in the matter of meats—S. Paul taught that all food was from the hand of one Maker—nothing, then, could really be considered common or unclean without throwing a slur upon the All-Creator. **Which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.** God's primeval intention is thus sharply contrasted with men's arbitrary restrictions. This Divine intention is repeated with still greater emphasis in ver. 4"—C. B.

5. **It is sanctified by the word of God**—"creating all, and giving it to man for food—**and by prayer.** The children of God are to pray for the sanctification of all the creatures which they use. And not only the Christians, but, even the Jews, yea the very heathens, used to consecrate their table by prayer"—WESLEY.

"The sanctification referred to by S. Paul belongs to no one prayer or grace, but to the constant habit of referring everything to God as the giver of all—to the perpetual 'office' of a devout heart, which, taking everything as a gift from God, the lover and the friend of man, thanks God from the heart continually"—ELLICOTT.

7. "Like those who were to contend in the Grecian games, **exercise thyself unto godliness**—train thyself up in holiness of heart and life, with the utmost labour, vigour, and diligence"—WESLEY.

"Mind practical religion. Those that would be godly must **exercise themselves unto godliness**; it requires a constant exercise. The reason is taken from the gain of godliness. **Bodily exercise profiteth little**, or 'for a little time.' What will it avail us to mortify the body, if we do not mortify sin?"—M. HENRY.

8. **Bodily exercise profiteth a little**—"increases the health and strength of the body"—WESLEY.

For the training of the body, on which so much importance was laid by the Greeks, is profitable for little: it has its uses, but they are comparatively unimportant. (Comp. 1 Cor. 9. 24–27.) Some refer the words to the ascetic practices just condemned; but the apostle, in such a context, when his object was to warn against them, would hardly speak of them as profitable, even **for little**: while allusions to gymnastic training would be appropriate and significant in writing to Timothy, whose father was a Greek. **Godliness is profitable for all things**—"it is the most practical of all things. It lays hold on man's whole nature. It purifies his body; it illumines and sanctifies his intellect; it braces his will. It penetrates into every department of his life, whether business or amusement, social intercourse, or private meditation"—PLUMMER. **Promise of the life that now is.** Perhaps "the promise of life," *i.e.* of all that life can give and is. But the *best* promises even of the present life are spiritual.

9. **A faithful saying.** Here referring to the foregoing maxim (see on ch. 1. 15). There is nothing in what follows which has any appearance of a well-known phrase.

10. **Therefore**—"animated by this promise—**we both labour and suffer reproach**—we regard neither pleasure, ease, nor honour—**because we trust**—for this very thing the world will hate us—**in the living God**—who will give us the life He has promised—**who is the Saviour of all men**—preserving them in this life, and willing to save them eternally. **But especially**—in a more eminent manner—**of them that believe**—and so are saved everlastingly"—WESLEY.

"**Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.** These words, like the assertion of ch. 2. 4, have been often pressed into the service of that school of kindly, but mistaken, interpreters, who ignore, or explain away, the plain doctrine of Holy Scripture which tells us there are those whose destruction from the presence of the Lord shall be everlasting, whose portion shall be the 'second death' (2 Thess. 1. 9; Rev. 21. 8). These interpreters prefer to substitute in place of this terrible, but *repeated* declaration, their own perilous theories of universalism. Here the gracious words seem to affix a seal to the statement immediately preceding, which speaks of 'the hope in the living God' as the source of all the labour and brave patience of the Lord's true servants. The **living God** is also a *loving*

God, the **Saviour of all**, if they would receive Him, and, undoubtedly, the Redeemer of those who accept His love and are faithful to His holy cause"—SPENCE.

12. "**Let no one** have reason to **despise** thee for **thy youth.** To prevent this, **Be a pattern in word**—public and private. **In spirit**—in your whole temper. **In faith.** When this is placed in the midst of several other Christian graces, it generally means a particular branch of it; fidelity or faithfulness"—WESLEY.

"Timothy was probably at this time thirty-eight or forty, and therefore much younger than some of the presbyters or elders he had to govern. His youth had probably been before objected to him (see 1 Cor. 16. 11). **An example—in word**—both in public teaching and private converse. **Conversation**—rather, 'conduct,' the sense indeed in which the word conversation was used by our translators. (Comp. 2 Cor. 1. 12; Gal. 1. 13; Eph. 1. 3; 4. 22)"—S. C. TRAPP says: "Reason indeed should rule; but when reason cannot prevail, *example* will." "**In word**—this refers to the public utterances, in teaching and exhortation, but more particularly to the *words* used by Timothy in social intercourse. These, in such a life as that of the young presiding elder of the Ephesian church, must have been of the deepest importance. The tone of his conversation was no doubt imitated by many, it would influence for good or evil the whole Christian society of that great centre. The words of men placed in such a position should ever be true and generous, helpful and encouraging, and, above all, free from slander, from all low and pitiful conceptions of others. **In purity**—chastity of mind as well as body is here signified. Every Christian must be watchful, lest he should seem to set a careless example in the matter of morality"—ELLICOTT.

13. **Give thyself to reading**—"both publicly and privately. Enthusiasts, observe this! Expect no end without the means"—WESLEY.

"**Till I come give attendance to reading.** The words evidently imply a hope, perhaps even an expectation, on the part of S. Paul, that he would one day be enabled once more to visit the church of Ephesus; but so long as that absence lasted, Timothy was to attend carefully to three special points in the public ministry in which he was, in the apostle's absence, the chief officer. The **reading** was that public reading of Scripture in the congregation—a practice borrowed from the synagogue service, when publicly the Law and the Prophets were read to the people assembled. **To exhortation, to doctrine.** These both most probably refer to the public ministry in the congregation. The first, **exhortation**, particularly applies to the *feelings*. The reading of the Scriptures must be followed by an earnest practical application of their teaching to the affairs of that life in the midst of which the Christian listener was living. The word **doctrine** suggests a public teaching, directed rather to the *understanding* of the hearers. The idea of exposition, or even of dogmatic teaching, seems here included"—C. B.

14. **Neglect not**—"they neglect it who do not exercise it to the full"—WESLEY.

"**Which was given thee by prophecy**—by immediate direction from God—**by the laying on of my hands** (2 Tim. 1. 6); while the elders joined also in the solemnity. This **presbytery** probably consisted of some others, together with Paul and Silas"—WESLEY.

"The very titles of the old covenant dispensation seem to have been revived in this instance of the Divine selection of Timothy; for in ch. 6. 11 the older apostle addresses his representative at Ephesus with the old prophetic title when he writes, 'Thou, O man of God, flee these things.' Now he solemnly calls attention to that strange, miraculous 'grace' which some inspired prophet at his ordination declared was to be conferred on Timothy. The 'gift' was said to be conferred, as to its certainty in the Divine counsels, by such prophecy—the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of one or more of His prophets, declaring His will and intention to confer this special grace on the young companion of S. Paul"—ELLICOTT.

15. **Meditate.** "The Bible makes no distinction between this and to contemplate, whatever others do. True meditation is no other than faith, hope, love, joy, melted down together, as it were, by the fire of God's Holy Spirit; and offered up to God in secret. He that is **wholly in these** will be little in worldly company, in other studies, in collecting books, medals, or butterflies, wherein many pastors drone away so considerable a part of their lives"—WESLEY.

"**Give thyself wholly to them**—*lit.* '*be* in them'; make them your life's employment. With these words S. Paul closes this division of his solemn directions to his chosen disciple and representative at Ephesus. He must dwell on these things and must be diligent in their practice; he must show himself active and industrious as a public teacher, and must also order his life so as to be an example to his fellow-believers. To his public teaching and his public example, he must give ceaseless attention, that the Christian brotherhood of the church over which he presided should be enabled constantly to see what progress their chief pastor was making in Christian experience and life"—ELLICOTT.

16. **Continue in them**—"in all the preceding advices"—WESLEY.

The minister of Christ must be equally careful of his character and his teaching. Some day he must account for both. If both be right there will be a double reward: **in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.**

CHAPTER V.

MISCELLANEOUS DIRECTIONS FOR DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.—1, 2. **Rebuke not**—"considering your own youth, with such a severity as would otherwise be proper"—WESLEY.

"Let his relations with his younger members of the family of Christ be rather those of a brother and a friend than of a superior in rank and dignity. **The elder women as mothers.** The same watchful care against all assumption of superiority must also be exercised in his dealings with the Christian matrons of Ephesus. **The younger as sisters, with all purity.** In the case of the younger women, S. Paul adds to his directions respecting brotherly and sisterly regard a grave word, urging upon Timothy, and all official teachers like Timothy, to add to this self-denying, loving friendship a ceaseless watchfulness in all their conversation, so as not to afford any ground for suspicion; for, above all things, the recognised teacher of Christianity must be pure"—C. B.

3. **Honour**—"that is, maintain out of the public stock"—WESLEY.

"The provision of the widow was attributable to the exertions of the church, which never relaxed its solicitude for the interest of wives surviving their husbands—winning, perhaps, one of the most arduous of its triumphs when, after exacting for two or three centuries an express promise from the husband at marriage to endow his wife, it at length succeeded in engrafting the principle of dower on the customary law of all Western Europe"—MAINE.

4. **Let these learn to requite their parents**—"for all their former care, trouble, and expense"—WESLEY.

Here a warning against allowing the church to be burdened with a burden which others ought to bear is given, in the form of a pressing reminder to the children or grandchildren of the destitute and desolate widow. It is a solemn and imperative duty for the children to afford all needful succour—a duty not to be evaded by any bearing the Christian name.

5. **Widows indeed**—"who have no near relations to provide for them; and who are wholly devoted to God. **Desolate**—having neither children nor grandchildren to relieve her"—WESLEY.

"The chief pastor in Ephesus must remember that among the women of his flock there were *some* widows indeed, with neither children nor grandchildren to assist them, without friends even to cheer their desolate life. To find out and to succour these poor, sad-hearted, friendless beings, S. Paul reminds Timothy, was one of the duties of a Christian minister"—ELLICOTT.

6. **She that liveth in pleasure**—"delicately, voluptuously, in elegant, regular sensuality, though not in the use of any such pleasures as are unlawful in themselves"—WESLEY.

In pleasure—"and extravagantly: the Greek word combines the notion of luxurious self-indulgence with that of prodigality"—TRENCH. Such a life destroys the spiritual life.

7. **That they**—"that is, the widows"—WESLEY.

That they may be blameless. "That, whether seeking support from the public alms of the Christian community or not, the widows of the congregation should struggle after an irreproachable, self-denying life, and show before men publicly *whose* servants they indeed were. In these words there seems a hint that the former life of many of these women-converts to Christianity had been very different to the life loved of Christ, and that in their new profession as Christians there was urgent need of watchfulness on their part not to give any occasion to slanderous tongues"—SPENCE.

8. **If any provide not**—"food and raiment—**for his own**—mother and grandmother, being desolate widows—**he hath**—virtually—**denied the faith**—which does not destroy but perfect natural duties. What has this to do with heaping up money for our children, for which it is often so impertinently alleged? But all men have their reasons for laying up money. One will go to hell for fear of want; another acts like a heathen, lest he should be **worse than an infidel**"—WESLEY.

"The apostle here reverts to the obligation of children and grandchildren, which indeed has a wider application,—**if any one**—not merely those within these closer relationships—**does not provide for his own** relatives, **and especially those of his own household**—his own immediate family—**he has denied the faith**—practically, **and is**, in this respect, **worse than an unbeliever**, who does, for the most part, perform these natural duties of domestic life"—S. C.

9. **Let not a widow be chosen**—"into the number of deaconesses, who attended sick women or travelling preachers—**under threescore**—afterwards they were admitted at forty, if they were eminent for holiness. **Having been the wife of one husband**—that is, having lived in lawful marriage, whether with one or more persons successively"—WESLEY.

"Although the highest work for Christ can best be done by those who by remaining single have kept their domestic ties at a minimum, yet young women are more likely to do useful work in society, and are less likely to come to harm, if they marry and have children. Of **older women** this is not true. Age itself is a considerable guarantee; and a woman of sixty, who is willing to give such a pledge, may be encouraged to enter upon a life of perpetual widowhood. But there must be other qualifications as well, if she wishes to be enrolled

among those who not only are entitled by their destitute condition to receive maintenance from the Church, but by reason of their fitness are commissioned to undertake Church work. And these qualifications must be carefully investigated"—PLUMMER.

10. **If she hath washed the feet of the saints**—"has been ready to do the meanest offices for them"—WESLEY.

"**If**—for example—**she have brought up children**—those of others, especially orphans, besides her own; **washed the saints' feet**—paid the kind offices of hospitality in an especial manner to Christians, as distinguished from 'strangers'"—S. C. **If she have diligently followed every good work.** This sums up the beautiful character to be sought for in the candidates for membership in this chosen women's band. She must be known not merely as a mother and a wife, who had well and faithfully performed the womanly duties of her home life, but men must speak of her as one who had diligently and lovingly sought out the rough places of the world, and who, with a brave and patient self-denial, with a sweet and touching self-forgetfulness, had set herself to perform those kind, good actions the Master loves so well.

11. "**Refuse**—do not choose. **For when they are waxed wanton against Christ**—to whose more immediate service they had addicted themselves—**they want to marry**—and not with a single eye to the glory of God; and so withdraw themselves from that entire service of the Church to which they were before engaged"—WESLEY.

"The younger women must be held ineligible for the presbyterial order. S. Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saw how often the renunciation of old pursuits and pleasures, made under peculiar pressure of circumstances, undertaken in the hot fervour of youth, in later days would become weary and distasteful"—ELLICOTT.

12. **They have rejected their first faith**—"have deserted their trust in God, and have acted contrary to the first conviction, namely, that wholly to devote themselves to His service was the most excellent way. When we first receive power to believe, does not the Spirit of God generally point out what are the most excellent things; and at the same time, give us a holy resolution to walk in the highest degree of Christian severity? And how unwise are we ever to sink into anything below it"—WESLEY.

Having damnation—"incurring condemnation. **Their first faith**—or 'promise'; the engagement they made, if not formally, at least virtually, when they were admitted on the roll of widows, one of whose qualifications was, to have been the wife of one husband"—S. C. "Such a going back, such a giving up the higher and the more devoted life—the life of self-sacrifice, of self-abnegation—for the ordinary joys and cares of domestic life, for the useful but still everyday pursuits of ordinary men and women;—such a going back would be indeed a casting off their first faith, and such an example of backsliding could not fail to harm the cause of Christ"—ELLICOTT.

13. "**From house to house**—*lit.* 'the houses' which it was their business to visit. As the duties of the ecclesiastical widows required them to visit the families of believers, it was necessary that they should be discreet, experienced, and godly women, to prevent their visits from degenerating into idle gossip and talebearing"—S. C. "Idleness is an art soon learned. Doing nothing may quickly become doing naughtily"—TRAPP. **Busybodies.** (See Prov. 20. 3.)

14. **I counsel therefore the younger women**—"widows or virgins, such as are not disposed to live single—**to marry, to bear children, to guide the family**—then will they have sufficient employment of their own—**and give no occasion of reproach to the adversary**—whether Jew or heathen"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul's practical mind, guided by the Spirit of God, has left us no impossible rules of perfection, no exaggerated praises of asceticism, of lofty self-denial, no passionate exhortings to a life made up entirely of self-sacrifice and self-surrender. He knew the ordinary man or woman was incapable of such exalted heroism, and therefore was too wise, too loving, even to recommend a life which few could live. It was not that the Master, Christ, and the greatest of His servants, S. Paul, did not themselves prize and admire the higher ideal and the nobler life—for was it not their own? Did not one attain to it, and the other die in his hero-efforts to reach it? But Master and scholar in their gospel of the world have left commands that all, not the few, can obey—have enjoined a life which all, not the few, may live"—SPENCE.

15. **Some**—"widows—**have turned aside after Satan**—who has drawn them from Christ"—WESLEY.

"**Turned away after Satan**—from sobriety and purity, and consequently, perhaps, from the faith. There was abundant time for the apostle to have had experience of such melancholy declensions at Ephesus, or at any rate in other churches; so that it is a feeble argument which infers from these words a date in the second century for this Epistle"—S. C.

17. **Let the elders that rule well**—"who approve themselves faithful stewards of all that is committed to their charge—**be counted worthy of double honour**—a more abundant provision, seeing that such will employ it all to the glory of God. As it was the most laborious and disinterested men who were put into these offices, so whatever anyone had to bestow, in his life or death, was generally lodged in their hands for the poor. By this means the churchmen became very rich in after ages; but as the design of the donors was

something else, there is the highest reason why it should be disposed of according to their pious intent. **Especially those** — of them — **who labour**—diligently and painfully—**in the word and teaching** — in teaching the word" — WESLEY.

"The consideration of the position and qualifications of certain ruling elder women, 'the presbyterial widows,' reminded S. Paul of certain points to be impressed on Timothy connected with the rank and honour due to the more distinguished presbyters associated with him in the Ephesian congregations"—ELLICOTT.

18. "**The ox that treadeth out the corn**—rather and more literally, 'an ox while threshing.' The precept in Deut. 25. 4 is one of humanity to animals. The ox, while treading out the corn with his hoofs, or dragging the threshing-wain over it, was not to be prevented from helping himself as the reward of his labour. S. Paul, in an earlier Epistle (1 Cor. 9. 9), had *argued* from this text the right of a minister to be maintained by those to whom he ministers; he here refers to it as *inferring* the right. **And the labourer is worthy of his reward** — rather, 'hire,' as in Luke 10. 7, where these words are used by our Lord. It is highly probable that S. Paul was acquainted with the Gospel of S. Luke, which was written before the Acts of the Apostles. In all probability the words **the Scripture saith** refer only to the first quotation; and even if the latter clause is included, our Lord's words recorded by S. Luke may have been called Scripture by S. Paul, as S. Paul's own Epistles are by S. Peter (2 Pet. 3. 16)"—S. C.

19. **Against an elder**—"or presbyter—do not even **receive an accusation unless by two or three witnesses.** By the Mosaic Law, a private person might be cited (though not condemned) on the testimony of one witness; but S. Paul forbids an elder to be even cited on such evidence, his reputation being of more importance than that of others"—WESLEY.

"**Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.** By the 'elder' here we must understand a presbyter—the ordained minister of the Church. S. Paul has been directing his son in the faith, and successor in the government of the chief Asian church, carefully to watch for, and to reward by dignity and honour, the services of the more zealous and distinguished presbyters. He now tells him that the other matters, besides zeal and successful service among the Church's professed officers, will come before him when he stands at the helm of the Church. Charges—owing, possibly, to jealousy, party feeling, suspected doctrinal error — will not unfrequently be brought against a presbyter. Such an accusation is only to be received by Timothy when the evidence is perfectly clear. Every possible precaution against simply vexatious charges brought against one occupying the hard and difficult position of a presbyter, must be taken by the presiding minister. The reference is to Deut. 17. 6"—SPENCE.

20. **Those** — "elders—**that sin** — scandalously, and are duly convicted—**rebuke before all**—the Church"—WESLEY.

S. Paul here passes to the question how to deal with the responsible officers of the Church when they were proved to be notoriously sinning. While, on the one hand, the earnest and devoted men were to be honoured with "a double honour,"—while every possible *legal* precaution was to be taken in the case of those being accused—on the other hand, when proved to be men continuing in sin and error, their punishment must be as marked as in the other case was the reward.

21. **I charge thee before God** —"referring to the last judgment, in which we shall stand **before God and Christ**, with His **elect**, that is holy, **angels**, who are the witnesses of our conversation. The apostle looks through his own labours, and even through time itself, and seems to stand as one already in eternity. **That thou observe these things without prejudging**—passing no sentence till the cause is fully heard—or **partiality**—for or against anyone"—WESLEY.

"**The elect angels.** The words are variously explained. It is perhaps best to understand them (1) *generally*, the holy angels, God's special attendants. So 'elect' is used in 1 Pet. 2. 6, not so much to imply distinction as to express excellence. The elect saints are God's Church on earth: the elect angels are in His court in heaven. Other interpretations are (2) those who kept their first estate, in contradistinction to the fallen angels; (3) the guardian angels of Timothy or of the church of Ephesus; (4) angels specially selected by God as His messengers to men"—S. C. "**Without prejudice**—every man should be dealt with in the Church as he will be dealt with at the judgment-seat of Christ"—CLARKE.

22. **Lay hands suddenly on no man**—"that is, appoint no man to Church offices without full trial and examination; else thou wilt be accessory to, and accountable for, his misbehaviour in his office. **Keep thyself pure**—from the blood of all men"—WESLEY.

Keep thyself pure—with a strong emphasis on the pronoun—"strictness in inquiring into the antecedents of candidates for ordination and in dealing with ministerial depravity will have a very poor effect, unless your own life is free from reproach." And, if we omit the parenthetical advice about taking wine, the thought is continued thus: "As a rule it is not difficult to arrive at a wise decision respecting the fitness of candidates, or the guilt of accused presbyters. The vices of the wicked and the virtues of the good outrun any formal judgment about them (see ver. 24). Sooner or later, men, and especially ministers, will be known for

what they are"—PLUMMER. "It will be most correct to take the exhortation quite generally, so that the meaning is, Timothy is to lay hands **in over-hasty fashion** on no one—whatever the occasion may be. He who thoughtlessly lays hands on the unworthy, thereby declaring them worthy of the Divine blessing, makes himself a sharer in their sins. Against this Timothy is to guard"—MEYER.

23. "**Drink no longer water**—rather, 'Be no longer a water-drinker,' which Timothy had, perhaps, become, either in compliance with the best features of an ascetic tendency now developing, or as an example to the luxurious Greeks" —S. C.

24. **Some men's sins are manifest beforehand**—"before any strict inquiry be made—**going before to judgment**—so that you may immediately judge them unworthy of any spiritual office—**and some they**—their sins—**follow after**—more covertly"—WESLEY.

In appointing men to sacred offices in the Church, among the candidates Timothy would find (1) some of whom he knew nothing, but only that they professed Christianity—let such be tried before they are appointed; (2) some of whose faith and piety he had the fullest knowledge, and whose usefulness in the Church was well known; (3) some whose lives were not at all or but partially reformed, who were still unchanged in their hearts, and unholy in their lives. The sins of these latter were known to all; **they go before to judgment**—with them he could have no difficulty. On all these accounts the exhortation is necessary, **Lay hands suddenly on no man. Judgment.** "Some explain 'judgment' of the judgment of God, when the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed; a sense in which the words are awfully true. But the thought is alien from the context, which consists of practical directions to Timothy"—S. C.

25. **They that are otherwise**—"not so manifest—**cannot be** long **hid**—from thy knowledge. On this account, also, be not hasty in laying on of hands"—WESLEY.

Likewise, etc. "In like manner, too, their good words are manifest, **and they that are otherwise**—not manifest at first sight—**cannot be hid** on inquiry. The caution is directed against prejudice (ver. 21) and haste (ver. 22)" —S. C. "In his difficult post Timothy might fear lest, especially in his selection of men for the Lord's service, true nobility of character might not unfrequently escape his notice and be overlooked, and that thus the best and truest might never be enrolled on the register of church officers. S. Paul bids him take courage in the thought that in many a case self-sacrifice, generosity, stern principle, will be sufficiently manifest to guide him in his choice of fit persons for the holy calling; and in those rarer cases where the higher and sweeter virtues are hidden, he may be sure that in God's good season these too *will* become known to him, in ample time for him to call them also into his Master's service"—C. B.

CHAPTER VI.

1. **Let servants under the yoke**—"of heathen masters—**account** them **worthy of all honour**—all the honour due from a servant to a master—**lest the name of God and His doctrine be blasphemed**—as it surely will, if they do otherwise"—WESLEY.

"There are four passages in which S. Paul deals directly with the relations between slaves and their masters—in Eph. 6. 5–9; Col. 3. 22; ch. 4. 1; Phil. 8. 21, and here. Here he looks at the question from the slave's point of view; in the letter to Philemon from that of the master; in the Epistles to the Colossians and to the Ephesians he addresses both. Without attacking the rights of property or existing laws and customs, he spoke a far higher word, and one which sooner or later must carry freedom with it, when he said, 'You must *love* your slaves.' The apostle's injunctions to slaves who have Christian masters is worthy of special attention; it indicates one of the evils which would certainly have become serious, had the apostles set to work to preach emancipation. The slaves being in almost all cases quite unfit for a life of freedom, wholesale emancipation would have flooded society with crowds of persons quite unable to make a decent use of their newly-acquired liberty. S. Paul tells the slave, 'While you are under the yoke prove yourselves worthy of it and capable of bearing it. In becoming Christians you have become Christ's freemen. Show that you can enjoy that liberty without abusing it. If it leads you to treat a heathen master with disdain, because he has it not, then you give him an opportunity of blaspheming God and your holy religion; for he can say, 'What a vile creed this must be, which makes servants haughty and disrespectful. If it leads you to treat a Christian master with contemptuous familiarity, because he recognises you as a brother whom he must love, then you are turning upside down the obligation which a common faith imposes on you. That he is a fellow-Christian is a reason why you should treat him with more reverence, not less.' This is ever the burden of his exhortation to slaves. (See verse following and Tit. 2. 9, 10)"—PLUMMER.

2. **Let them not despise them**—"pay them the less honour or obedience. **Because they are brethren**—and in that respect on a level with them. They that live in a religious community know the danger of this; and that greater grace is requisite to bear with the faults of a brother than of an infidel, or man of the world. **But rather do them service**—serve them so much the more diligently—**because they are** joint **partakers of the** great **benefit** —salvation. **These things**—Paul, the aged, gives young Timotheus a charge to dwell upon

practical holiness. Less experienced teachers are apt to neglect the superstructure, whilst they lay the foundation; but of so great importance did S. Paul see it to enforce obedience to Christ, as well as to preach faith in His blood, that, after strongly urging the life of faith on professors, he even adds another charge for the strict observance of it"—WESLEY.

PLUMMER adds: "We have social difficulties to deal with, whose magnitude and character make them not unlike that of slavery in the first ages of Christianity. There are the relations between capital and labour, the prodigious inequalities in the distribution of wealth. In attempting to remedy such things, let us, while we catch enthusiasm from S. Paul's sympathetic zeal, not forget his patience and discretion. Monstrous evils are not to be slain at a blow. They are deeply rooted; and if we attempt to tear them up, we may pull up the foundations of society along with them. Charity, we know, never faileth; but neither Scripture nor experience has taught us that violence is a sure road to success. We need more faith in the principles of Christianity and in their power to promote happiness as well as godliness. To serve others, to spend and be spent for them, that is the ideal to place before mankind; and just in proportion as it is reached, will the frightful inequalities between class and class, and between man and man, cease to be." "The danger which naturally attended the conversion of slaves to Christianity, that, feeling themselves thus called in the highest sense to an equality with their masters, they might neglect the duties of their station, or at least repine against it, is provided against in various passages of S. Paul's Epistles (1 Cor. 7. 21-24; Eph. 6. 5-8; Col. 3. 22-24; Tit. 2. 9, 10)"—S. C.

3. **If any teach otherwise**—"than strict practical holiness in all its branches. **And consent not to sound words**—*lit.* 'healthful words'; words that have no taint of falsehood, or tendency to encourage sin. **And the doctrine which is after godliness**—exquisitely contrived to answer all the ends, and secure every interest, of real piety"—WESLEY.

"It appears that there were teachers in the Church — a sort of *religious levellers* — who preached that the converted servant had as much right to the master's service as the master had to his. Teachers of this kind have been in vogue long since the days of S. Paul and Timothy. **Wholesome words**—'healing doctrines,' which give *nourishment* and *health* to the soul, which is the true character of all the doctrines taught by our Lord Jesus Christ; doctrines which are **according to godliness**—securing as amply the honour and glory of God, as they do the peace, happiness, and final salvation of men. All this may refer to the general tenor of the gospel, and not to any things said by our Lord relative to the condition of slaves. With political questions, or questions relative to private rights, our Lord scarcely ever meddled; He taught all men to *love one another*, to respect each other's rights; to submit to each other, to show all fidelity, to be obedient, humble, and meek; and to show that His kingdom was not of this world"—CLARKE. These self-willed men, in consenting not to the sublime words of Christ, at the same time refused to acquiesce in the doctrine which insisted upon a holy life; for Christian truth is inseparable from purity, single-heartedness, self-forgetfulness, brave patience.

4. **He is puffed up**—"which is the cause of his not consenting to the doctrine which is after inward, practical religion. By this mark we may know them. **Knowing nothing**—as he ought to know. **Sick of questions**—doatingly fond of dispute—an evil, but common, disease; especially where practice is forgotten. Such, indeed, contend earnestly for singular phrases, and favourite points of their own. Everything else, however, like the preaching of Christ and His apostles, is all 'law,' and 'bondage,' and 'carnal reasoning.' **Strifes of words**—merely verbal controversies. **Whereof cometh envy**—of the gifts and successes of others. **Contention**—for the pre-eminence. Such disputants seldom like the prosperity of others, or to be less esteemed themselves. **Evil surmisings**—it not being their way to think well of those that differ from themselves in opinion"—WESLEY.

He is proud. "S. Paul with righteous anger flames out against these perverse men, who, using the name of Christ, substitute *their* short-sighted views of life for His, throw doubt and discredit upon the teaching of His chosen apostles and servants, stir up discord, excite party spirit, barring, often hopelessly, the onward march of Christianity. The true Christian teaching is healthy, practical, capable of being carried out by all orders in the state, by every age or sex, by bond and free. The spurious Christian maxims of these men deal with subtle, useless, unpractical questions, which have no influence on ordinary life, and only tend to stir up strife and useless inquiry, and to make men discontented and rebellious. These unhappy men he first characterises as 'proud,' *lit.* 'blinded with pride.' **Knowing nothing**—better rendered, 'yet without knowing anything'; having no real conception of the office and work of Christ in the world. S. Paul was writing, then, in the Spirit of the living God, and was warning no solitary pastor and friend at Ephesus of the weeds then springing up in that fair, newly-planted vineyard of his, but was addressing the Master's servants in many vineyards and of many ages; was telling them what would meet them, what would mar and spoil their work, and in not a few cases would break their hearts with sorrow"—C. B.

5. **Supposing that gain is godliness**—

"thinking the best religion is the getting of money—a far more common case than is usually supposed"—WESLEY.

"What S. Paul says of the opinions of these perverted men is not that they supposed **gain to be godliness**, but that they supposed 'godliness to be a means of gain.' They considered godliness, or rather the 'form of godliness' which was all they really possessed, to be a profitable investment. Christianity to them was a profession in the mercantile sense, and a profession that paid; and they embarked upon it, just as they would upon any other speculation which offered equally good hopes of being remunerative"—PLUMMER.

6. **But godliness with content**—"the inseparable companion of true, vital religion—**is great gain**—brings unspeakable profit in time, as well as in eternity"—WESLEY.

"The reasoning in the writer's mind was, probably, these false men suppose godliness will be turned into gain. Yes, though *they* were terribly mistaken, still there *is* a sense in which their miserable notion is true. True godliness is ever accompanied with perfect contentment. In this sense, godliness *does* bring along with it great gain to its possessor"—ELLICOTT. "The heart, amid every outward want, is only truly rich when it not only wants nothing which it has not, but has that which raises it above what it has not"—WIESINGER. **Great gain.** "There *is* a sense in which the sentiment of these men is true, if godliness is coupled with contentment, instead of covetousness, and its gain measured not by this life only but by eternity"—S. C.

7. **Neither can we carry anything out**—"to what purpose, then, do we heap together so many things? Oh, give me one thing—a safe and ready passage to my own country"—WESLEY.

"With a view to enforce what he has said S. Paul repeats two well-known and indisputable propositions—**we brought nothing into the world** and **we can carry nothing out.** Each statement, singly, has been abundantly proved by the experience of mankind, and no one would be likely to dispute either. One of the earliest books in human literature has them as its opening moral. 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither,' are Job's words in the day of his utter ruin; and they have been assented to by millions of hearts ever since. What right then have we to be discontented with what has been given to us? and what folly to spend all our time in amassing wealth, which at the time of our departure we shall be obliged to leave behind us! *There* is the case against avarice in a nutshell. Never contented. What a contrast to the godly man, who has found true independence in a trustful dependence upon the God whom he serves"—PLUMMER.

8. **Covering**—"that is, raiment and an house to cover us. This is all that a Christian needs, and all that his religion allows him to desire"—WESLEY.

The Greek word rendered **let us be content** is better translated "we shall have a sufficiency." The argument will run thus: "All earthly possessions are only for this life; here, if we have the wherewithal to clothe us and to nourish us, we shall have enough"; if we have more than this, S. Paul goes on to show, we shall be in danger of falling into temptation.

9. **They that desire to be rich**—"to have more than these; for then they would be so far rich, and the very desire banishes content, and exposes them to ruin. **Fall**—'plunge'—a sad gradation!—**into temptation**—miserable food for the soul!—**and a snare**—or trap. Dreadful 'covering'! **And into many foolish and hurtful desires**—which are sown and fed by having more than we need. Then farewell all hope of content! What then remains, but **destruction** for the body, and **perdition** for the soul?"—WESLEY.

Who wish to be rich—"make riches the object of their desire; for it is possible, as S. Chrysostom says, for one who has riches to employ them rightly while he sets no value on them. **A snare**—probably 'of the devil,' as ch. 3. 7. **Drown men in**—*lit.* 'sink men in the depths of'"—S. C. (See Prov. 28. 20.) **Destruction and perdition**—"'destruction' refers rather to wreck and ruin of the body, whilst 'perdition' belongs rather to that more awful ruin of the eternal soul. The gratification of desires, whether these desires are centred in the lower animal passions of the table, or in the pursuit of yet baser and more selfish passions still, invariably leads to the destruction of the poor frail human body first. This premature breaking up of the earthly tabernacle is the herald and precursor of the final perdition of the immortal soul"—ELLICOTT.

10. **Love of money**—"commonly called 'prudent care of what a man has'—**is the root**—the parent **of all** manner of **evils—which some coveting have erred**—*lit.* 'missed the mark.' They aimed not at **faith**, but at something else—**and pierced themselves with many sorrows**—from a guilty conscience, tormenting passions, desires contrary to reason, religion, and one another. How cruel are worldly men to themselves!"—WESLEY.

"This passage, in connection with ver. 7, appears to have been quoted from memory by Polycarp: 'But the beginning of all difficulties is covetousness. Knowing then that we brought nothing into the world, and that neither have we anything to carry out, let us arm ourselves,' etc. **Many sorrows**—such as anxieties, disappointments, desires, and pangs of conscience"—S. C. "His case is one of the most hopeless, whose desire for worldly advantage has settled down into a mere love of money. There is no vice more deadening

to every noble and tender feeling than avarice. It is capable of extinguishing all mercy, all pity, all natural affection. It can banish from the heart not only all love, but all shame and self-respect. Assuredly the apostle is right when he calls the love of money a **root of all kinds of evil.** There is no iniquity to which it does not form one of the nearest roads. Every criminal who wants an accomplice can have the avaricious man as his helper, if he only bids high enough"—PLUMMER.

11. **But thou, O man of God**—"whatever else all the world do. A 'man of God' is either a prophet, a messenger of God, or a man devoted to God; a man of another world. **Flee**—as from a serpent, instead of coveting **these things. Follow after righteousness**—the whole image of God; though sometimes this word is used, not in the general, but in the particular acceptation, meaning only that single branch of it which is termed 'justice.' **Faith**—which is also taken here in the general and full sense—namely, a Divine, supernatural sight of God, chiefly in respect of His mercy in Christ. This 'faith' is the foundation of 'righteousness,' the support of **godliness,** the root of every grace of the Spirit. **Love**—this S. Paul intermixes with everything that is good: he, as it were, penetrates whatever he treats of with 'love,' the glorious spring of all inward and outward holiness"—WESLEY.

"It is not clear whether this appellative is addressed to Timothy as a Christian or as a minister. In a very true sense all Christians should be men of God; but to Timothy, who from a child had known the Scriptures, the name would suggest the prophet who came to Bethel (1 Kings 13. 1), Elijah and Ezekiel, and the lives and habits of these holy men, so opposed to covetousness and luxury. **Flee these things**—avarice and all the sins which grow from that root"—S. C. Christ cautions His disciples to beware of worldliness. (Luke 21. 34.) "Gold and popularity, gain and ease, were to be won with the sacrifice of *apparently* so little, but with this sacrifice Timothy would cease to be the **man of God.** To maintain that S. Paul was aware of any weakness *already* shown by his disciple and friend would, of course, be a baseless assertion; but that the older man dreaded for the younger these dangerous influences is clear. The term 'man of God' was the common Old Testament name for 'Divine messengers,' but under the new covenant the name seems extended to all just men faithful to the Lord Jesus. (See 2 Tim. 3. 17.) The solemn warning, then, through Timothy comes to each of His servants, **Flee thou from covetousness. And follow after righteousness.** 'The evil must be overcome with good' (Rom. 12. 21). The 'man of God,' tossing away from him all covetous longings, must press after 'righteousness'; here used in a general sense, signifying 'the inner life shaped after the Law of God.' **Faith, love**—the two characteristic virtues of Christianity. The one may be termed the hand that lays hold of God's mercy, and the other the mainspring of the Christian's life. **Patience** — that brave patience which, for Christ's sake, with a smile can bear up against all sufferings. **Meekness**—the meekness of heart and feeling with which a Christian acts towards his enemies. His conduct who 'when He was reviled, reviled not again' best exemplifies this virtue"—SPENCE.

12. **Fight the good fight of faith**—"not about words. **Lay hold on eternal life**—just before thee. **Thou hast confessed the good confession**—perhaps at his baptism: so likewise (ver. 13); but with a remarkable variation of the expression. **Thou hast confessed the good confession before many witnesses**—to which they all assented. He 'witnessed the good confession,' but Pilate did not assent to it"—WESLEY.

"Again, with the old stirring metaphor of the Olympic contests for a prize (1 Cor. 9. 24; Phil. 3. 13, 14)—the metaphor S. Paul loved so well, and which Timothy must have heard so often from his old master's lips as he preached and taught—he bids the 'man of God,' rising above the pitiful struggles for things perishable and useless, fight the noble fight of faith; bids him strive to lay hold of the *real* prize — life eternal. The emphasis rests here mainly on the words **the good fight** and **eternal life.** These things are placed in strong contrast with 'the struggle of the covetous' and its 'miserable, perishable crown.' 'The good fight,' more closely considered, is the contest and struggle which the Christian has to maintain against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is styled the 'good fight of faith,' partly because the contest is waged on behalf of, for the sake of, the faith, but still more because from faith it derives its strength and draws its courage. **Eternal life** is the prize the 'man of God' must ever have before his eyes. It is the crown of life which the Judge of quick and dead will give to the 'faithful unto death.' (See Jas. 1. 12; Rev. 2. 10.) **Whereunto thou art also called.** The 'calling' here refers both to the inner and outward call to the Master's work. The inner call is the persuasion in the heart that the one vocation to which the life must be dedicated was the ministry of the word; and the outward call is the summons by S. Paul, ratified by the Church in the persons of the presbyters of Lystra"—C. B.

13. **I charge thee before God who quickeneth all things**—"who hath quickened thee, and will quicken thee at the great day"—WESLEY.

"The apostle having reminded Timothy of the confession of faith he made in the presence of many witnesses, now gives him charge, in the face of a more tremendous presence, not to disgrace it by failing to keep the commandment

which the gospel imposes on the Christian"—ELLICOTT.

15. **Which**—"appearing. **In His own times**—the power, the knowledge, and the revelation of which remain in His eternal mind"—WESLEY.

In His own times—"ordained by Him, and known only to Him. **The blessed**, etc. These titles are applied to God the Son in Rev. 17. 14; 19. 16"—S. C.

16. **Who only hath** underived, independent, **immortality. Dwelling in light unapproachable**—to the highest angel. **Whom no man hath seen, or can see**—with bodily eyes. Yet 'we *shall* see Him as He is'"—WESLEY.

Immortality — "essential and underived, He being the essence and fount of all life. (John 5. 26.) **Dwelling in the light**, etc. Yet our Lord says of the pure in heart that 'they shall see God' (Matt. 5. 8), and holiness is a condition 'without which no man shall see the Lord' (Heb. 12. 14). The word 'see' must therefore be used in a different sense. Bishop Pearson distinguishes thus: God is invisible to the natural eye, both in man's natural and supernatural state; but the invisibility of the Divine essence does not prevent our clear *intellectual* vision of Him in our supernatural state. It has been thought that vers. 15, 16 are part of an ecclesiastical hymn"—S. C.

17. What follows seems to be a kind of a postscript. **Charge the rich in this world**—rich in such beggarly riches as *this world* affords. **Not to be highminded**—oh who regards this! Not to think better of themselves for their money, or anything it can purchase. **Neither to trust in uncertain riches** — which they may lose in an hour; either for happiness or defence—**but in the living God**—all the rest is dead clay. **Who giveth us**—as it were holding them out to us in His hand. **All things**—which we have. **Richly**—freely, abundantly. **To enjoy**—as His gift, in Him and for Him. When we use them thus, we do indeed 'enjoy' all things. Where else is there any notice taken of the 'rich,' in all the apostolic writings, save to denounce woes and vengeance upon them?"—WESLEY.

Charge them that are rich. "S. Paul had traced up the error of the false teachers—against whose work and influence he had so earnestly warned Timothy—to covetousness, to an unholy love of money; he then spoke of this unhappy covetousness—this greed of gain, *this wish to be rich*—as the root of every evil. From this fatal snare he warned the 'man of God' to flee, bidding him take courage in the high service to which he was dedicated, and to be fearless of all consequences, for he served the King of kings. But in the congregations of Ephesus there were many, owing to birth or to other circumstances, already rich and powerful, already in the possession of gold and rank, in varied degrees. Before closing the letter to the chief pastor, Timothy, he must add a word of encouragement and also of special warning to these. Above all things, he would have no mistake as to his meaning; the *wish to be rich* was a sure root of error and of evil, but the *being rich* was a very different thing; this class was surrounded, indeed, with special perils, but still, even *as rich* they might serve God faithfully. So in his charge to them he commands them not to strip themselves of their wealth, but to use it wisely, generously. **Who giveth us**, etc. The rich should set their affections and place their trust, not in these uncertain riches, but in God, the bestower of them, who wills, too, that His creatures should find pleasure in these His gifts—given to us to enjoy. This is another of the many sayings of the old man S. Paul, in which he urges on the people of God, that their kind Master in heaven not only allows men reasonable pleasures and gratifications, but even Himself abundantly provide such for them"—C. B.

18. **To do good**—"to make this their daily employ, that they may **be rich**—may abound **in** all **good works. Ready to distribute**—singly to particular persons. **Willing to communicate**—to join in all public works of charity"—WESLEY.

"Rather, **free in giving, ready in sharing**, *i.e.* with others. These words seem to point to the highest enjoyment procurable by these **rich**—the luxury of doing good, of helping others to be happy, the only enjoyment that never fails, never disappoints. **Ready to distribute, willing to communicate.** In distinguishing between these words, which are nearly synonymous, the first points rather to the hand which generously *gives*, and the second to the heart which lovingly *sympathises*. The first obeys willingly the Master's charge, 'Give to him that asketh'; the second follows that loving command which bids His own to rejoice with those that rejoice, and to mourn with those that mourn"—ELLICOTT.

19. **Treasuring up for themselves a good foundation**—"of an abundant reward, by the free mercy of God—**that they may lay hold on eternal life.** This cannot be done by almsdeeds; yet they 'come up for a memorial before God' (Acts 10. 4). And the lack even of this may be the cause why God will withhold grace and salvation from us"—WESLEY.

(Comp. our Lord's words in Luke 16. 9, where the same truth is taught, and a similar promise made.)

20. **Keep that which is committed to thy care**—"the charge I have given thee (ch. 1. 18.) **Avoid profane empty babblings.** How weary of controversy was this acute disputant! **And knowledge falsely so called**—most of the ancient heretics were great pretenders to knowledge"—WESLEY.

That which is committed to thy trust. "The words following prove by the contrast that it is the deposit of sound doctrine, which

it had been entrusted to Timothy to keep and to teach. **Science**—rather, 'the knowledge.' 'The oppositions' were probably the attacks of those who were already beginning to arrogate to their teaching the name of gnosis, 'knowledge,' and were introducing the different elements which afterwards made up the systems called Gnosticism"—S. C.

21. **Which some professing have erred concerning the faith.** In this most probably wild and visionary "knowledge," the false teachers and their hearers sought salvation and a rule of life, and they miserably failed in their efforts. The result with them was, that they lost all hold on the great doctrine of faith in a crucified Saviour.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

"THIS Epistle was probably wrote by S. Paul, during his second confinement at Rome, not long before his martyrdom. It is, as it were, the swan's dying song. But though it was wrote many years after the former, yet they are both of the same kind, and nearly resemble each other.

"IT HAS THREE PARTS—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1, 2.
II. An Invitation, 'Come to me,' variously expressed—
1. Having declared his love to Timothy, . . . ,, ,, 3–5.
He exhorts him, 'Be not ashamed of me,' . . ,, ,, 6–14.
And subjoins various examples, ... ,, ,, 15–18.
2. He adds the twofold proposition—
(1) 'Be strong';
(2) 'Commit the ministry' to faithful men, . ,, ii. 1, 2.
The former is treated of, ... ,, ,, 3–13.
The latter, ... ,, ,, 14.
With further directions concerning his own behaviour, ... Chap. ii. 15—iv. 8.
3. 'Come quickly,' . . . . . Chap. iv. 9.
Here S. Paul:
(1) Mentions his being left alone, . . . ,, ,, 10–12.
(2) Directs to bring his books, . . . ,, ,, 13.
(3) Gives a caution concerning Alexander, . . ,, ,, 14, 15.
(4) Observes the inconstancy of men, and the faithfulness of God, ... ,, ,, 16–18.
4. 'Come before winter.' Salutations, . . . ,, ,, 19–21.
III. The Concluding Blessing, ... ,, ,, 22."
—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1, 2. ADDRESS AND SALUTATION.—**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.**—As in the Epistles to the Corinthians, the Ephesians, and Colossians, he ascribes his apostleship to the sovereign will and election of God. Apart from any merit or work of his own, God chose him for the office. He neither aspired to it nor wished for it. The reference to the Almighty will in this Epistle is singularly in harmony with the spirit of calm resignation which breathes through it. It was that sovereign will which chose him as an apostle, which guided him all through that eventful life of his, and which brought him to the prison of Cæsar, where, face to face with death, he wrote this last letter to his friend and disciple Timothy.

2. Timothy was S. Paul's own son in the faith, and he was also dearly beloved.

Vers. 3–5. EXPRESSIONS OF AFFECTION.—3.

Whom I serve from my forefathers—"that is, whom both I and my ancestors served—**with a pure conscience.** He always worshipped God according to his conscience, both before and after his conversion. One who stands on the verge of life is much refreshed by the remembrance of his predecessors, to whom he is going"—WESLEY.

"**Whom I serve from my forefathers**—that is, with the devotion and love I have inherited as a sacred family tradition. S. Paul was here referring, not to the great forefathers of the Jewish race—Abraham, Isaac, and the patriarchs—but to the members of his own family, who, he states, were religious, faithful persons. **That without ceasing I have remembrance of thee**—better rendered, 'as unceasing is the remembrance which . . .' This long parenthetical sentence leads up to the point for which S. Paul was so deeply thankful to God—namely, the true faith of Timothy himself. These unstudied words tell us something of the inner life of such a one as S. Paul, how ceaselessly, unweariedly he prayed, night as well as day. The object, too, of S. Paul was not S. Paul, but Timothy"—SPENCE.

4. **Being mindful of thy tears**—"perhaps frequently shed, as well as at the apostle's last parting with him"—WESLEY.

Thy tears—"shed probably by Timothy when his aged master had last taken leave of him. It is likely that the clouds of danger which were gathering thickly round S. Paul towards the close of his career had oppressed the brave-hearted apostle with a foreboding of coming evil, and had invested the last parting with Timothy with circumstances of unusual solemnity. S. Paul had affected others besides Timothy with the same great love, so that tears were shed by strong men when he bade them farewell. (See Acts 20. 37, 38)"—ELLICOTT.

5. **Which dwelt**—"a word not applied to a transient guest, but only to a settled inhabitant—**first**—probably this was before Timothy was born, yet not beyond S. Paul's memory"—WESLEY.

We know, in the course of his second missionary journey (Acts 16. 1-3), S. Paul was brought into contact with this pious family at Lystra. Timothy owed much of his spiritual life and godly character to the gracious influences of his early home life. "The mothers of the kings of Judah are constantly mentioned, and, as they were good or evil, so were their children"—TRAPP.

Vers. 6-14. EXHORTATION TO EARNESTNESS AND FIDELITY.—6. **Wherefore**—"because I remember this—**I remind thee of stirring up**—*lit.* blowing up the coals into a flame—**the gift of God**—all the spiritual gifts, which the grace of God has given thee"—WESLEY.

"**Stir up**—kindle into a flame, as a fire in danger of smouldering out. **The gift of God**, etc. The special gift (as in 1 Tim. 4. 14), bestowed by God on Timothy at his ordination, to qualify him for, and to give effect to, the work of the ministry, the outward sign of obsignation and imparting of which was the imposition of the hands of the apostle, together with those of the body of the presbyters"—S. C.

7. "And let nothing discourage thee, **for God hath not given us.** That is, the spirit which God hath given us Christians, is **not the spirit of fear**—or cowardice—**but of power**—banishing fear—**and love and sobriety.** These animate us in our duties to God, our brethren, and ourselves. 'Power' and 'sobriety' are two good extremes. 'Love' is between, the tie and temperament of both; preventing the two bad extremes of fearfulness and rashness. More is said concerning power, ver. 8; concerning love, 2 Tim. 2. 14, etc.; concerning sobriety, 2 Tim. 3. 1, etc."—WESLEY.

"The spirit with which we are endowed is a spirit of **power**, whereas a spirit of fearfulness is weak. Faintheartedness cannot be strong. It is only by acting, and by acting vigorously and courageously, that we find out the full power of the spirit with which we have been blessed. **Of love**—which more than anything else casts out the spirit of fear. Moreover, the spirit of love teaches us the nature of the gift of power. It is not force or violence; not an imposing of our own will on others. It is an affectionate striving to win others over to obedience to the will of God. It is the spirit of self-sacrifice, not of self-assertion. **And of a sound mind** (R.V. 'discipline'). By discipline that cowardly indolence, which the spirit of fearfulness engenders, can be kept down and expelled"—PLUMMER.

8. **Therefore be not thou ashamed**—"when fear is banished, shame also flees away—**of the testimony of our Lord**—the gospel and of testifying the truth of it to all men. **Nor of me**—the cause of the servants of God doing His work, cannot be separated from the cause of God Himself. **But be thou partaker of the afflictions**—which I endure for the gospel's sake. **According to the power of God**—this which overcomes all things is nervously described in the two next verses"—WESLEY.

"**The testimony of our Lord**—*i.e.* of bearing testimony, as an Evangelist, to the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, doctrine, and precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Comp. Acts 1. 8.) **Nor of me His prisoner.** A prisoner, indeed, but the Lord's prisoner, not only for His sake, but by His will. **According to the power of God.** Either 'in accordance with the power of His grace working in us and enabling us,' or, 'in accordance with the power which He has displayed in saving us'"—S. C. This **testimony**, of which Timothy was not to be ashamed, of course includes the sufferings and the shame of Christ. In these,

before mocking, scornful men, must Timothy, as an example to the flock, rather glory; but "the testimony" signifies much more than what relates only to the Passion story. The Christian, instead of being ashamed of his "profession," must before the world show fearlessly that its hopes and its promises are his most precious treasure. Neither Timothy, nor any Christian must shrink from openly espousing the unpopular cause of the Crucified, or from publicly declaring their sympathy with its hated martyrs.

9. **Who hath saved us**—"by faith. The love of the Father, the grace of our Saviour, and the whole economy of salvation, are here admirably described. **Having called us with an holy calling**—which is all from God, and claims us all for God. **According to His own purpose and grace**—that is, His own gracious purpose—**which was given us**—fixed for our advantage, **before the world began**"——WESLEY.

CALVIN pithily remarks: "If God chose us before the creation of the world, He could not have considered the question of our works, which could have had no existence at a period when we ourselves were not." And ELLICOTT says: "S. Paul now specifies the manner in which the power of God has been displayed toward us. **Who hath saved us.** This comprehends all God's dealings with us in respect to our redemption. Again, as so frequently in these Pastoral Epistles, is the First Person of the blessed Trinity referred to as the Saviour."

10. **By the appearing of our Saviour.** "This implies His whole abode upon earth. **Who hath abolished death**—taken away its sting, and turned it into a blessing. **And hath brought life and immortality to light**—hath clearly revealed by **the gospel** that immortal life which He hath purchased for us"—WESLEY.

"**Now made manifest.** (Comp. Tit. 2. 11, 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared.') **The appearing.** Here and in Tit. 2. 11, the incarnation, life, and ministry **of our Saviour Jesus Christ,** elsewhere usually of His return in glory. **Who hath abolished death**—rather, 'taken from death its power,' rendered it impotent. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 26, 55, and Heb. 2. 14, 15.) **And hath brought,** etc.—rather 'hath thrown light upon,' hath lit up man's true and endless life, and the incorruption of his whole being, body and soul. These were truths before, but indistinct and lost in gloom; but the Light of the world, at His appearing, shone upon them; and they stand out distinct, as objects of faith and 'blessed hope.' **Through the gospel**—the instrumental means of making known the appearing of the Saviour, with all which He revealed"—S. C. "**Who hath abolished death**—more accurately, 'when He abolished or made of none effect.' The Greek word thus rendered, signifies that, by the action of the Lord, death was rendered inoperative, comparatively harmless; its sting was removed. The 'death' thus made of none effect has a far more extended meaning than that separation of soul and body we are in the habit of calling death. It signifies that awful punishment of sin which is best described as the exact opposite to 'eternal life.' The death we are acquainted with by sad experience here is only the forerunner of the death eternal. Already to the believers in Jesus this death of the body counts for nothing; the time will come when it will even exist no more. **And hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.** The Greek word rendered 'immortality' is more accurately translated by 'incorruption.' 'Life' here is that true life, in its highest and completest sense, which includes the most perfect happiness—a happiness a foretaste of which is enjoyed on this side the grave; over it (this bliss) death now has no power"—C. B.

12. **That which I have committed to Him**—"my soul—**until that day**—of His final appearing"—WESLEY.

S. Paul had entrusted his deathless soul to the keeping of his Heavenly Father, and having done this, serene and joyful, he waited for the end. His disciple Timothy must do the same. So may every man who can say, **For I know whom I have believed**—or better rendered, "whom I have trusted."

13. **The pattern of sound words**—"the model of pure wholesome doctrine"—WESLEY.

"The very frequent reference to the **sound healthy words** in these Epistles by S. Paul, and from which he urges his disciples never to depart, indicate to us the deep importance S. Paul and the first generation of believers attached to the very words and expressions used by the apostles and those who had been with the Lord"—ELLICOTT.

14. **The good thing**—"this wholesome doctrine"—WESLEY.

Rather, **Guard that good deposit**—of a sound faith to be held by himself and taught to others. "S. Paul," says BENGEL, "when his departure was at hand, had two deposits: one to be committed to God, the other to Timothy."

Vers. 15–2. 26. REFERENCE TO SOME WHO HAD FALLEN AWAY FROM THE FAITH, AND EXHORTATION TO TIMOTHY TO STEADFASTNESS. —15. **All who are in Asia**—"who had attended me at Rome for a while—**are turned away from me.** What! from Paul the aged, the faithful soldier, and now prisoner of Christ! This was a glorious trial, and wisely reserved for that time, when he was on the borders of immortality. Perhaps a little measure of the same spirit might remain with him under whose picture are those affecting words, 'The true effigy of Francis Xavier, Apostle of the Indies; forsaken of all men; dying in a cottage'"—WESLEY.

The geographical term Asia is rather vague. It may, and indeed strictly speaking, does, include, Mysia, Phrygia, Lydia, Caria; but such a widespread defection from Pauline teaching seems improbable, and there is no tradition that anything of the kind ever took place. **Of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.** "These names would at once suggest to Timothy the men and the congregations of 'Asia' to whom S. Paul was alluding—names well known doubtless, then, and especially to persons in the position of Timothy; but no tradition has been preserved which throws any light on the lives and actions of these traitorous friends of S. Paul"—ELLICOTT.

16. **The family of Onesiphorus**—"as well as himself—**hath often refreshed me**—both at Ephesus and Rome"—WESLEY.

"**All** I said, yet not quite all; there are exceptions. There is the household of Onesiphorus: may God have mercy upon it and him. **Ashamed of my chain.** A prisoner in free custody was chained by *one* wrist to the soldier who kept him. (See Acts 28. 16.) This may be the explanation of the singular 'chain,' and a natural and undesigned coincidence between the Epistle and the fact"—S. C.

17. **Very diligently.** Bishop Pearson, assuming that the greater diligence was rendered necessary by the greater severity of S. Paul's captivity, argues hence for the fact of a second captivity.

18. **The Lord**, thus repeated, may be little more than the reciprocal pronoun "himself," a little emphasised (Bengel), especially if the expression "may the Lord" (Alford) had become a formula of prayer and blessing.

CHAPTER II.

1. **Thou, therefore.** Since all in Asia, with some few exceptions, such as Onesiphorus and his family, have turned away from me, do thou, then, **be strong**, but not as men understand strength or firmness; but do thou be strong **in the grace that is in Christ Jesus**—that is, be strong in the power of that inward sanctification which enables a man to will and to do according to what God has commanded, in the power of that inward sanctification which alone proceeds from Christ, and which will never be wanting to anyone who is in Christ; in other words, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6. 10). In his own strength he will be able to do nothing, but in the grace which Christ freely bestows on all believers who ask it of Him, Timothy will be able to find all he needs.

2. **The things**—"the wholesome doctrine. (2 Tim. 1. 13.) **Commit**—before thou leavest Ephesus—**to faithful men who will be able**, after thou art gone, **to teach others**"—WESLEY.

"This may be considered as the earliest trace of the formation of *a theological school*, a school which has for its object not merely the instruction of the ignorant, but the protection and maintenance of a definite body of doctrine. That which the apostle, when he was in Ephesus, publicly taught, under the sanction of a multitude of witnesses, is to be preserved and handed on without compromise or corruption as a pattern of wholesome doctrine"—PLUMMER.

3, 4, 5. **No man that warreth entangleth himself**—"any more than is unavoidable—**in the affairs of this life**—with worldly business or cares—**that**—minding war only—**he may please** his captain. In this and the next verse there is a plain allusion to the Roman law of arms, and to that of the Grecian games. According to the former, no soldier was to engage in any civil employment; according to the latter, none could be crowned as conqueror who did not keep strictly to the rules of the game"—WESLEY.

"In this passage S. Paul makes use of three figures: *husbandry*, *athletic contest*, and *military service*. The last-named is the illustration he most frequently uses. Every Christian, and especially every Christian minister, may be regarded as a soldier, as an athlete, as a husbandman; but, of the three similitudes, the one which fits him best is that of a soldier. Military service involves self-sacrifice, endurance, discipline, vigilance, obedience, ready co-operation with others, sympathy, enthusiasm, loyalty. It implies also vigilant, unwearying, and organised opposition to a vigilant, unwearying, and organised foe. S. Paul does not suggest that Christians should keep aloof from the affairs of this life, which would be a flat contradiction of what he teaches elsewhere. (1 Thess. 4. 11, 12.) He has a duty to perform **in the affairs of this life**, but in doing it he is not to be **entangled** in them. They are means, not ends; and must be made to help him on, not suffered to keep him back. If they become entanglements instead of opportunities, he will soon lose that state of constant preparation and alertness which is the indispensable condition of success"—PLUMMER.

6, 7. "Unless he **labour first** he will reap no fruit"—WESLEY.

"It is the enduring, patient, self-sacrificing toil that is rewarded in the affairs of common life—the man that 'endures hardness,' whether as a soldier, or athlete, or tiller of the ground, wins the reward; and as in the world, so in religion. Further on in the Epistle the apostle speaks of *his* having won the crown of righteousness. *He* had *endured hardness* of every conceivable kind; every affliction for the Lord's sake he had endured save death, and *that* he was expecting, and knew it could not long tarry. The teaching of S. Paul in this triple picture is—not *every* soldier wins his commander's applause, but only the veteran who devotes himself heart and soul to his profession; not *every* athlete wins the crown or prize, but only he who trains with anxious,

painful care; not *every* tiller of the ground gathers the earth's fruits, but only the patient toiler. So must it be in religious life. It is not enough to *say* we are Christians, or even to *wish* to be of the brotherhood of Christ. Men must really *live* the life they say they love"—SPENCE.

8. **Of the seed of David**—"this one genealogy attend to"—WESLEY.

Remember—"bear in mind. The connection seems to be, But with all its toils and sufferings the gospel has also its stores of abounding consolation. The remembrance of the risen and victorious Saviour is the comfort and support of His ministers"—S. C.

9. **Is not bound**—"not hindered in its course"—WESLEY.

I.e. although they may bind *me*, while I am in prison at Rome, the gospel is running its free course over the whole Roman world.

10. **Therefore**—"encouraged by this, that 'the word of God is not bound'—**I endure all things.** See the spirit of a real Christian! Who would not wish to be like-minded? **Salvation** is deliverance from all evil; **glory**, the enjoyment of all good"—WESLEY.

"The question has been often asked, whether those **elect** for whom the apostle endured these things were, when he wrote these words, *believers*. It may be answered, with some certainty, that the **elect** here spoken of include both believers and unbelievers. The first, the believer, would in all ages be built up by the contemplation of the steadfastness under the suffering of S. Paul; the second, the unbeliever, would be won to the faith by the divinely-inspired arguments and exhortations which the brave old man ceaselessly spoke or wrote down in prison just as when free"—ELLICOTT.

11. **Dead with Him**—"dead to sin, and ready to die for Him"—WESLEY.

Death with Him involves, surely, **life** with Him too? In that life of His we shall share; we shall be partakers in this life of His *there*, but only if we have shared in the life of suffering which was His life *here*.

12. **If we deny Him**—"to escape suffering for Him"—WESLEY.

"This sentence is a contrast with the two preceding. (Comp. Matt. 10. 33; 2 Pet. 2. 1; Jude 4.) The words here refer specially to the verbal denial of Christ, made through fear of suffering. If we prove so unfaithful, **He will not recognise us as His own**, the result of which will be that we remain in a state without grace and without blessing"—HUTHER.

13. **If we believe not**—"that is, though some believe not, God will make good all His promises to them that do believe—**He cannot deny Himself**—His word cannot fa "—WESLEY.

"**If we believe not**—better rendered 'if we are faithless'—that is, untrue to the vows of our Christian profession. The faithlessness implies more than mere unbelief in any of the fundamental doctrines of the faith, such as the resurrection of the Lord or His divinity. **Yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself**—those who have understood these words as containing soothing, comforting voices for the sinner, for the faithless Christian who has left his first love, are gravely mistaken. The passage is one of distinct severity, may even be termed one of the sternest in the Book of Life; for it tells how it is impossible even for the pitiful Redeemer to forgive in the future life. 'He cannot deny Himself'—cannot treat the faithless as though he were faithful, cannot act as though faithfulness and faithlessness were one and the same thing. The Christian teacher, such as Timothy, and the members of his flock likewise, must remember that, sure and certain as are the promises of glory and happiness to those who love the Lord and try to live His life, so surely will fall the chastisement on all who are faithless and untrue. With the solemn words of this 'faithful saying' S. Paul closes this, the second division of his Epistle—fellowship in the sufferings of Christ *here*, on this side the grave, and fellowship in the glory of Christ *there*, on the other side the grave—the one side was the sure consequence of the other; the one could not exist without the other"—SPENCE.

14. **Remind them**—"who are under thy charge. Oh how many unnecessary things are thus unprofitably, nay hurtfully, contended for"—WESLEY.

"**Charging them**, etc. Solemnly charging them in the presence of the Lord (see 1 Tim. 5. 21) not to dispute about words (1 Tim. 6. 4), useful for nothing, tending to the subversion, the overthrow, rather than the edification or the building up of the hearers"—S. C. "The spirit of controversy is a bad thing in itself, but the evil is intensified when the subject of controversy is a question of words. Principles are things worth striving about, when opposition to what we know to be right and true is unavoidable. But disputatiousness about words is something like proof that love of self has taken the place of love of truth"—PLUMMER.

15. **A workman that needeth not to be ashamed**—"either of unfaithfulness or unskilfulness. **Rightly dividing the word of truth**—duly explaining and applying the whole Scripture, so as to give each hearer his due portion. But they that give one part of the gospel to all (the promises and comforts to unawakened, hardened, scoffing men) have real need to be ashamed"—WESLEY.

Rightly dividing, etc.—*lit.* "cutting straight." "The figure has been very variously derived: from a priest dividing the victim, a steward distributing the bread or stores, a stonemason, a carpenter, a ploughman, a road-cutter. The last has been most frequently adopted. Perhaps they are right who, like Huther and Alford, consider that the figure

had become almost lost sight of in common usage, and that the word had come to mean little more than to 'manage' or administer"—S. C.

16. **They** — "who babble thus will grow worse and worse"—WESLEY.

"These empty profanities, with their philosophic pretentiousness, had done much harm already, and would do still more; for the men who propagate them would certainly go still greater lengths in impiety; and they must receive no encouragement"—PLUMMER.

17. **And their word**—"if they go on, will be mischievous as well as vain, and **will eat as a gangrene**"—WESLEY.

"The substitution of gangrene for **cancer** is an improvement, as giving the exact word used in the original. Gangrene poisons the whole frame, and quickly becomes fatal. The apostle foresees that doctrines, which really ate out the very heart of Christianity, were likely to become very popular in Ephesus, and would do incalculable mischief. The nature of these doctrines we gather from what follows"—PLUMMER.

18. **Saying the resurrection is already past**—"perhaps asserting that it is only the spiritual passing from death unto life"—WESLEY.

"**Who concerning the truth have erred**—or, 'have erred,' or, more literally, 'have missed their aim.' The resurrection of the body, grounded upon the Lord's own words (John 5. 28, 29) was one of the articles of the Christian faith upon which S. Paul especially loved to dwell. (See, for instance, his words before Felix, Acts 24. 15.) With this 'resurrection of the body,' S. Paul, prompted by the Holy Ghost, taught men that the future state of rewards and punishments was intimately bound up; the soul will be clothed with a body of glory or with a body of shame, according to the deeds done in the flesh. This doctrine appears in very early times to have been questioned by some in the Christian community. Then, as now, was the thought repugnant to the shrinking soul of man—that the body in which he then lived and sinned would rise again"—SPENCE.

19. **But the foundation of God** — "His truth and faithfulness — **standeth fast**—can never be overthrown; being as it were sealed with a seal, which has an inscription on each side—on the one, **The Lord knoweth those that are His**; on the other, **Let everyone who nameth the name of the Lord**, as His Lord, **depart from iniquity.** Indeed, they only are His who depart from iniquity. To all others He will say, 'I know you not' (Matt. 7. 22, 23)"—WESLEY.

"**Nevertheless, God's firm foundation standeth.** Nevertheless, that is to say, though some may be shaken in faith by the unhappy teaching above referred to, yet assuredly God's firm foundation stands unshaken. 'The firm foundation laid by God' is the Church of Christ, which is here termed 'a foundation' laid by God, because it, the Church of Christ, is the ground-storey of the glorious temple of the future. In other words, the Church of Christ is here considered as the foundation of a far grander building, which, in the fulness of time, will rest upon its massive work (see Eph. 2. 19–21); and this ground-storey, the corner-stone of which is Christ, 'standeth age after age, in spite of any efforts which may be made to destroy or even to shake it.' The term 'foundation,' here used for the Church of God on earth, is remarkable, and points to a great truth: that after all, this life is but a beginning, and that 'His Church' here is but a foundation—is only the first and early storey of that glorious Church the Divine Architect has planned, and will complete in heaven"—C. B.

20. **But in a great house**—"such as the Church, it is not strange that **there are not only vessels of gold and silver**, designed for honourable uses, **but also of wood and of earth**—for less honourable purposes. Yet a vessel even of gold may be put to the vilest use, though it was not the design of him that made it"—WESLEY.

"But though the foundation of the Church bears the stamp, not only of God's decrees, but of holiness, yet in it, as in every large house, there will be evil and imperfection mingled with the good. **Some to honour**, etc.—*i.e.* 'some for trivial and common uses.' So there are in God's Church two classes, though each admitting of degrees. (Comp. Matt. 13. 30, 47)"—S. C.

21. **If a man purge himself from these**—"vessels of dishonour, so as to have no fellowship with them"—WESLEY.

If a man therefore purge himself from these—"again the reference is general, but there was a special thought for Timothy when S. Paul wrote this. If *he* would separate from all that was evil in the church at Ephesus, then would he indeed be one of those golden vessels unto honour. The image of the great house, and its many and varied vessels, though still not quite lost sight of, is passing out of sight. This verse changes into a note of direct exhortation. The good and faithful must separate themselves from the evil and faithless"—C. B.

22. **Flee youthful desires**—"those peculiarly incident to youth. **Follow peace with them**—unity with all true believers. **Out of a pure heart.** 'Youthful desires' destroy this purity: **righteousness, faith, love, peace,** accompany it"—WESLEY.

Flee also youthful lusts. But he who would *indeed* become "a vessel of honour" in that great house of God must do more than merely separate himself from all outward communion and friendship with men who, by their teaching and in their lives, did dishonour to

the Master's religion. There was an *inner* work to be accomplished, as well as an outer and more public protest to be made. He must fight with and conquer those lusts, passions, and desires which are more peculiarly tempting to those who are still in the meridian of life.

24. **A servant of the Lord must not**—"eagerly or passionately—**strive**—as do the vain wranglers spoken of (ver. 23). **But be apt to teach**—chiefly by patience and unwearied assiduity"—WESLEY.

"*Conciliation* may be termed the keynote of these directions. S. Paul would press upon Timothy and his successors the great truth that it was the Master's will that the unnumbered peoples who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death should learn, by slow though sure degrees, how lovely and desirable a thing it was to be a Christian; should come at length to see clearly that Christ was, after all, the only lover and real friend of man. **Apt to teach, patient.** The Greek word is better rendered by the 'forbearing' of the margin than by 'patient.' 'Patient of wrong,' however, best gives the full force of the original. This is what the servant of God should really aim at being: the teacher rather than the controversialist—rather the patient endurer of wrong than the fomenter of dissensions and wordy strifes"—C. B.

25. **In meekness.** "He has often need of zeal, always of meekness. **If haply God**—for it is wholly His work—**may give them repentance—the acknowledging of the truth** would then quickly follow"—WESLEY.

"By **those that oppose themselves**, S. Paul alludes scarcely so much to those leading teachers of false doctrine as to those led away by them. Their treatment was to be a gentle one. **If God peradventure will give them repentance.** The Greek original here also carries out what was said of the 'servant of the Lord,' in the words immediately preceding—'patient of wrong,' 'forbearing,' 'meek.' It suggests the hope that at some time or other God's grace would work in those 'opposing' members of the congregation a change. The repentance here signifies an abandonment on the part of those erring Christians of that wrong course on which they had entered, and a return to the true Church of God, and to a full knowledge of the gospel truth"—ELLICOTT.

26. **Who**—"at present **are** not only **captives**, but asleep; utterly insensible of their captivity"—WESLEY.

"The deadly peril of all 'captives of sin' is here well painted. These unhappy ones, before they can free themselves from the toils of the evil one, must awake from the deep slumber in which they are wrapped; in other words, must first be *conscious* of their awful danger. **Who are taken captive by him at his will.** These words have been variously interpreted by commentators. The meaning that, on the whole, seems most satisfactory, represents the captive to sin waking up from his deathly slumber and escaping the toils of the evil one, for the purpose of carrying out for the future the will of God. The rendering of the whole verse would be as follows, **And that they may recover themselves out of the snares of the devil—being held captive by him to do His** (God's) **will**"—SPENCE.

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1-9. WARNING OF EVIL TIMES, EVIL TEACHERS, AND EVIL MEN, ALREADY IN THE CHURCH.—1. **In the last days**—"the time of the gospel dispensation, commencing at the time of our Lord's death, is peculiarly styled the 'last days.' **Grievous**—troublesome and dangerous"—WESLEY.

"Such announcements as those in ch. 2. 20, 26, must have fallen damp and disappointing on the expectations of many in the first ardour of the gospel. Vessels for dishonour even in God's house—captives taken by Satan at his will, even after the prince of this world had been triumphed over on the cross—these were facts at variance, doubtless, with the expectations of many believers, but necessary to be known. The warning, therefore, continues. **In the last days.** The time of the gospel dispensation, which is the last of the Divine dispensations, and it is to continue till the consummation of all things. It is clear from ver. 5 that Timothy himself was living in them. **Perilous times will come**, when, perhaps, they might be least expected"—S. C.

2. "**For men**—even in the Church—**will be**—in great numbers, and to a higher degree than ever—**lovers of themselves**—only, not their neighbours, the first root of evil. **Lovers of money**—the second"—WESLEY.

Lovers of themselves. The vice of self-love breaks all the bonds of charity, and is one of the deepest marks of human depravity. **Covetous**—*lit.* "lovers of silver," and "the love of money is the root of all evil"—SUTCLIFFE. Selfishness well heads the dreary list. It is the true root of all sin.

3. **Without natural affection**—"to their own children. **Intemperate, fierce**—both too soft and too hard"—WESLEY.

Without natural affection—"careless and regardless of the welfare of those connected with them by ties of blood. **Truce-breakers**—*i.e.* 'implacable.' **False-accusers** or 'slanderers.' (See 1 Tim. 3. 11.) **Incontinent**—having no control over the passions. **Despisers**, etc.—better rendered, 'no lovers of good,' that is, hostile to every good thought and work"—ELLICOTT.

4. **Lovers of** sensual **pleasure**—"which naturally extinguishes all love and sense of God"—WESLEY.

Heady—*i.e.* "hasty, violent, rash." **High-minded**—rather, "blinded (or puffed up) with pride." (Comp. 1 Tim. 3. 6.) ELLICOTT says:

"The enumeration of vices in Rom. 1. 29 *seq.*, describes heathenism; this describes corrupt Christianity."

5. **Having a form**—"an appearance of godliness, but not regarding, nay even **denying** and blaspheming, the inward power and reality of it. Is not this eminently fulfilled at this day?"—WESLEY.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof—"keeping up a show of observing the outward forms of religion, but renouncing its power and its influence over the heart and the life; showing openly that they neither acknowledged its guidance or wished to do so. These, by claiming the title of Christians, wearing before men the uniform of Christ, but by their lives dishonouring His name, did the gravest injury to the holy Christian cause. **From such turn away.** *These*, daring to assume the sacred name, no doubt with the thought of claiming its glorious promises, without one effort to please the Master, or to do honour to His name—*these* were to be openly shunned by such as Timothy. No half measures were to be adopted towards *these*, who tried to deceive their neighbours and possibly deceive themselves. The pagan was to be courteously entreated, for in God's good time the glory of the Lord might shine, too, on those now sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. The heretic, seduced by false men from the school of the apostles, where the life as well as the doctrine of Jesus was taught, was to be gently instructed. Perhaps God would lead him once more home. But *these* who, while pretending to belong to Jesus, lived the degraded life of the heathen, were to be shunned. No communion, no friendly intercourse, was possible between the hypocrite and the Christian"—SPENCE.

6. **Of these**—"that is, mere formalists"—WESLEY.

Mosheim thinks that the three participial clauses describe the three different classes of the heretics—(1) sinners, (2) seekers after happiness, (3) devotees; they rather denote various traits in the same persons, and "the very union of such traits is characteristic"—DE WETTE. It is no matter of surprise that the heretics, to win more followers, turned their attentions to the fair sex; that has been done by heretics in all ages.

7. **Ever learning**—"new things—but not **the truth of** God"—WESLEY.

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. "A morbid love of novelty, and a hope to penetrate into mysteries not revealed to God's true teachers, spurred these female learners on; but 'to the *full* knowledge of the truth'—for this is the more accurate rendering of the Greek word—they never reached, for by their evil life their heart was hardened. That some of these false teachers laid claim to occult arts, to a knowledge of magic and sorcery, is clear from the statement contained in the next verse, where certain sorcerers of the time of Moses are compared to them."

8. "Several ancient writers speak of **Jannes** and **Jambres**, as the chief of the Egyptian magicians. **Men of corrupt minds**—impure notions and wicked inclinations. **Void of judgment**—quite ignorant, as well as careless, of true, spiritual religion"—WESLEY.

"**Jannes and Jambres** were the traditional names preserved among the Jews of the principal magicians of Pharaoh's court. ORIGEN states that S. Paul is quoting from an apocryphal book, called the Book of Jambres and Mambres; but of such a book there is no trace. The tradition makes them the sons of Balaam, who foretold the birth of Moses, counselled the persecutions of the Israelites, and were either drowned in the Red Sea, or perished in the slaughter after making the golden calf"—S. C.

9. **They shall proceed no further**—"in gaining proselytes"—WESLEY.

The resemblance of the case of the men to whom S. Paul alludes to that of the Egyptian magicians was in their opposition to the truth, in the complete exposure of their folly, and possibly (as Ellicott thinks) in the occult arts to which they alike pretended.

10, 11. "Timothy, and perhaps Timothy only, had been almost constantly with S. Paul from his second missionary journey till the time when he was left by him at Ephesus"—WORDSWORTH. **At Antioch**, in Pisidia. (Acts 13. 50.) If writing to almost anyone but Timothy, it would have been necessary to specify this; or the Syrian Antioch, being by far the best known, would have been understood"—S. C.

12. **All that are resolved to live godly**—"therefore count the cost. Art thou resolved? **In Christ**—out of Christ there is no godliness. **Shall suffer persecution**—more or less. There is no exception. Either the truth of Scripture fails, or those that think they are religious, and are not persecuted in some shape or other on that very account, deceive themselves"—WESLEY.

Yea, and all that will live godly. "But S. Paul would not allow it to be thought for a moment that in the fact of his enduring persecution and suffering there was anything remarkable or singular; so he adds the words of this verse, which repeat in a peculiarly solemn way the great Christian truth, that eternal glory was only to be reached by man through an avenue of sufferings."

13. **Deceiving and being deceived.** "He who has once begun to deceive others is both the less likely to recover from his own error, and the more ready to embrace the errors of other men"—WESLEY.

MATTHIES thus states the connection between this and the preceding verses: "Quite different is it with evil men, who, instead of suffering for the truth, proceed always further in their

wickedness." The apostle here continues the description of the heretics which was interrupted at ver. 10.

14. **From whom**—"even from me a teacher approved of God"—WESLEY.

"To the good testimony given to Timothy by S. Paul in ver. 10 there is added the exhortation to stand steadfast in the truth. Timothy had already been instructed in the truth of the gospel before S. Paul met with him, nay, even before this instruction he had been carefully made acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. This very fact, that from childhood he had been under the influence of Divine truth, and been nourished by the bread of life, was to be an incentive to him to adhere faithfully to this word of truth"—HUTHER.

15. **From an infant thou hast known the Holy Scriptures**—"of the Old Testament. These only were extant when Timothy was an infant. **Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith in** the Messiah that was to come. How much more are the Old and New Testament together able, in God's hand, to make us more abundantly wise unto salvation! Even such a measure of present salvation as was not known before Jesus was glorified"—WESLEY.

From a child. "The rabbis mention five as the age at which Jewish children are to begin to read the Law. **Which are able**, etc. —in contrast with all other writings. With the following important limitation, however, **Through faith which is in Christ Jesus.** These Scriptures, it will be observed, were those of the Old Testament, which could make wise only by teaching salvation through the Christ who was to come"—HOOKER.

16. **All Scripture is inspired of God.** "The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote it, but continually inspires, supernaturally assists, those that read it with earnest prayer. Hence **it is** so **profitable for doctrine**, for instruction of the ignorant, **for the reproof** or conviction of them that are in error or sin, **for the correction** or amendment of whatever is amiss, and for instructing or training up the children of God **in** all **righteousness**"—WESLEY.

Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness (R.V.). The word **Scripture** is used fifty times in the New Testament, and is in all these places applied to the writings of the Old or New Testament, and to no other. It is clearly a technical word, and must have been so used and understood by S. Paul and by Timothy. Limited here by the context to the Scriptures which Timothy had learnt as a child, it can mean only the writings of the Old Testament; but when applied to the writings of the New Testament, as it is by S. Peter to the Epistles of S. Paul (2 Pet. 3. 15, 16), it of course carried with it, as belonging also to those books, all the attributes of inspiration, profitableness, and the like, which inhered in the word in its application to the Old Testament. Had S. Paul's Epistles not been inspired, and also profitable, S. Peter would not have classed them with "the other Scripture." **Every Scripture**, *i.e.* every passage or book of the Scriptures (which is the accurate rendering of S. Paul's words), is as extensive in meaning as "all Scripture," and more precise. **Given by inspiration of God**—*lit.* "God-breathed." (Comp. 2 Pet. 1. 21, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.") The word does not enable us to establish or to give the preference to any of the theories of the *mode* of inspiration, but it does seem (as ELLICOTT says) "fairly either to *assume* or to *enunciate* this vital truth; that every separate portion of the Holy Book is inspired, and forms a living portion of a living and organic whole. While, on the one hand, this expression does not exclude such verbal errors, or, possibly, such trifling historical inaccuracies as *man's* spirit, even in its most exalted state, may not be wholly exempt from, and *human* transmission and transcription may have increased, it still does certainly assure us, on the other, that these writings, as we have them, are individually pervaded by God's Spirit, and warrants our belief that they are the true utterances of the Holy Ghost, and an assertion of the *full* inspiration of the Bible."

17. **That the man of God**—"he that is united to and approved of God. **May be perfect**—blameless himself, and **throughly furnished**—by the Scripture, either to teach, reprove, correct, or train up others"—WESLEY.

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. "The 'man of God' here is no official designation, but simply designates the Christian generally, who is striving, with his Master's help, to live a life pleasing to God; and the 'good works' have no special reference to the labours of Timothy and his brother presbyters, but include all those generous and self-sacrificing acts to which in these Epistles so many references have been made. It was in the Holy Scriptures that the true servant of the Lord, the man of God, would find defined with clearness and precision the nature of those works the Holy Spirit was pleased to call 'good'"—C. B.

CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1-8. CONTINUED EXHORTATION TO MINISTERIAL DILIGENCE.—1. **I charge thee, therefore.** "This is deduced from the whole preceding chapter. **At His appearing and His kingdom**—that is, at His appearing in the kingdom of glory"—WESLEY.

"Exhortation to faithful performance of official duty is strongly enforced, and the allusion to the last judgment gives special strength to the exhortation. **I charge thee.** Matters

of greatest importance must be pressed with greatest vehemence. It is a weakness to be hot in a cold matter, but worse to be cold in a hot matter"—TRAPP.

2. **Be instant**—"insist on, urge these things **in season, out of season**—that is, continually, at all times and places. It might be translated, **with and without opportunity**—not only when a fair occasion is given: even when there is none, one must be made"—WESLEY.

Preach the word. "The language of the original here is abrupt and emphatic, written evidently under strong emotion and with intense earnestness. S. Paul charged his friend and successor with awful solemnity, as we have seen, 'preach,' or proclaim, loudly and publicly, as a herald would announce the accession of his king. **Be instant**—attentive and earnest. **In season, out of season**—take opportunity or make it. (Comp. Ezek. 2. 5, 'whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.') The application of this precept would of course be prudentially modified by such cautions as Matt. 7. 6. **Reprove, rebuke, exhort**—rather, 'convict, rebuke,' etc., put, that is, to its various uses every scripture which God has inspired (ch. 3. 16)"—S. C. **With all longsuffering and doctrine.** The word translated "doctrine" signifies, rather, "teaching." He must reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all gentleness and patience; and in all this he must take care that "teaching"—the teaching which is right and true, and full of hope—accompanies his rebuke and his words of comfort.

3. **For they will heap up teachers.** "Therefore thou hast need of 'all longsuffering.' **According to their own desires**—smooth as they can wish. **Having itching ears**—fond of novelty and variety, which the number of new teachers, as well as their empty, soft, or philosophical discourses, pleased. Such teachers, and such hearers, seldom are much concerned with what is strict or to the purpose. **Heap to themselves**—not enduring **sound doctrine**, they will reject the sound preachers, and gather together all that suit their own taste. Probably they send out one another as teachers, and so are never at a loss for numbers"—WESLEY.

"Timothy must remember that things in the Church of Christ on earth will not change for the better. The great drag-net of the Church, in its wide sweep, would keep drawing into its meshes something of every kind. Errors now just apparent, he must bear in mind, would attain more formidable dimensions. The thirst for novelties in doctrine, the desire for a teaching which, while offering peace to a troubled conscience, would yet allow the old self-indulgent life to go on as before, would increase. In full view of this development of error, in sure expectation of a future full of anxious care, Timothy and his brother teachers must indeed be wakeful, watchful, and earnest in their preaching and ministrations"—ELLICOTT. **And they shall turn away their ears from the truth.** This was the punishment of those who would only listen to what was pleasing to them, and which flattered instead of reproved their way of life. They became involved in the many various errors in doctrine which were then taught in the schools of the heretics, and they ended by turning away from every Christian truth.

5. **Watch**—"an earnest, constant, persevering exercise. The Scripture watching, or waiting, implies steadfast faith, patient hope, labouring love, unceasing prayer; yea, the mighty exertion of all the affections of the soul that a man is capable of. **In all things**—whatever you are doing, yet in that, and 'in all things, watch.' **Do the work of an evangelist**—which was next to that of an apostle"—WESLEY.

But watch thou in all things. "'But do thou,' continued S. Paul, 'do thou be watchful.' The Greek word translated 'watch thou,' signifies literally 'be sober.' It has been well paraphrased, 'Keep thy coolness and presence of mind that thou be not entrapped into forgetfulness, but as one ever wakeful and ready, be on the watch.' The word, as it were, sums up all those last directions of S. Paul, from ch. 2. 14, in which S. Paul charged Timothy to abstain from vain arguments and confine himself to the simple word of truth, to avoid discussions which would be likely to lead to strife, and to be patient and gentle with all—to separate himself from merely nominal Christians, and to keep steadily to the old paths in which the apostles had walked. He was to be ever watchful in all these things"—SPENCE. **The work of an evangelist.** "The work of proclaiming the gospel (ch. 5. 2), which was still incumbent on Timothy in his higher position, and which, in fact, inheres, whatever else may be added to it, in every order of the ministry"—S. C.

6. **The time of my departure is at hand**—"so undoubtedly God had shown him. **I am ready to be offered up**—*lit.* 'to be poured out,' as the wine and oil were on the ancient sacrifices"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul points to his approaching death in order to strengthen his exhortation to Timothy to fulfil his duties faithfully. As he himself cannot any longer contend against the increasing disorder, Timothy must be all the more careful to prove himself faithful. S. Paul makes nothing of death. It was no more betwixt God and Moses but 'Go up and die.' So betwixt Christ and S. Paul, but launch out, and land immediately at the fair haven of heaven"—TRAPP.

8. **The crown of** that **righteousness**—"which God has imputed to me and wrought in me. **Will render to all.** This increases the joy of S. Paul, and encourages Timothy.

Many of these S. Paul himself had gained. **That have loved His appearing**—which only a real Christian can do. I say a real Christian, to comply with the mode of the times: else they would not understand, although the word Christian necessarily implies whatsoever is holy, as God is holy. Strictly speaking, to join real or sincere to a word of so complete an import, is grievously to debase its noble signification, and is like adding long to eternity or wide to immensity"—WESLEY.

A crown of righteousness—"the crown, that is, which shall be given for righteousness; as in the games, the crown of the race, the crown of wrestling, is the crown given to the victor in the race, or in wrestling, or the like. It is a criticism, based on ignorance of the facts of the inner life, which sees in this happy confidence of the apostle a contradiction to the humility of his other Epistles, *e.g.* Phil. 3. 12–14. Rather it is an evidence of the authenticity of this his latest Epistle, written when martyrdom was imminent. For it is a truth, proved by so many instances as almost to indicate a law of the procedure of the Divine grace, that the assurance which has been withheld from God's people in the midst of their ordinary duties and trials, is granted them in the hour of need, and especially at the approach of death. Nor is there any contradiction between the apostle's expectation of the crown of righteousness and his doctrine of free justification by faith. 'Rather,' says CALVIN, 'do these two rightly agree; that man is justified freely by the merits of Christ, and yet that he will receive the reward of works from before God. For as soon as God receives us into His favour, He holds our works also acceptable, so as to vouchsafe them a reward also, however undeserved"—S. C. "**Who have loved and do love His appearing.** That is the full force of the Greek, which expresses the present and permanent result of past action; and therein lies the test whereby to try the temper of our Christianity. S. Paul, who had long yearned to depart and be with Christ, could not easily have given a more simple or sure method of finding out who those are who have a right to believe that the Lord has a crown of righteousness in store for them. Are we among the number? Are our lives such that we are longing for Christ's return?"—PLUMMER.

9. **Come to me**—"both that he might comfort him, and be strengthened by him. Timotheus himself is said to have suffered at Ephesus"—WESLEY.

"He longed to see some of his faithful companions once more, and for the last time to bid them with his own mouth to be faithful and brave. So, as it were hoping against hope, he dictates on the last pages of the letter, **Do thy diligence,** or better, '*earnestly endeavour* to come shortly to me.' His loving wish to see Timothy again appears from the words of ch. 1. 4, 'greatly desiring to see thee,' and again from ch. 4. 21, 'Do thy diligence to come before winter.' On the natural human longing for sympathy in the supreme hour, compare our blessed Lord's words to Peter, James, and John (Matt. 26. 38), 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, *and watch with Me*'"—C. B.

10. **Demas**—"once my fellow-labourer (Philem. 24)—**hath forsaken me. Crescens,** probably a teacher also, **is gone,** with my consent, **to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia,** having now left **Crete.** These either went with him to **Rome,** or visited him there"—WESLEY.

Demas hath forsaken me, etc.—"rather, 'Demas left me because he loved the present world, and went to Thessalonica,' which was perhaps his home. He was with S. Paul at Rome during part, at least, of his first imprisonment, being mentioned as joining in greetings to the Colossians (Col. 4. 4), and in the Epistle to Philemon (ver. 24) he is numbered among the apostle's fellow-labourers. There is no scriptural ground for assuming that this shrinking from danger and duty, sinful though it was, was equivalent to, or ended in, total apostasy, which, however, was the later tradition mentioned by Epiphanius. Demas is perhaps a shortened form of Demetrius"—S. C.

11. **Only Luke**—"of my fellow-labourers, **is with me.** But God is with me; and it is enough. **Take mark**—who, though he once, 'departed from the work,' **is** now again **profitable to me**"—WESLEY.

Only Luke is with me—*i.e.* Luke alone of the apostle's usual companions in travel. Others were with him (ver. 23). There is no reason for doubting that this Luke was the apostle's well-known assistant. He accompanied S. Paul on his second missionary journey from Troas (Acts 16. 10), then on his third journey (Acts 20. 5–21; 28). He was with S. Paul both in his imprisonment at Cæsarea and in the first imprisonment at Rome (Acts 27; Col. 4. 14; Philem. 24).

12. "Tychicus was in Greece with S. Paul on the third missionary journey, and preceded him to Troas (Acts 20. 4, 5). According to Col. 4. 7 and Eph. 6. 21, S. Paul sent him from Rome to Asia Minor"—HUTHER.

13. **The cloak**—"either the 'toga,' which belonged to him as a Roman citizen, or an upper garment, which might be needful as winter came on—**which I left at Troas with Carpus**—who was probably his host there. **Especially the parchments**—the books written on parchment"—WESLEY.

"**The cloak,** etc. The apparently trivial nature of this request in an Epistle containing such weighty matter, and also the fact of such a wish on the part of one expecting death being made at all, is at first a little puzzling. It is best to understand the words as simply requesting Timothy, on his way, to bring with him a thick cloak, or mantle, which S. Paul had left

with a certain Carpus at Troas. Probably, when he left it, it was summer, and he was disinclined to burden himself in his hurried journey with any superfluous things. Winter was now coming on, and the poor aged prisoner in the cold damp prison, with few friends and scanty resources, remembered and wished for his cloak. It is just such a request which the master would make of his disciple, who, knowing well the old man's frail, shattered health, would never be surprised at such a request even in an Epistle so solemn. **And the books.** The books were, most likely, a few choice works, some bearing on Jewish sacred history, partly exegetical and explanatory of the mysterious senses veiled under the letter of the Law and the Prophets, and partly historical. Others were probably heathen writings, of which we know, from his many references in his Epistle, S. Paul was a diligent student"—ELLICOTT.

14, 15. **The Lord will reward him.** "This he spoke prophetically"—WESLEY.

"The words do not imply any desire for vengeance: Christian love does not extinguish the feeling of justice; besides the apostle does not speak the words because of the personal injury, but because of Alexander's hostility to the truth"—MEYER.

16. **All**—"my friends and companions—**forsook me.** And do we expect to find such as will not forsake us? **My first defence**—before the savage Emperor Nero"—WESLEY.

Surely this was S. Paul's saddest experience. His *enemies* had persecuted him, out of hatred to the cause of Christ, but to be forsaken by his own *familiar friends*, at his great public trial, was still harder to bear.

17. **The preaching**—"the gospel which we preach"—WESLEY.

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me. Though men deserted Him, yet One—even his Lord (Christ), who could do more for him than any friend or advocate or protector of earth—stood by him, and strengthened him by giving him courage and readiness. The word for "strengthen" means literally "to infuse power into" a person. It is one of which the apostle is rather fond; and outside his writings it occurs in the New Testament only in the Acts and in Hebrews, once in each. (Rom. 4. 20; Eph. 6. 10; Phil. 4. 13; 1 Tim. 1. 12; ch. 2. 1.)

18. **And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work**—"which is far more than delivering me from death. Yea, **and**, over and above, **preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom**—far better than that of Nero"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul's enemies are not likely to be idle during the extension of time granted by the court. They will do their utmost to secure a sentence of condemnation at the second hearing of the case, and thus get the man whom they detest removed from the earth. Whether they will succeed or not, the apostle does not know. But one thing he knows:—that whatever is really evil in their works against him will be powerless to harm him. The Lord will turn evil into good. They may succeed in compassing his death. But, even if they do so, the Lord will make their work of death a work of salvation; and by the severing of the thread which still binds S. Paul to this life **will save him unto**, that is, 'will translate him safe into' His heavenly kingdom"—PLUMMER.

20. When I came on, **Erastus abode at Corinth** — "being chamberlain of the city (Rom. 16. 23). But **Trophimus I have left sick**, not having power (as neither had any of the apostles) to work miracles when he pleased, but only when God pleased"—WESLEY.

But Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. Trophimus, a Gentile Christian, who was with S. Paul on his third missionary journey, and whom the apostle was accused of taking into the Temple at Jerusalem. It was this accusation on the part of the Jews which led to S. Paul's arrest which preceded his first long imprisonment. The event here alluded to must have taken place some time *after* the apostle's release from the first imprisonment, A.D. 63, and, probably, in the course of his last journey, shortly before his second arrest and imprisonment at Rome, about A.D. 66.

21. **Do thy diligence to come before winter.** "Probably this was added to hasten his coming. If he delayed, the season of the year would put off, perhaps hinder altogether, his voyage. **Eubulus greeteth thee.** Of this Eubulus nothing is known. **And Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia.** Of these, Linus was, no doubt, the first of the long line of Bishops of Rome. The date of his consecration corresponds with the year of S. Paul's martyrdom, A.D. 66. We know, from this greeting, he was one of the few 'faithful' to his old master"—WESLEY.

22. "The salutation is twofold—to Timothy and to his flock. **The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you** (all). The subscription, though in this instance probably correct, has no authority"—S. C.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

"TITUS was converted from heathenism by S. Paul (Gal. 2. 3); and, as it seems, very early; since the apostle accounted him as his brother at his first going into Macedonia: and he managed and settled the churches there, when S. Paul thought not good to go thither himself. He had now left him at Crete, to regulate the churches; to assist him wherein, he wrote this Epistle, as is generally believed, after the First, and before the Second, to Timothy. The tenor and style are much alike in this and in those; and they cast much light on each other, and are worthy the serious attention of all Christian ministers and churches in all ages.

"THIS EPISTLE HAS FOUR PARTS—

I. The Inscription,	Chap. i. 1-4.
II. The Instruction of Titus to this effect—	
1. Ordain good Presbyters,	,, ,, 5-9.
2. Such are especially needful at Crete,	,, ,, 10-12.
3. Reprove and admonish the Cretans,	,, ,, 13-16.
4. Teach aged men and women,	,, ii. 1-5.
And young men, being a pattern to them,	,, ,, 6-8.
And servants, urging them by a glorious motive,	,, ,, 9-15.
5. Press obedience to Magistrates, and gentleness to all men,	,, iii. 1-2.
Enforcing it by the same motive,	,, ,, 3-7.
6. Good works are to be done, foolish questions avoided, heretics shunned,	,, ,, 8-11.
III. An Invitation of Titus to Nicopolis, with some admonitions,	,, ,, 12-14.
IV. The Conclusion,	,, ,, 15."

—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

1. **Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ**—"titles suitable to the person of S. Paul, and the office he was assigning to Titus. **According to the faith**—the propagating of which is the proper business of an apostle. **A servant of God**—according to the faith of the elect. **An apostle of Jesus Christ**—according to the knowledge of the truth. We serve God according to the measure of our faith; we fulfil our public office according to the measure of our knowledge. **The truth that is after godliness**—which in every point runs parallel with and supports the vital, spiritual worship of God; and, indeed, has no other end or scope. These two verses contain the sum of Christianity, which Titus was always to have in his eye. **Of the elect of God**—of all real Christians"—WESLEY.

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ. "The titles here assumed by S. Paul in his introductory greeting are in some respects slightly different to any of his usual designations. In the other two so-called Pastoral Epistles addressed to Timothy, S. Paul simply styles himself, 'an apostle of Jesus Christ.' Possibly, the longer and more formal title is here adopted because his relations were hardly ever of so intimate a character with Titus as with Timothy; the latter would seem to have held the position of S. Paul's *adopted son*. **According to the faith of God's elect.** The rendering should be, 'for (the furtherance of) the faith,' or, in other words, 'the object of my (Paul's) apostleship was that through my instrumentality the chosen of God should believe.' The whole question respecting these 'elect,' or 'chosen of God,' is surrounded with deep mystery; three or four guiding thoughts may however, be safely laid down:—(1) In the visible world such an *apparently* arbitrary election to special privileges, fortune, happiness, utterly irrespective, in the first instance, of individual merit, does exist. This is clear to all of us. (2) In grace we are distinctly told repeatedly that a similar election exists, and our own observation certainly coincides

here with revelation. (3) Such election in no case seemingly affects our position here as free agents; surrounded with the most precious privileges, gifted with much knowledge, it is possible, as we, alas, too often see, deliberately to refuse the good and to choose the evil. (4) All such allusions to the 'elect' as, for instance, the one here before us, are intended, not as a stumbling-block for the believer, but as a comfort for the faithful, struggling man of God, for it tells him how the Eternal 'before the ages' had chosen him to be His servant"—SPENCE.

2. **In hope of eternal life**—"the grand motive and encouragement of every apostle and every servant of God. **Which God promised before the world began**—to Christ, our Head"—WESLEY.

Better translated, **resting on the hope of eternal life.** The connection of the preceding clauses with these words has been well summed up, "The apostle's calling had for its object the faith of the elect and the knowledge of the truth; and the basis on which all this rested was the hope of eternal life." **Which God, that cannot lie**—possibly this singular and strong expression was chosen with reference to the peculiar vice of the Cretans, over whose church Titus was then presiding. (See ver. 12.) **Promised before the world began**—more accurately, "from eternal ages." (See 2 Tim. 1. 9.) The promise of eternal life was the result of a Divine purpose fixed from eternity.

3. **And He hath in His own times**—"at sundry times; and 'His own times' are fittest for His own work. What creature dares ask, 'Why no sooner?' **Manifested His word**—containing that promise, and the whole 'truth which is after godliness.' **Through the preaching wherewith I am intrusted, according to the commandment of God our Saviour**—and who dares exercise this office on any less authority?"—WESLEY.

"**The preaching intrusted to me**"—MEYER. S. Paul had some reason for describing *his* preaching as the means by which this revelation was made, since *he* recognised the depth of the Divine decree as no other apostle had recognised it, and by him it was proclaimed to all peoples. (See 2 Tim. 4. 17.)

4. **My own son**—"begot in the same image of God, and repaying a paternal with a filial affection. **The common faith**—common to me and all my spiritual children"—WESLEY.

To Titus. "We know comparatively little of Titus' early career. In the Acts he, singularly enough, is never mentioned; for what knowledge of him we possess we are entirely dependent upon a few casual allusions to him in the Epistles. This presbyter in charge of the Cretan church was a Greek, the son of Gentile parents, and uncircumcised. He owed his conversion to Christianity to S. Paul, with whom ever after he seems to have been connected by ties of intimate friendship, though he was by no means the apostle's constant companion, as was Timothy or Silas or Luke. Only during the apostle's long residence at Ephesus (nearly three years) Titus appears to have been, for at least part of the time, closely associated with S. Paul, and his confidant in his complicated relations with foreign churches. It is clear that during this long Ephesian residence he was drawn into close and intimate friendship with S. Paul, who then had opportunity of becoming acquainted with Titus' varied powers and evident skill in the administration and in dealing with men and women. From the several casual notices in the Second Corinthian Epistle, we gather considerable insight into the character and powers of the Gentile convert. Amongst other works, he apparently completed the collection S. Paul had set on foot in the various Gentile churches for the poor Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. His services, assisting materially to bring this famous work of charity to a successful issue, seem not to have been the least among his titles to S. Paul's friendship and high esteem"—SPENCE.

5. **The things which are wanting**—"which I had not time to settle myself. **Ordain elders**—appoint the most faithful, zealous men to watch over the rest. Their character follows (vers. 6–9). These were the 'elders,' or 'bishops,' that S. Paul approved of;—men that had living faith, a pure conscience, a blameless life"—WESLEY.

Appoint elders in every city. This implies that among the multitude of cities, for which Crete in Homer's day had been already famous, not a few had a Christian congregation which needed this oversight and instruction. S. Paul tells Titus to take care that no city is left without a presbyter. Each Christian community is to have its proper ministry; it is not to be left to its own guidance. There were many things that were wanting in Crete; but one of the chief things which pressed upon the apostle's mind was the lack of a properly organised ministry, without which everything must soon fall into confusion and decay. S. Paul himself had done something, but in many respects the churches were not organised as they ought to be; presbyters had still to be appointed to gather single believers into a firmly established church.

6. **The husband of one wife**—"surely the Holy Ghost, by repeating this so often, designed to leave the Romanists without excuse"—WESLEY.

If any be blameless. The candidate for the holy office must have naught laid to his charge; he must be of such a character that no one could bring a reasonable accusation against him. Blameless must be his life, spotless his name. As it has been well said, "the office of presbyter must never be allowed to cover or condone damaged reputations."

Having faithful children—better, "believing children." In searching out these presbyters, whose charge would involve so many and such responsible duties, Titus must look for men of ripe age. There were even grave objections to the appointment of the comparatively young to this office. **Not accused of riot**—more accurately rendered, "dissoluteness." The Greek word here rendered "riot" implies a self-indulgent or even a reckless expenditure. Such careless selfishness well-nigh always ends in profligacy. In the case of men whose duties included the superintendence of the Church's funds, it was imperatively necessary that their homes and families should be free from all suspicion of anything like that reckless waste or extravagance which in so many cases imperceptibly passes into dissoluteness and profligacy. **Riot.** The word includes the notions of extravagance and of indulgence in vicious pleasure.

7. **As the steward of God**—"to whom He intrusts immortal souls. **Not selfwilled**—*lit.* 'pleasing himself'; but all men for their good to edification. **Not passionate**—but mild, yielding, tender"—WESLEY.

It is the *moral* estimation in which the person to be selected was held, the reputation which he had amongst men, on which above all he lays stress. For an efficient discharge of the duties of the office can be conceived of only on the supposition of a good reputation. PLUMMER says: "**God's steward** must be ready to sink every personal interest in the interests of the great Employer. He has nothing of his own. He deals with his Master's goods, and must deal with them in his Master's way. He who labours in this spirit will one day be rewarded by the Divine voice of welcome, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

9. **As he hath been taught**—"perhaps it might be more literally rendered, **according to the teaching**, or doctrine, of the apostles; alluding to Acts 2. 42"—WESLEY.

Holding fast, etc.—*i.e.* "keeping close to the doctrine of Christ, 'the word of His grace,' adhering thereto according to the instructions he hath received, holding it fast in his own belief and profession, and in teaching others. 'I have kept the faith' was S. Paul's comfort (2 Tim. 4. 7), and 'not shunned to declare . . . the whole counsel of God' (Acts 20. 27); there was his faithfulness"—HENRY.

10. **They of the circumcision**—"the Jewish converts"—WESLEY.

Vain talkers—"who *must* say something, and who have broken the peace of many a home and shattered the prosperity of many a church; the multitude of teachers who have nothing true to say is the curse of the kingdom of God"—REYNOLDS.

11. **Stopped.** "The word properly means, to 'put a bit into the mouth' of an unruly horse"—WESLEY.

"For an example how Titus and his presbyters were to stop the mouths of these teachers of what was false, comp. Matt. 22. 34–46, where the Lord, by His wise, powerful, yet gentle words, first put the Sadducees to silence, and then so answered the Pharisees that 'neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask Him any more questions.' **Teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.** Here S. Paul goes to the root of the evil, when he shows what was the end and aim of these 'teachers'' lives. It was a mean and sordid ambition, after all—merely base gain. When this is the main object of a religious teacher's life, his teaching naturally accommodates itself to men's tastes. He forgets the Divine Giver of his commission, and in his thirst for the popularity which brings with it gold, his true work, as the faithful watchman of the house of Israel, is forgotten and ignored"—SPENCE.

12. **A prophet**—"so all poets were anciently called; but besides Diogenes Laertius says that Epimenides, the Cretan poet, foretold many things. **Evil wild beasts**—fierce and savage"—WESLEY.

One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said. S. Paul had spoken (vers. 10, 11) in the severest terms of certain influential members of the Cretan church; he had even alluded to their disastrous teaching ruining whole families, evidently implying that he had perceived among the Cretans a readiness to welcome a teaching which countenanced a laxer moral tone, the invariable result of perverted doctrine; and now he supports his own condemning words by a reference to a well-known Cretan poet—to one who, according to tradition, was even honoured by them as a god. **Slow bellies**—these terms paint with sharp accuracy other evil characteristics of the Cretan peoples—their dull gluttony, their slothful sensuality. The words are used especially of those who, by indulging their bodily appetites, become corpulent and indolent.

13. "**Reprove sharply**—the word is 'cuttingly.' He that minds his patient's health will not trifle with his mortal diseases. Reproof is an edged tool, and must not be jested with. He that reproves sin merrily, as one that takes a pride to show his wit and to make the company laugh, will destroy the sinner instead of the sin"—SWINNOCK.

14. **Commandments of men**—"the Jewish or other teachers, whoever they were that **turned from the truth**"—WESLEY.

We gather the nature of these commandments from the words of the next (15th) verse. They related to the abstinence from meats and from other things created by God for the use and enjoyment of man.

15, 16. **To the pure**—"those whose hearts are purified by faith—this we allow. **All things are pure**—all kinds of meat; the

Mosaic distinction between clean and unclean meats being now taken away. **But to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure**—the apostle joins 'defiled' and 'unbelieving,' to intimate that nothing can be clean without true faith: for both the understanding and conscience, those leading powers of the soul, are polluted; consequently, so is the man and all he does"—WESLEY.

Unto the pure, etc. All things, that is, to which the distinction of clean and unclean has been applied. (Comp. Rom. 14. 14, and 1 Cor. 8. 4–8.) Moral impurity is, of course, not in question. Besides the difference of meats, we have other instances of ceremonial distinctions given in Mark 7. 4–8. The spirit of this saying of S. Paul, occurring almost in the same language as in Rom. 14. 20, was the groundwork of much of the Gentile apostle's teaching. The words of the Lord Jesus above referred to (Matt. 15. 2, 11) contains the same grand truth. **All things** include much besides mere food—in a word, include all acts connected with everyday life which in themselves are neither right nor wrong, neither good nor evil, but which derive their colouring of good or evil solely from the doer of the act. **Them that are defiled**, etc. "Practical unbelief is only too commonly allied with moral pollution"—ELLICOTT. "Defilement of the mind means that the thoughts, wishes, purposes, activities are all stained and debased. The second of these—the conscience—is the moral consciousness within, that which is ever bringing up the memory of the past, with its omissions and commissions, its errors, its cruel, heartless unkindness, its selfish disregard of others. When *this* is defiled, then the last safeguard of the soul is broken down. The man and woman of the defiled conscience is *self-satisfied*, hard, impenitent to the last"—SPENCE. **They profess**, etc. "Probably they laid claim to a higher degree of knowledge, and the terms Gnosis 'knowledge' and Gnostic might already be beginning to be used arrogantly by teachers"—S. C.

CHAPTER II.

1. **Wholesome**—"restoring and preserving spiritual health"—WESLEY.

"It will be observed that the sound teaching which Titus is charged to give to the different sections of his flock relates almost exclusively to *conduct*. There is scarcely a hint in the whole of this chapter that can be supposed to have reference to errors of **doctrine**. In quite a general way the old men are to be exhorted to be sound in *faith* as well as in love and patience: but otherwise all the instruction to be given to old and young, bond and free, relates to conduct in thought, word, and deed"—PLUMMER.

2. **Vigilant**—"as veteran soldiers, not easily to be surprised. **Patience**—a virtue particularly needful for and becoming them. **Serious**—not drolling or diverting on the brink of eternity"—WESLEY.

Aged men—"the correct rendering, not 'presbyters.' Age, not office, is here designated. **Temperate**—self-restrained in all things, not merely in meat and drink. **In patience.** S. Chrysostom observes that patience is substituted for hope, as the third grace with faith and charity, as being especially the virtue of old men"—S. C.

3. **In behaviour**—"the particulars whereof follow—**as becometh holiness**—*lit.* 'observing an holy decorum.' **Not slanderers**—or evil-speakers. **Not given to much wine**—if they use a little for their often infirmities. **Teachers**—age and experience call them so to be. Let them teach **good** only"—WESLEY.

"**Behaviour**—'demeanour,' outward deportment, in manner, habits, dress, etc., which indicates the inward principle. **False accusers**—slanderers (1 Tim. 3. 11). **Not given to much wine**—*lit.* not 'enslaved by much wine'; according to Plato, a besetting sin of the Cretans"—S. C. **The aged women likewise.** "S. Paul, faithful to what had now become one of the guiding principles of Christianity, the equal position of women in the city of God, fellow-heirs with men in the citizenship of the city which hath foundations, proceeds to remind the elder women of Crete of their own high duties in the company of believers. They now—the women—must remember that the position which Christ and His disciples had claimed for them in the world was not without its grave responsibilities. These aged women of the flock, like the elders just exhorted, had also much to do for Christ. **That they be in behaviour as becometh holiness**—that is, 'that they should show themselves as it becometh holiness'; or, more literally, 'in demeanour reverend.' The Greek word rendered 'in behaviour,' or 'in demeanour,' includes dress, appearance, conversation, manner; includes an outward deportment dependent on something more internal"—SPENCE.

4. **That they instruct the young women.** "These Timothy was to instruct himself—Titus, by the elder women—**to love their husbands, their children**—with a tender, temperate, holy, wise affection. O how hard a lesson!"—WESLEY.

"That it was natural for the young to imitate the old will be readily allowed; it was therefore necessary that the old should be an example of godly living to the young"—CLARKE. "In Ephesus the representative of the apostle was directed himself to exhort the younger women; very likely the same charge being given here to the aged women of the congregations was owing to the state of the Cretan Christians, which called not only for more practical and homely, but also for more individual, exhortations. So here this special work was left for the elder women among the

faithful to carry out. Such a reformation not only in the discipline of the church, but also in the individual life and conversation, as S. Paul desired to see in Crete, would never be brought about by a sermon, or even by many sermons, however eloquent and earnest, from Titus. It would be a matter requiring long time and patience, and would rather follow as the result of patient individual effort and holy example"—ELLICOTT.

5. **Discreet**—"particularly in the love of their children. **Chaste**—particularly in the love of their husbands. **Keepers at home**—whenever they are not called out by works of necessity, piety, and mercy. **Good**—well-tempered, sweet, soft, obliging. **Obedient to their husbands**—whose will, in all things lawful, is a rule to the wife. **That the word of God be not blasphemed**—or evil spoken of; particularly by unbelieving husbands, who lay all the blame on the religion of their wives"—WESLEY.

Keepers at home. "Home duties, cares, pleasures, sacrifices of self—these God-appointed duties ought to fill the mind and the heart of the young wife. There should be no desire, no attempt, to go round to the other houses, and so contracting idle, gossiping habits. **Obedient to their own husbands**—more accurately, 'submitting themselves to their own husbands.' Women who really love their Master, Christ, should take care that, as far as in them lay, the law of subordination in the family to its rightful head should be strictly carried out. In a church like that of Crete, made out of divided houses often, where the Christian wife was married to a pagan husband, such a charge as this was specially needful"—ELLICOTT.

6. **To be discreet**—"a virtue rarely found in youth"—WESLEY.

Sober-minded. "The frequent occurrence of this precept—four times in six verses—may be explained by the character of the Cretans given in ch. 1. 12, 13"—S. C. **Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.** "The task of influencing the young men belongs especially to Titus. Among them, in respect to age, he still must be reckoned; as regarded their peculiar temptations, none could be found so fit as the still young Christian disciple of S. Paul (he was probably about forty years of age when he was placed over the Cretan church) to set out vividly before them both the peril and the only means of guarding against it. In this word (*sober-minded*) which urged self-restraint, a young man's duty is briefly comprehended. No task, S. Chrysostom tells us, is after all so hard and difficult for youth, as obtaining the mastery over oneself in the matter of harmful pleasures. The apostle gives but few special directions here for his disciples' guidance, for he is going to tell him how he will best win these young men to the side of Christ. It will be, he proceeds to show him, most effectually done by the sight of the example of his own manly, self-restrained religious life"—SPENCE.

7. **Showing thyself a pattern.** "Titus himself was then young. **In the doctrine** which thou teachest in public: as to matter, **uncorruptness**; as to the manner of delivering it, **seriousness**—weightiness, solemnity"—WESLEY.

The exhortation by word is to be accompanied by the exhortation of example; in regard to all things, in all points. The form of the doctrine which Titus preaches is to be pure, chaste, free from everything that conflicts with the nature of the gospel. All false doctrines leave men under the influence of spiritual disease.

8. **Wholesome speech**—"in private conversation"—WESLEY.

"**Discourses**—*i.e.* not only sound in doctrine for the instruction of the church, but so well considered and judiciously applied as to give no undue advantage to opponents"—S. C. These warnings of S. Paul belong to all ages of the faith.

9. **Please them in all things**—"wherein it can be done without sin. **Not answering again**—though blamed unjustly. This honest servants are most apt to do. **Not stealing**—not taking or giving anything without their master's leave—this fair-spoken servants are apt to do"—WESLEY.

Exhortation in regard to slaves. The harder the lot of the slaves, and the more unendurable this might appear to the Christian slave, conscious of his Christian dignity, the more necessary was it to impress upon him the duty of faithful obedience. **Not answering again**—*i.e.* they must obey cheerfully, willingly, without sullenness; not thwarting or setting themselves against their master's plans or desires or orders; and the apostle (in ver. 10) gives them a noble inducement for this brave, sweet patience he would have so earnestly pressed upon them. Such conduct on their part, he tells them, would serve greatly to help the Master's cause; it would prepossess many hostile minds in favour of a religion which could so powerfully influence even the slave. S. CHRYSOSTOM comments thus: "Greeks form their estimate of doctrines not from the doctrine itself, but from the actions and the life" (of those who profess the doctrine).

10. **Showing all good fidelity**—"soft, obliging faithfulness. **That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour**—more than S. Paul says of kings. How he raises the lowness of his subject! So may they, the lowness of their condition"—WESLEY.

Showing all good fidelity—*i.e.* not a service merely which aims at good appearances, but which arises from good principle. (Comp. Eph. 6. 5; Col. 3. 22.) **Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity.** "It must be remembered that many of the slaves in the

Roman empire were employed in other duties besides those connected with the house or on the farm. Some were intrusted with shops, and these being left often quite to themselves, of course great opportunities for dishonesty and fraud were constantly present. Others received an elaborate training, and as artists, or even physicians, worked in part for their masters. A slave in the days of S. Paul had a hundred ways of showing to his owner this true and genuine fidelity, opposed to mere assumed surface obedience and service. **That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.** A slave cheerfully accepting his hard yoke, and striving with hand and brain to please and advance the interest of his earthly master, only for the dear love of Christ, must have been in those days of cynical *self*-love a silent, yet a most powerful preacher of a gospel which could so mould and elevate a character so degraded"—SPENCE. It is noteworthy how God deigns to receive an adornment from slaves, whose condition was so mean and abject that scarcely were they considered to rank among men at all: "they were ranked as 'possessions,' just like cattle or horses"—CALVIN. "This teaching of S. Paul is in harmony with the words of the Lord Jesus, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.' God gets His highest praise from the lips of little children, His robes of glory from the faithfulness, honour, and simplicity of born slaves"—REYNOLDS.

11. **The saving grace of God**—"so it is in its nature, tendency, and design—**hath appeared to all men**—high and low"—WESLEY.

The expression **bringing salvation to all men**, is another of those hard sayings which have been pressed into the service of that kindly but erring school of expositors which shuts its eyes to the contemplation of the many unmistakable sayings which warn the impenitent and hardened sinner of the sad doom of eternal death. The **grace** *alone* brings salvation to all men—in other words, it is that grace of God whereby alone it is possible for mankind to be saved. The expression by no means asserts that all men *will* be saved by it, but that it is the *only* means by which salvation is possible.

12. **Instructing us**—"all who do not reject it—**that, having renounced ungodliness**—whatever is contrary to the fear and love of God. **And worldly desires**—which are opposite to sobriety and righteousness. **We should live soberly**—in all purity and holiness. 'Sobriety,' in the Scripture sense, is rather the whole temper of a man, than a single virtue in him. It comprehends all that is opposite to the drowsiness of sin, the folly of ignorance, the unholiness of disorderly passions. Sobriety is no less than all the powers of the soul being consistently and constantly awake, duly governed by heavenly prudence, and entirely conformable to holy affections. **And righteously**—doing to all as we would they should do to us. **And godly**—as they who are consecrated to God both in heart and life"—WESLEY.

"**Teaching us**—*lit.* 'disciplining us'; educating us by life's sad experiences. God's grace is in truth a stern discipline of self-denial and training for higher things. **Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.** More accurately, 'to the intent that, having denied,' etc. The object of the loving discipline of our Father in heaven is that we, having done with those things in life which are offensive or dishonourable to God, having put aside as worthless all inordinate desires for the things of this world—all those things which exclusively belong to this life and have nothing to do with the life to come—having denied all this, that we should live as righteous men the remainder of our lives here"—SPENCE. "To **live soberly** is to have every temper, appetite, and desire, under the government of *reason*, and reason itself under the government of the Spirit of God"—CLARKE. "This gospel revelation is to teach, and not by way of information only, but by way of precept and command, as a sovereign that gives laws to his subjects. It directs what to follow, and what to avoid, and what to do. The gospel is not for speculation only or chiefly, but for practice and right ordering of life"—M. HENRY.

13. **Looking**—"with eager desire—**for that glorious appearing**—which we **hope** for—**of the great God even our Saviour Jesus Christ**—so that, if there be (according to the Arian scheme) a great God and a little God, Christ is not the little God, but the great one"—WESLEY.

"**Looking for the blessed hope and manifestation of the glory.** And that holy life, just urged on the believer, of quiet self-restraint, of love to others, of piety towards God, must be lit up by a blessed hope, by a hope which is far more than a hope; that holy life of the faithful must be a continued waiting for a blessed hope—'the hope which is laid up for us in heaven' (Col. 1. 5). It may be asked, What *is* this hope? We answer, it is 'the hope of glory' which we shall share with the Son of God, when we behold Him as He is. So for us the hope of glory is intimately bound up with the second coming of the Lord. Then the life of the lover of the Lord must be one continued looking for, waiting for, the coming of the Lord in glory—must be a looking for that hour when we shall see, in all His Divine majesty, Him who redeemed us. In that life and light, in that majesty and glory, His own will share. **Of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.** From the English version, it would seem that S. Paul's idea was that the Christian should live waiting for the glorious appearing of the great God, accompanied with our Lord Jesus Christ. In this sublime passage the glory of the Only-begotten Son *alone* finds mention. Taken thus, it is a studied declaration of the divinity of the

Eternal Son, who is here styled 'our great God and Saviour'"—SPENCE.

14. **Who gave Himself for us**—"to die in our stead—**that He might redeem us**—miserable bond-slaves, as well from the power and the very being, as from the guilt, of all our sins"—WESLEY.

Himself is emphatic—"His whole self, soul and body, and all He had or was; Himself, God-Man, which was certainly the greatest gift that was ever given, the highest price that was ever paid for anything in the world"—BEVERIDGE. **For us**—both for our benefit and salvation. **That He might redeem us**—by the ransom of His own blood—**from all iniquity**, which was holding us in bondage (John 8. 34). The other idea contained in "redemption," the setting free from condemnation, is found in Eph. 1. 7. **A peculiar people.** (See 1 Pet. 2. 9.) "The word **peculiar** meaning originally 'what remains, over and above,' and 'so set apart as such,' came to signify 'separate from,' with, perhaps, occasionally the additional notion of 'superior to.' The title 'a peculiar people,' which belongs to the Jewish Church under the old covenant, is transferred by S. Peter and S. Paul to the Christian Church under the new. The differentia, however, and marks of separation under the gospel, is zeal for good works"—S. C. **Who gave Himself for us.** (See Gal. 1. 4; Eph. 5. 25.) These words take up the thought expressed in the term "Saviour" of the last verse. "Himself," His whole self, as has been well said, "the greatest gift ever given"; "for us," that is, on our behalf. **That He might redeem us from all iniquity.** That He for us might pay a ransom, the ransom being His precious blood. Our Saviour, by the payment of this tremendous ransom—O deepest and most unfathomable of all mysteries!—releases us from everything which is opposed to God's blessed will. Here the mighty ransom is spoken of as freeing us from the bondage of lawlessness; elsewhere in the Divine books the same ransom is described as delivering us from the penalties of this same breaking the Divine law"—HOFMANN.

15. **Let no man despise thee**—"that is, let none have any just cause to despise thee. Yet they surely will. Men who know not God will despise a true minister of His word"—WESLEY.

Exhort the faithful, and **reprove** the disobedient and careless. **Let no man despise thee**—"not here as 1 Tim. 4. 12, on account of 'thy youth'; but do this with such gravity, earnestness, and consistency of conduct, that no one shall have any ground for slighting thy admonitions. Speak so as to command respect"—S. C. CLARKE says: "Few portions of the New Testament excel this chapter. It may well form the creed, system of ethics, and text-book of every Christian preacher. Does any man inquire, What is the duty of a gospel minister? Send him to the second chapter of the Epistle to Titus for a complete answer. There he will find what he is to *believe*, what he is to *practise*, and what he is to *preach*."

CHAPTER III

1. **Remind them**—"all the Cretan Christians—**to be subject**—passively, not resisting—**to principalities**—supreme—**and powers**—subordinate governors. And **to obey**—them actively, so far as conscience permits"—WESLEY.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers. Very careful and searching have been the apostle's charges to Titus respecting the teachers of the *Church*, their doctrine and their life; very particular have been his directions, his warnings, and exhortations to men and women of different ages on the subject of their *home* life. But, with the exception of a slight digression in the case of slave to a pagan master, his words had been written with a reference generally to Christian life among *Christians*. But there was then a great life outside the little Christian world. How were the people of Christ to regulate their behaviour in their dealings with the vast pagan world outside? S. Paul goes to the root of the matter at once when he says, "Put them in mind," etc. The Greek words translated "principalities and powers" are better rendered here by "rulers and authorities," as the word "principalities" is used occasionally in the English version for an "order of angels." The terms include all constituted governors and officials, Roman and otherwise, in the island. **To obey magistrates**—taken absolutely, "to obey the temporal power." Our Lord's words were the model for all teaching in this division of Christian ethics. One great teacher after the other, in the same spirit, in varied language, urges upon the people of Christ a reverence and submission to all legally constituted authority in the State.

2. **To speak evil**—"neither of them nor any man. **Not to be quarrelsome**—to assault none. **To be gentle**—when assaulted—**towards all men**—even those who are such as we were"—WESLEY.

"These commands of S. Paul to the church of Crete breathe throughout the Spirit of Christ, who 'when He was reviled, reviled not again'; who said, 'Love your enemies, . . . do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.' The things charged here by S. Paul were new virtues to men. They are held up to admiration by no heathen moralists. The meekness signifies kindly forbearance. This Christian feeling, which looks lovingly on all sorts and conditions of men, on the stranger and the outcast, even on the vilest sinner, is especially enjoined here. It is the same sweet spirit of love which desires, in 1 Tim. 2. 1, that prayer and supplication be made in the public Christian assembly for **all men**"—ELLICOTT.

3. **For we.** "And as God hath dealt with us, so ought we to deal with our neighbour — **were without understanding** — wholly ignorant of God—**and disobedient**—when He was declared to us"—WESLEY.

"The meaning is, As we were in the state in which they are now, but were rescued by the kindness of God, it becomes us to show kindness and gentleness towards those whom we were at one time like"—MEYER.

4. **When the love of God appeared**—"by the light of His Spirit to our inmost soul"—WESLEY.

Another thought now wells up in the apostle's mind. We of ourselves should never have become changed men, had not the kindness of God and His Divine love for men shown itself. We, indeed, have no ground for self-exaltation, no excuse for haughty treatment of others, either in thought or action; for if we now live other and purer lives than they live, our change to better and higher things was owing to no desert or merit of ours, but solely to the mercy and the love of God.

5. **Not by works.** "In this important passage the apostle presents us with a delightful view of our redemption. Herein we have —(1) The cause of it; not our 'works' or **righteousness**, but 'the kindness and love of God our Saviour.' (2) The effects; which are (*a*) Justification; 'being justified,' pardoned and accepted through the alone merits of Christ, not from any desert in us, **but according to His own mercy**, 'by His grace,' His free unmerited goodness. (*b*) Sanctification, expressed by **the laver of regeneration** (that is, baptism, the thing signified, as well as the outward sign), **and the renewal of the Holy Ghost**, which purifies the soul, as water cleanses the body, and renews it in the whole image of God. (3) The consummation of all—**that we might become heirs of eternal life**, and live now in the joyful hope of it"—WESLEY.

"In this passage, which is a brief but pregnant epitome of the gospel, the scheme of man's salvation is regarded only from the side on which it is wholly God's work, without taking note of the conditions and qualifications which, however much they too are God's work, are required from the co-operation of man. The apostle was dwelling on the truth that the change referred to in ver. 3 is not due to ourselves or our own merit, but to God's grace. He therefore had no occasion to allude here to the qualifications or stipulations required at baptism, nor to the faith by which man is justified, nor to 'the working out his own salvation,' which is one of the instruments by which the Holy Ghost renews us day by day, nor to the holiness which is the character and badge of the heirs of eternal life. All this is needed: but, viewed from God's side, it is not by anything which man has done or could do, but by His own free mercy that God has saved him"—WACE. **Not by works of righteousness.** This by no means asserts that such works ever had been done, and then produced, as it were, before the bar of God, and weighed and found insufficient; but it simply maintains that to *win* salvation such *must* be done. Sad experience, more forcibly than any theological assertion, has demonstrated to us all the utter impossibility of any of us, even the holiest, ever, even for one day, doing the works of a purely righteous man.

7. **That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.** "Here appears the glorious design of God's salvation. We were in a hopeless and lost state, from which God's love for man saved us by the laver of regeneration and renovation; and this was the end for which He saved us—that we should be 'heirs of eternal life.' 'Being justified,' that is, freed from the future punishment and consequences of sin, and received into the favour and friendship of God, which favour and friendship had been, through sin, forfeited. 'By His grace,' by the favour and kindness of God the Father, are we restored to His love and friendship. 'Heirs' (see Rom. 8. 17, where this thought of our heirship of heaven is enlarged). 'According to the hope of eternal life': this life eternal is still for us in the future, though ever present in respect of hope: children of God we indeed are, and sharers in many a good gift of our Father, but eternal life, *that* glorious inheritance, is still in the far future, and as yet can only be enjoyed by us in hope, but it is a sure hope—eternal life—the hope of which is the mainspring of all Christian work and activity—though it includes it, of course, is something far more than merely endless existence. A veil, impenetrable to mortal eye, hangs between us and the many mansions of the Father's house. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be,' we only know that then, we, in company with an innumerable host of blessed beings, shall share in the beatific vision; we only know that then 'we shall ever be with the Lord'; and that with this thought and with these words are we to 'comfort one another.' (See 1 Thess. 4. 17, 18)"—SPENCE.

8. **Be careful to excel in good works.** "Though the apostle does not lay these for foundation, yet he brings them in at their proper place, and then mentions them, not slightly, but as affairs of great importance. He desires that all believers should be 'careful'—have their thoughts upon them: use their best contrivance, their utmost endeavours, not barely to practise, but 'to excel,' to be eminent and distinguished in them: because, though they are not the ground of our reconciliation with God, yet they are amiable and honourable to the Christian profession. **And profitable to men**—means of increasing the

everlasting happiness both of ourselves and others"—WESLEY.

This is a faithful saying. "Then S. Paul, having, in those few but sublime words we have been considering, painted our present happy state,—happy even on earth, where the glorious promised inheritance was still only a hope,—and having shown how that this blessedness was the result of no efforts of our own, but that we owe it solely to the tender love and to the Divine pity of God for man—cries out Yes, 'faithful is this saying'! **And these things I will that thou affirm constantly**—will that ever and again, in the congregation, these words of mine, woven into the tapestry of creed, or hymn of thanksgiving or supplication, be repeated by the faithful believers in the Lord, to remind them, not only of the glorious hope of eternal life, but also to bring Him to their remembrance to whom they owe this glorious heritage; and as they repeat or hear the words telling them of the wondrous mercy shown to them for no merit or desert of their own, they will the more willingly think kindly of, and act loyally with, other men still living in that deep and loathsome darkness where they once dwelt, until God, in His pity, delivered them"—C. B.

9. **Avoid**—"'stand aloof' from **contention**, etc., *lit.* 'legal disputes,' arising out of interpretations of the Law, such as abound in the Talmud, and of which the question (Matt. 22. 36), 'Which is the great commandment in the Law?' in the spirit in which it was put, is an example"—S. C. The "questions" and "genealogies" have been discussed above. (1 Tim. 1. 4.) The apostle characterises them as "foolish," because they were of an utterly unpractical nature, and consumed time and powers which were needed for other and better things. The "contentions" were disputes and wranglings which arose out of arguments advanced by different teachers upon the "questions" and genealogies." The "strivings about the Law" were, most probably, arguments suggested by disputed and intricate points connected with the Law of Moses. In the Talmud we possess unnumbered instances of all these strange and curious inquiries about which men then gravely disputed and wrangled, but none of which could in any way teach men how to make life more beautiful and loving, more like that fair pattern which S. Paul's Master loved.

10. **An heretic, after a first and second admonition, reject**—"avoid, leave to himself. This is the only place, in the whole Scripture, where this word 'heretic' occurs; and here it evidently means, a man that obstinately persists in contending about 'foolish questions,' and thereby occasions strife and animosities, schisms and parties in the Church. This, and this alone, is an heretic in the Scripture sense; and his punishment likewise is here fixed:—Shun, avoid him, leave him to himself. As for the Popish sense, 'A man that errs in fundamentals,' although it crept, with many other things, early into the Church, yet it has no shadow of foundation either in the Old or New Testament"—WESLEY.

After one and a second admonition without effect, **shun.** Nothing more can be done with him. The word does not carry the idea of excommunication which is suggested by our translation. "There was, no doubt, some self-willed, factious party-leader in Crete well-known to S. Paul to whom he referred here; but partly out of a loving hope that Titus would win him to his side, partly from the knowledge that this letter was a public instruction to many a church besides that of Crete, the disturber remained nameless. He was to be exhorted once, twice, and then if he remained contumacious he was to be left simply alone to his own devices. The community over which Titus presided in the place of S. Paul no longer were to know the obstinate heretic as a brother"—ELLICOTT.

11. **Such an one is perverted** — "in his heart, at least—**and sinneth, being self-condemned**—being convinced in his own conscience that he acts wrong"—WESLEY.

"**Being condemned of himself.** This refers to the Judaising teacher, who maintained his party and opinions for filthy lucre's sake. He was conscious of his own insincerity, and that he proclaimed not his system from a conscientious love of truth, but from a desire to get his livelihood"—CLARKE. With these words the official portion of the letter to the presiding presbyter in Crete closes. S. Paul had begun with directions how the church life of the island—up to this period apparently devoid of organisation—was to be arranged; he concludes with instructions how to deal with any who presumed to set themselves in opposition to his plans for the government of the community. The central portion of the letter is occupied in discussing how Christian doctrine is to influence the lives of those accepting it, and especially it treats of the conduct of Christians towards the pagan world, with whom they will necessarily be brought into contact.

12. **When I shall send Artemas or Tychicus**—"to succeed thee in thy office. Titus was properly an evangelist, who, according to the nature of that office, had no fixed residence; but presiding over other elders, wherever he travelled from place to place, assisting each of the apostles according to the measure of his abilities. **Come to me to Nicopolis** — very probably not the Nicopolis in Macedonia, as the vulgar subscription asserts (indeed, none of those subscriptions at the end of S. Paul's Epistles are of any authority), rather, it was a town of the same name which lay upon the sea-coast of Epirus. **For I have determined to winter there.** Hence it appears, he was not there yet, if so, he would have said, to winter

'here.' Consequently, this letter was not written from thence"—WESLEY.

When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me. "But Titus is here reminded—perhaps with *some* reference to the question of the treatment of the factious or heretic person just alluded to—that he is only the temporary ruler of the Cretan church, on a special commission of the great missionary apostle. Not improbably one of these two was intended to supply the place of Titus, when this faithful and trusted assistant of S. Paul was recalled to his master's side. Of Artemas nothing certainly is known. Tradition, however, makes him subsequently Bishop of Lystra. Tychicus is mentioned in five of the New Testament writings—in Acts 20. 4; Eph. 6. 21; Col. 4. 7; 2 Tim. 4. 12; and here. He seems to have been one of the most esteemed of S. Paul's friends"—SPENCE.

13. **Send forward Zenas the lawyer**—"either a Roman lawyer or an expounder of the Jewish Law"—WESLEY.

"Of **Zenas** nothing certain is known; although various traditions of no value make him to have been one of the Seventy, to have written the life of Titus, and to have been Bishop of Diospolis. It is possible that Zenas and Apollos might be the bearers of this Epistle"—WACE. **Apollos.** This famous teacher appears often in the New Testament records, in the Acts, and several of the Epistles. He was a distinguished scholar and a disciple of John the Baptist, and he was converted to God by the agency of the devoted Priscilla and Aquila, the tent-makers.

14, 15. **And let ours**—"all our brethren at Crete—**learn**—both by the admonition and example. Perhaps they had not before assisted Zenas and Apollos as they ought to have done"—WESLEY.

And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses. "'Ours' that is, those who with S. Paul and Titus in Crete called upon the name of Jesus. A last reminder to the brethren, whom with a loving thought he calls 'ours,' constantly to practise good and beneficent works. In the expression 'let ours also learn' it would seem as though S. Paul would have Christians *trained* to the wise and thoughtful performance of works of mercy and charity. It was with such injunctions as these that men like S. Paul and S. James laid the foundation storeys of those great Christian works of charity—all undreamed of before the resurrection morning, but which have been for eighteen centuries in all lands the glory of the religion of Jesus—one grand result of the Master's presence with us on earth, which even His bitterest enemies admire with a grudging admiration. In the short compass of these Pastoral Epistles, in all only thirteen chapters, we have no less than *eight* special reminders to be earnest and zealous in good works. There was evidently a dread in S. Paul's mind that some of those who *professed* a love of Jesus, and *said* that they longed after the great salvation, would content themselves with a dreamy acquiescence in the great truths, while the life remained unaltered. It is noteworthy that these Epistles, containing so many urgent exhortations *to work* for Christ, were S. Paul's last inspired utterances. The passages in question are ch. 1. 16; 2. 7, 14; 3. 14; 1 Tim. 2. 10; 5. 10; 6. 18; 2 Tim. 2. 21. **All that are with me salute thee.** It is uncertain where S. Paul was when he wrote this letter. 'All that are with me' include those with him, journeying in his company. They are not named, because the individuals composing the immediate following of S. Paul would be likely to be well known to Titus. **Greet them that love us in the faith.** An inclusive greeting, embracing each member of the Cretan church, whose love to him (S. Paul) was based upon the common faith in the Lord Jesus. Greet all who love me, as the earnest preacher of their faith and mine"—SPENCE. **Amen.** The greater number of the ancient authorities omit "Amen."

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

"ONESIMUS, a servant to Philemon, an eminent person in Colosse, ran away from his master to Rome. Here he was converted to Christianity by S. Paul, who sent him back to his master with this Letter. It seems Philemon not only pardoned, but gave him his liberty; seeing S. Ignatius makes mention of him as succeeding Timotheus at Ephesus.

"THE LETTER HAS THREE PARTS—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1-3.
II. After commending Philemon's faith and love, . . . ,, ,, 4-7.
He desires him to receive Onesimus again, . . . ,, ,, 8-21.
And to prepare a lodging for himself, ... ,, ,, 22.
III. The Conclusion, ... ,, ,, 23-25."
—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

1. "This single Epistle infinitely transcends all the wisdom of the world. And it gives us a specimen how Christians ought to treat of secular affairs from higher principles. **Paul, a prisoner of Christ**—to whom, as such, Philemon could deny nothing. **And Timotheus.** This was written before the Second Epistle to Timothy (ver. 22)"—WESLEY.

It will be observed that S. Paul does not give himself the title of *apostle* in this place. The very first word in which he speaks of himself is pathetic. He refers to his chains no less than *five* times in this short letter (vers. 1, 9, 10, 13, 23). He feels it glorious to suffer shame for his Lord's sake, and blessed to inherit the beatitude of those who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matt. 5. 10). He literally fulfils the exhortation of S. Peter (1 Pet. 4. 14–16). HIERON says: "To me it seems a loftier thing that he should style himself **prisoner of Jesus Christ** than apostle. The apostles gloried because 'they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name' (Acts 5. 41); but the authority of bonds is irresistible. He who is about to plead for Onesimus feels that he should plead in such a form that he could not be refused." "**And Timothy our brother**—Timothy is joined with S. Paul in the opening verse of two other Epistles of the captivity. (Phil. 1. 1; Col. 1. 1.) The addition of Timothy's name would add weight to S. Paul's request"—S. C.

2. **To Apphia**—"his wife, to whom also the business in part belonged—**and the church in thy house**—the Christians who meet there"—WESLEY.

"It seems in the highest degree probable that Apphia was Philemon's wife; probable, but in a lower degree, that Archippus was their son. The mention of a woman between two such men, one the apostle's 'fellow-labourer' (ver. 1), the other his **fellow-soldier** (ver. 2), is a noble example of the spirit of the gospel, and of S. Paul's language, 'neither male nor female' (Gal. 3. 28). It is an unobtrusive yet real hint of the elevation of *woman*, as the whole letter is of the release of the other victim of classical civilisation, the *slave*"—S. C. **Church in thy house.** "The especially domestic and personal character of the Epistle need not induce any limitation of the phrase to Philemon's own family. As the joining of Timothy's name in giving the salutation did not prevent the letter from being S. Paul's only, so the joining the church in the house in the receiving of the salutation does not prevent its being addressed only to Philemon and his family, who were, like himself, interested in Onesimus"—BARRY.

4. **Making mention of thee always.** S. CHRYSOSTOM here gives us another of his touches of delicate insight. S. Paul would not have Philemon think that his letter was only for the slave—that, but for Onesimus, he might never have written at all. See then how S. Paul indicates other reasons for writing, one here, another in ver. 22.

5. **Hearing**—"probably from Onesimus"—WESLEY.

"The idea which runs through the letter is Philemon's **love to the saints.** In writing of that love S. Paul cannot refrain from referring to its true origin—the faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the broken phrase. The sense seems therefore to be that which in some MSS. has been brought out by a natural correction, **thy faith towards the Lord Jesus, and thy love to all the saints. I thank my God.** Note the almost exact verbal coincidence with the salutations in Eph. 1. 15, 16; Phil. 1. 1–6; Col. 1. 3, 4, with, however, the natural distinction that this is briefer and simpler in style"—C. B.

6. "I pray **that the communication of thy faith may become effectual**—that is, that thy faith may be effectually communicated to others, who see and acknowledge thy piety and charity"—WESLEY.

That the communication of thy faith. The general idea of S. Paul's prayer for Philemon is clear—that his "faith may become effectual," *i.e.* energetic and perfected, "in full knowledge." This is exactly the prayer which, in different forms and degrees of emphasis, opens all the Epistles of the captivity. (See Eph. 1. 17; Phil. 1. 9; Col. 1. 9.) It describes the true order of Christian life, so fully and beautifully drawn out in Eph. 3. 17–19, beginning in faith, deepened by love, and so growing to knowledge. HAMMOND says: "There is another kind of 'communicativeness'—the performing of all Christian offices of love—(1) praying with and for one another, (2) praising God with and for one another."

7. **The saints**—"to whom Philemon's house was open (ver. 2)"—WESLEY.

The apostle speaks here of the works of charity in which Philemon abounded towards poor Christians.

8. **I might be bold in Christ**—"through the authority He hath given me"—WESLEY.

"The balance and propriety of S. Paul's language in this place is not always understood. He does *not* say, 'I have no right at all to command you,' but 'authority I have to command your obedience—not, indeed, of earthly rank, but in the sphere of Christ.' This mingled tone of command and entreaty is the exact reflex of the mingled respect and affection which, in his earliest Epistle, he claims for the ministerial office (1 Thess. 5. 12, 14). There are two spirits which have prevailed in the Christian ministry at different times and in different circumstances—the spirit of the hierarch and the spirit of the religious demagogue. S. Paul's tone here shows that he was too humble for the first, and too full of gentle dignity for the second. The argument (vers. 7, 8, 9) is well and pointedly

put by S. CHRYSOSTOM, 'You refresh others; refresh me, both for *Christ's* sake and because it is *becoming*, consonant with right reason, and because *love* gives'"—S. C.

9. **Yet out of love I rather entreat thee.** "In how handsome a manner does the apostle just hint, and immediately drop, the consideration of his power to command, and tenderly 'entreat' Philemon to hearken to his friend, his aged friend, and now prisoner for Christ! With what endearment, in the next verse, does he call Onesimus his son, before he names his name! And as soon as he had mentioned it, with what fine address does he just touch on his former faults, and instantly pass on to the happy change that was now made upon him!—so disposing Philemon to attend to his request, and the motives wherewith he was going to enforce it"—WESLEY.

Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. "At this time S. Paul must have been between fifty and sixty, and after a life of unexampled labour and suffering he might well call himself 'aged,' not, perhaps, in comparison with Philemon, but in relation to his need of ministry from his 'son' Onesimus. It has been suggested by Dr. Lightfoot that we should read here (by a slight change, or without any change, in the original), 'the ambassador, and also the prisoner of Jesus Christ.' The parallel with Eph. 6. 20—'for which I am an ambassador in bonds'—and, indeed, with the tone in which S. Paul in the other Epistles speaks of his captivity as his glory, is tempting. But the change seems to take much from the peculiar beauty and pathos of the passage; which, from its appeal to love rather than to authority, suits especially with the thought, not of the glory of ambassadorship for Christ, but of the weakness of an old age suffering in chains"—C. B.

10. **Whom I have begotten in my bonds**—"the son of my age"—WESLEY.

"It is evident from this that Onesimus was converted by S. Paul while he was prisoner at Rome, and perhaps not long before he wrote this Epistle"—CLARKE.

11. **Now profitable.** "None should be expected to be a good servant before he is a good man. He manifestly alludes to his name, Onesimus, which signifies, 'profitable'"—WESLEY.

"How softly does S. Paul here speak! Not that Onesimus' sin was small, or that he would have any, much less himself, to so regard it; but having been humbled for it, and doubtless taken shame to himself on account thereof, the apostle now would not sink his spirit by continuing to burden him therewith, but speaks thus tenderly when he was pleading with Philemon not to make severe reflections on his servant's faults, but to forgive. The argument here urged is this: It will now be for thy advantage to receive him; thus changed as he is, thou mayest expect him to be a dutiful and faithful servant, though in time past he was not so"—M. HENRY.

12. **Receive him, that is, my own bowels**—"whom I love as my own soul. Such is the natural affection of a father in Christ toward his spiritual children"—WESLEY.

"I love him as I do myself, and have sent him back to thee that thou should'st so receive him; do it therefore for my sake."

13. **To serve me in thy stead**—"to do those services for me which thou, if present, wouldest gladly have done thyself"—WESLEY.

In thy stead. "A delicate assumption of Philemon's tender affection, as well as of the overwhelming obligation under which he lay to S. Paul. That obligation extended even to personal **ministration**, such as might lighten some of the inconveniences of captivity"—S. C.

14. **That thy benefit might not be by constraint**—"for Philemon could not have refused it"—WESLEY.

The benefit derived from the service of Onesimus S. Paul acknowledges as coming from Philemon, because given with his consent. He will not keep Onesimus and ask that consent by letter, lest it should be **as it were of necessity**, *i.e.* lest it should wear even the semblance of constraint. "S. Jerome from this passage justly deduces as a conclusion that S. Paul held the principle that 'nothing in moral action is good which is not voluntary.' He applies it to the solution of the question which has been so often asked, 'Why God did not make men absolutely good?' 'God might have made man good, without man's will. But, had He done so, the good would not have been *voluntary* but *necessary*. But what is necessarily good is not good in the highest sense, and is even relatively and in another point of view evil. Therefore, in leaving us to our own free will, He made us more truly after His image and likeness'"—HIERON.

15. God might permit him to be **separated** (a soft word) **for a season, that thou mightest have him for ever**—both on earth and in heaven"—WESLEY.

"Charity would so hope and judge, yea, so it would be; yet the apostle speaks cautiously, that none might be bold to make another such experiment in expectance of a like gracious issue. God often brings gain to His own people out of their losses"—M. HENRY.

16. **In the flesh**—"as a dutiful servant. **In the Lord** — as a fellow-Christian"—WESLEY.

In these words we have at last the principle which is absolutely destructive of the condition of slavery—a condition which is the exaggeration of natural inferiority to the effacement of the deeper natural equality. The slave is bought by Christ's blood, made a Son of God, and therefore a brother to all who are members of the family of God. To reject and to outrage him is a rejection and outrage towards Christ. Compare S. Peter's striking comparison of the

sufferings of the slave to the passion of the Divine Sufferer (1 Pet. 2. 18–24). They suffer with Him, and He suffers in them. It has been proved historically that only by the aid of this last and highest conception has the brotherhood of love—too slowly, indeed, but yet surely—assumed reality.

17. **If thou accountest me a partner**—"so that thy things are mine, and mine are thine"—WESLEY.

A partner. The title is peculiar. In the singular number (in which it is naturally more distinctive) and in absolute use, unconnected with explanatory words (such as we read in 1 Pet. 5. 1), it is nowhere else found, except in 2 Cor. 8. 23, where Titus is called S. Paul's "partner and fellow-helper"; and even there the context defines the partnership as relating to the collection and ministration of alms. Here it can hardly refer to general Christian fellowship, which would require some such words as "in Christ," or "in the Spirit," and would not fully justify the strong personal appeal of the passage. It must indicate some peculiar bond of fellowship between S. Paul and Philemon.

18. **If he hath wronged thee**, etc. "The form only in this sentence is hypothetical. The case is put as one which is absolutely unquestionable. No doubt Onesimus robbed his master when he ran away. The *consequence* of this is a debt at present unpaid. He wronged Philemon once for all, and consequently is in debt, if he has stolen—as he has done—and so is in debt. Flight and theft were instinctively associated in the mind of Romans as the kindred offences of slaves. It will be observed that S. Paul's teaching was not socialistic. Not private property, but the abstraction of it was theft in his estimation. **Put that on mine account.** Can the apostle be pointing to an imitation of the great *imputation*: 'If He took our infirmities and bare our stripes, the apostle in like manner puts himself for Onesimus, and pledges himself for his debt'? (Hieron). Philemon would receive a magnificent recompense—for a fugitive slave, a brother for ever; for the money he lost, an apostle as his debtor"—S. C.

19. **I will repay it**—"if thou requirest it. **Not to say, that thou owest me thyself**—it cannot be expressed, how great our obligation is to those who have gained our souls to Christ. **Besides**—receiving Onesimus"—WESLEY.

"It is clear from this passage that the apostle had money which he could rightly call his own. At Ephesus, where he probably first knew Philemon, it would probably be earned in the work with Aquila and Priscilla, as at Corinth, and it is possible that some of it might still remain. In Rome now, it could hardly be from any other source than the offerings from the church at Philippi. They were given him freely; he might fairly spend them on his own 'son in the faith.' **Albeit I do not say to thee**—*lit.* 'not to say to thee.' Here S. Paul escapes from the business-like promise of the last verse to the freer atmosphere of spiritual relations. He knew that this promise it was right for him to offer, but wrong for Philemon to accept. Philemon owed his own self—his new self in Christ—to the apostle. In that was a debt which he could not repay, but would rejoice even in this smaller matter to acknowledge"—BARRY.

20. **Refresh my bowels in Christ**—"give me the most exquisite and Christian pleasure"—WESLEY.

Philemon was S. Paul's "son in the faith," yet he entreats him as "a brother"; Onesimus a poor slave, yet he solicits for him as if he were seeking some great thing for himself.

21. **Do more than I say.** This can hardly refer to anything except the manumission of Onesimus, and possibly his being sent back again to S. Paul. Exactly in this way Christianity was to work out the release of the slave—not by command, but by free and natural inference from its emphatic declaration of his true brotherhood in Christ.

22. **Given to you**—"restored to liberty"—WESLEY.

A lodging. The word often signifies "hospitality" generally, which Philemon might naturally offer in his own house, but which S. Paul would not suggest or ask.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

"IT is agreed by the general tenor of antiquity that this Epistle was written by S. Paul, whose other Epistles were sent to the Gentile converts; this only to the Hebrews. But this improper inscription was added by some later hand. It was sent to the Jewish Hellenist Christians, dispersed through various countries. S. Paul's method and style are easily

observed therein. He places, as usual, the proposition and division before the treatise (Heb. 2. 17); he subjoins the exhortatory to the doctrinal part; quotes the same scriptures (Heb. 2. 8; 10. 30, 38; 1. 6); and uses the same expressions as elsewhere. But why does he not prefix his name, which, it is plain from Heb. 3. 19, was dear to them to whom he wrote? Because he prefixes no inscription, in which, if at all, the name would have been mentioned. The ardour of his spirit carries him directly upon his subject (just like S. John in his First Epistle), and throws back his usual salutation and thanksgiving to the conclusion.

"This Epistle of S. Paul, and both those of S. Peter (one may add, that of S. James and of S. Jude also), were written to the same persons, dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, and other countries, and nearly at the same time. S. Paul suffered at Rome, three years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Therefore this Epistle, likewise, was written while the Temple was standing. S. Peter wrote a little before his martyrdom, and refers to the Epistles of S. Paul; this in particular.

"The scope of it is, to confirm their faith in Christ; and this he does by demonstrating His glory. All the parts of it are full of the most earnest and pointed admonitions and exhortations; and they go on in one tenor, the particle *therefore* everywhere connecting the doctrine and the use.

"The Sum is, The Glory of Christ appears—

I. From comparing with Him the prophets and angels, . Chap. i. 1–14.
Therefore we ought to give heed to Him, ... ,, ii. 1–4.

II. From His Passion and Consummation:
Here we may observe—
1. The proposition and sum, ... ,, ,, 5–9.
2. The Treatise itself. We have a perfect author of salvation, who suffered for our sake, that He might be (1) a merciful, and (2) a faithful (3) High Priest, ... ,, ,, 10–13.

These three are particularly explained, His Passion and Consummation being continually interwoven.

1. He has the virtues of an High Priest:
(*a*) He is faithful, ... ,, iii. 1.
Therefore be ye not unfaithful, . . ,, iv. 13.
(*b*) He is merciful, ... ,, ,, 15.
Therefore come to Him with confidence, . ,, v. 3.
2. He is called of God an High Priest. Here:
(*a*) The sum is proposed, ... ,, ,, 4–10.
With a summary exhortation, . . Chap. v. 11—vi. 20.
(*b*) The point is copiously—
1. Explained. We have a great High Priest:
(1) Such as is described in Ps. 110.:
After the order of Melchisedec, . Chap. vii. 1–19.
Established by an oath, . . ,, ,, 20–22.
For ever, ... ,, ,, 23–28.
(2) Therefore peculiarly excellent:
Heavenly, ... ,, viii. 1–6.
Of the new covenant, . . . ,, ,, 7–13.
By whom we have an entrance into the sanctuary . . Chap. ix. 1, x. 18.
2. Applied. Therefore—
(1) Believe, hope, love, . . Chap. x. 19–25.

These three are further inculcated—	
(*a*) Faith with patience, . .	Chap. x. 26–39.
Which, after the example of the ancients, . .	Chap. xi. 1, xii. 1.
And of Christ Himself, .	Chap. xii. 2, 3.
Is to be exercised, . .	,, ,, 4–11.
Cheerfully, peaceably, holily,	,, ,, 12–17.
(*b*) Hope, ...	,, ,, 18–20.
(*c*) Love, ...	,, xiii. 1–6.
(2) In order to grow in these graces, make use of	
The remembrance of your former, .	,, ,, 7–16.
The vigilance of your present, pastors,	,, ,, 17–19.
To this period, and to the whole Epistle, answers—	
The Prayer, the Doxology, and the mild Conclusion, . . .	,, ,, 20–25.

"There are many comparisons in this Epistle, which may be nearly reduced to two heads—(1) The prophets, the angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, are great; but Jesus Christ is infinitely greater. (2) The ancient believers enjoyed high privileges; but Christian believers enjoy far higher. To illustrate this, examples both of happiness and misery are everywhere interspersed: so that in this Epistle there is a kind of recapitulation of the whole Old Testament. In this also Judaism is abrogated, and Christianity carried to its height"—WESLEY.

THE following is extracted from the Introduction of the Commentary on the Epistle to Hebrews by Dr. MOULTON, edited by Dr. ELLICOTT:—

AUTHORSHIP.

"The character of the Epistle is beyond all question Paul-like (if we may so speak, to avoid the ambiguity of "Pauline"). If, then, it is not to be ascribed directly to S. Paul, we must suppose either (1) that it is a translation from a Hebrew original written by him; or (2) that, whilst the substance of the Epistle is his, the diction and style belong to one of his companions, who, for some unexplained cause, put the apostle's thoughts into form; or (3) that the Epistle was written by a friend or disciple of S. Paul. Each of the four hypotheses may, as we have said, claim the evidence of early writers; but it is a matter of extreme difficulty rightly to estimate the value of this evidence. That the Epistle was *directly* written by S. Paul is an opinion of which we have no distinct evidence earlier than the third century.

"Much favour has in recent times been shown to the other tradition which Origen records—that the Epistle was written by S. Luke. The resemblance of language between this Epistle and S. Luke's writings are numerous and striking; but with all this there is great dissimilarity of style. The difference between a Letter such as this and historical or biographical memoirs must indeed be taken into account; but even when allowance has been made for this, it is difficult to receive the writer of the Acts as the author of our Epistle. Another consideration also is of weight. We can hardly doubt that we have before us here the work of a Jew; but S. Paul's words in Col. 4. 11–14, imply that S. Luke was of Gentile birth.

"The subject is not one for confident assertion; but we strongly doubt whether the Epistle can be ascribed to any of those suggested by ancient writers. One other hypothesis must be mentioned, which has commanded the adhesion of many of the ablest writers of recent times. Luther was the first to express (in his *Commentary on Genesis*) an opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was the work of Apollos. Some will maintain that conjecture is inadmissible,

but certainly all the conditions of the problem appear to be satisfied by this conjecture. The record of S. Luke in Acts 18. 24–28, 19. 1, supplemented by S. Paul's references in 1 Corinthians, might seem to have been expressly designed to show the special fitness of Apollos for writing such an Epistle as this."

CHAPTER I.

VERS. 1–14.—He in whom God has at last revealed Himself to man is Son of God, exalted above all angels.

1. **God, who at sundry times.** "The creation was revealed in the time of Adam; the last judgment, in the time of Enoch; and so at various times, and in degrees, more explicit knowledge was given. **In divers manners**—in visions, in dreams, and by revelations of various kinds. Both these are opposed to the one entire and perfect revelation which He has made to us by Jesus Christ. The very number of the prophets showed that they prophesied only 'in part.' **Of old.** There were no prophets for a large tract of time before Christ came, that the great Prophet might be the more earnestly expected. **Spake.** A part is put for the whole; implying every kind of Divine communication—**by the prophets**—the mention of whom is a virtual declaration that the apostle received the whole Old Testament, and was not about to advance any doctrine in contradiction to it. **Hath in these last times**—intimating that no other revelation is to be expected — **spoken** — all things, and in the most perfect manner. **By His Son** — alone. The Son spake by the apostles. The majesty of the Son of God is proposed—(1) Absolutely, by the very name of 'Son' (ver. 2), and by three glorious predicates — 'whom He hath appointed,' 'by whom He made,' who 'sat down,' whereby He is described from the beginning to the consummation of all things (vers. 2, 3). (2) Comparatively to angels (ver. 4). The proof of this proposition immediately follows: the name of 'Son' being proved (ver. 5); His being 'heir of all things' (vers. 6–9); His making the worlds (vers. 10–12); His sitting at God's right hand (vers. 13, etc.)"—WESLEY.

God, who at sundry times. "The fine arrangement of the words in the A.V. fails, it must be confessed, to convey the emphasis which is designed in the original. The writer's object is to place the former revelation over against that which has now been given; and the remarkable words with which the chapter opens (and which might not inaptly serve as the motto of the whole Epistle) strike the first note of contrast. If we may imitate the artistic arrangement of the Greek, the verse will run thus, 'In many portions and in many ways God having of old spoken unto the fathers in the prophets.' To the fathers of the Jewish people (comp. Rom. 9. 5) God's word was given part by part, and in divers manners. It came in the revelation of the patriarchal age, in the successive portions of Holy Writ; in the ministry of law, and of prophecy, and of promise, ever growing clearer through the teaching of experience and history. At one time the word came in direct precept, at another in typical ordinance or act, at another in parable or psalm. The word thus dealt out in fragments and variously imparted was God's word, for the revealing Spirit of God was 'in the prophets' (2 Cor. 13. 3). We must not unduly limit the application of 'prophet'; besides those to whom the name is directly given, there were many who were representatives of God to His people, and interpreters of His will. (Comp. Num. 11. 26, 29; Ps. 105. 15)"—MOULTON.

"The phrase, **in sundry portions and in divers manners**, *i.e.* 'in various parts and in many forms,' does not indicate any inferiority of the Old Testament revelation to the New, arising from its fragmentariness and the colour it received from circumstances and the many prophetic minds through whom it came. The expression rather signalises the variety and fulness of the Old Testament Word of God. The words **to the fathers** and **to us** mark another point of difference. The fathers are the Church and saints of Israel's past, for the writer is an Hebrew speaking to Hebrews; and 'to us' means to men posterior to the advent of Christ. God's speaking to the fathers extended over many ages, just as the succession of prophets did, in whom He spake; for though His revelation of the covenant, the chief word that He spake of old, was made through Moses, the greatest of the prophets (Deut. 34. 10; Hos. 12. 13; Acts 7. 37), to Israel of the Exodus, He raised up prophets in every age to expound and enforce it. But His speaking to us was bounded by the brief term of the Son's life upon earth. The words 'to us' might indicate the finality of the revelation given in the Son, for 'we' are they 'on whom the ends of the world are come' (1 Cor. 10. 11), and God's design was that 'they without us should not be made perfect' (ch. 11. 40). The Son is the greatest and last messenger of God to men. He makes the final revelation (ver. 2)"—DAVIDSON.

2. **Whom He hath appointed heir of all things.** "After the name of Son, His inheritance is mentioned. God 'appointed' Him the 'heir' long before He made the worlds (Eph. 3. 11; Prov. 8. 22, etc.). The Son is the firstborn, born before all things: the 'heir' is a term relating to the creation which followed (ver. 6). **By whom He also made the worlds** — therefore the Son was

before all worlds. His glory reaches from everlasting to everlasting, though God spake by Him to us only 'in these last days'"—WESLEY.

Hath in these last days, etc.—"better, 'at the end of these days spake unto us in a Son.' The thought common to the two verses is 'God hath spoken to man'; in all other respects the past and the present stand contrasted. The manifold successive partial disclosures of God's will have given place to one revelation, complete and final; for He who spake in the prophets hath now spoken 'in a Son.' The whole stress lies on these last words. The rendering 'a Son' may at first cause surprise, but it is absolutely needed; not, '*Who* is the Revealer?' but '*What* is He?' is the question answered in these words. The writer does not speak of 'a Son' in the sense of one out of many; the very contrast with the prophets (who in the lower sense were amongst God's sons) would be sufficient to prove this, but the words which follow, and the whole contents of this chapter, are designed to show the supreme dignity of Him who is God's latest Representative on earth. **Whom He hath appointed**—better, 'whom He appointed': in the Divine counsels He was constituted **heir of all things**"—MOULTON.

Whom He set heir of all things. "The verse gives a view of the Christian Mediator in His entire history, which was necessary in order to a full contrast with the mediators of the first covenant. The words represent the entire line of His history as He is *related to God*, and the end of the line, God's making Him heir of all things, was becoming the beginning of it, His being His Son and agent in making the worlds, and could not have been possible for any but the Son"—DAVIDSON.

3. **Who sat down**—"the third of these glorious predicates, with which three other particulars are interwoven (which are mentioned likewise and in the same order, Col. 1. 15, 17, 20). **Who being.** The glory which He received in His exaltation at the right hand of the Father no angel was capable of, but the Son alone, who likewise enjoyed it long before. **The brightness of His glory.** Glory is the nature of God revealed in its brightness. **The express image**—or stamp. Whatever the Father is, is exhibited in the Son, as a seal in the stamp on wax. **Of His person**—or substance. The word denotes the unchangeable perpetuity of Divine life and power. **And sustaining all things**—visible and invisible, in being. **By the word of His power**—that is, by His powerful word. **When He had by Himself**—without any Mosaic rites or ceremonies—**purged our sins**: in order to which it was necessary He should for a time divest Himself of His glory. In this chapter S. Paul describes His glory, chiefly as He is the Son of God; afterwards, Heb. 2. 6, etc., the glory of the man, Christ Jesus. He speaks, indeed, briefly of the former before His humiliation, but copiously after His exaltation; as from hence the glory He had from eternity began to be evidently seen. Both His purging our sins, and sitting at the right hand of God, are largely treated of in the seven following chapters. **Sat down**—the priests stood while they ministered; sitting, therefore, denotes the consummation of His sacrifice. This word, 'sat down,' contains the scope, the theme, and the sum of the Epistle"—WESLEY.

"This verse is exactly parallel in meaning to ver. 2, with one difference. Ver. 2 describes the Son in relation to God, and His history as something which God did unto Him; ver. 3 describes the Son in His own nature, and His history as something done by Himself under the impulse and in the power of His nature. The end of the history is the same in both cases, for 'made heir' corresponds to **sat down**, and the beginning is the same, for **brightness of His glory** is but an expansion of 'Son'; but the connection between the beginning and the end differs; the passage from 'Son' to 'heir' is through 'made the worlds,' while the passage from 'brightness of His glory' to **sat down at His right hand** is through **having made purification of sins.** Heirship of all things is the dignity befitting sonship, and only possible to a son; but it is more befitting, inasmuch as the Son was the maker of all things: sitting at the right hand of God is becoming one who is the brightness of His glory, and only possible to one of this Divine nature; but it was reached through making purification of sins. The one place which the Son now occupies was reached along two lines—one, the line of His essential being; the other, that of His moral history. **Who being the brightness of His glory**—*lit.* 'effulgence' of His glory. 'Being' describes what the Son was in His own nature, and the following words merely expand 'Son.' The reference is to the pre-existing state of the Son, what He was in Himself, which certainly explains how He sat down at the right hand of God. There scarcely seems material for answering the question, Was the Son the brightness of God's glory also in the days of His flesh? 'Glory' is not any external halo that surrounds the Divine nature; it is the Divine nature itself in its majesty and as manifested to the world. **Purged our sins.** To make purification of sins is to remove them by purification, to purify them away. The language is suggested by the Old Testament practice of sprinkling blood upon whatever was defiled by the sinful contact or manipulation of man. Things so sprinkled with sacrificial blood had the uncleanness that adhered to them purified away (ch. 9. 21, etc.). This is the Old Testament ceremonial in the sphere of the copies of things, to which corresponds the efficacy of Christ's blood in the sphere of the true things

(ch. 9. 23). The author, however, in his brief summary of the great steps through which the Son rose to the right hand of God, merely mentions this purification, postponing the full illustration of it till further on. (Ch. 9. 11–14; comp. 10. 20)"—DAVIDSON.

4. "This verse has two clauses, the latter of which is treated of (ver. 5), the former (ver. 13). Such transpositions are also found in the other Epistles of S. Paul, but in none so frequently as in this. The Jewish doctors were peculiarly fond of this figure, and used it much in all their writings. The apostle, therefore, becoming all things to all men, here follows the same method. All the inspired writers were readier in all the figures of speech than the most experienced orators. **Being**—by His exaltation, after He had been lower than them (Heb. 2. 9). **So much higher than the angels.** It was extremely proper to observe this because the Jews gloried in their Law, as it was delivered by the ministration of angels. How much more may we glory in the gospel, which was given, not by the ministry of angels, but of the very Son of God! **As He hath by inheritance a more excellent name**—because He is the Son of God, He inherits that name, in right whereof He inherits all things. His inheriting that name is more ancient than all worlds; His inheriting all things, as ancient as all things. **Than they.** This denotes an immense pre-eminence. The angels do not inherit all things, but are themselves a portion of the Son's inheritance, whom they worship as their Lord"—WESLEY.

"The apostle proceeds to the main argument of this part of his discourse—the superiority of our Lord to the angels. His first position is that, as Mediator, the Son is seated on the right hand of God; a distinction far beyond that of the most exalted creature. But this surpassing dignity resulted from the glory of His pre-existent state; and the doctrine of the rest of the chapter is that, in His relation to the work of redemption, He is as far superior to the angelic ministers of the Divine will as He was in His eternal nature. When our Lord is said to possess a name more excellent than the angels, it is to His nature, His essential qualities or relations, and not to His title or His official rank or dignity, that attention is primarily and specifically demanded"—TREFFRY. This verse states explicitly the contrast between the present redemptive place of the Son (which embraces and is only possible through His being the Son), but was reached through His life in the flesh (ch. 2. 9) as sketched in vers. 1–3, and the place of the angels. The Son became "better" than the angels. This redemptive dignity to which the Son attained was in harmony with His name of Son (comp. 3. 6; 5. 5), and is as much higher than the place of angels as the name of Son, which belongs to Him, is more excellent than the name of "angels" or messengers by which they are called. (Comp. Phil. 2. 7, etc.; Eph. 1. 20, etc.) This contrast of the Son with the angels is for the purpose of showing His superiority generally to all beings, even the highest, but especially to the angels as revealers of the Old Testament covenant and heads of the Old Testament world (ch. 2). The contrast is properly one of the two worlds in the persons of their heads.

5. **Thou art My Son**—"God of God, Light of Light. **This day have I begotten thee**—I have begotten Thee from eternity, which, by its unalterable permanency of duration, is one continued, unsuccessive day. **I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son**—I will own Myself to be His Father, and Him to be My Son, by eminent tokens of My peculiar love. The former clause relates to His natural Sonship, by an eternal, inconceivable generation; the other, to His Father's acknowledgment and treatment of Him as His incarnate Son. Indeed this promise related immediately to Solomon, but in a far higher sense to the Messiah"—WESLEY.

For unto which of the angels, etc. "'God has spoken of the Messiah as His Son, a title which no angel ever receives from Him.' That the appellation 'sons of God' may be used in an inferior sense, and that thus angels may be so designated (Job 1. 6; 38. 7), does not affect this argument; for every reader must perceive that in these quotations 'Son' is used of One, and in a sense that is unique. The two quotations are taken from Ps. 2. 7 and 2 Sam. 7. 14. It seems probable that the second Psalm was written by David during the troublous times of (2 Sam. 8.–10.) in the fresh recollection of the promises of which we read in 2 Sam. 7. In the midst of the rebellious conspiracies of kings and nations is heard Jehovah's word, 'Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion' (Ps. 2. 6). In ver. 7 the anointed King declares the Divine decree, 'The Lord hath said unto Me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee'; and the following verses describe the kingly dominion of the Son"—MOULTON. "S. Paul here institutes an argument upon this very passage in the second Psalm, to prove the superiority of Christ to the angels. The force of the argument lies in the expression **begotten**, importing that the Person addressed is the Son of God, not by creation but by generation. Christ's pre-eminence over the angels is here stated to consist in this, that, whereas they were created, He is begotten; and the apostle's reasoning is fallacious, unless this expression intimates a proper and peculiar filiation"—WATSON.

6. **And again**—"that is, in another scripture—**He**—God—**saith when He bringeth in His first-begottcn.** This appellation includes that of Son, together with the rights of primogeniture, which the First-begotten Son of God enjoys, in a manner not communicable to any creature. **Into the world**—namely, at His Incarnation. **He saith, Let all the angels of**

God worship Him—so much higher was He, when in His lowest estate, than the highest angel"—WESLEY.

"The term **First-born** is a recognised name of the Messiah. Primarily it expresses priority to all creatures (Col. 1. 15), and in this sense God Himself receives the name of 'First-born,' but here probably it means nothing more than Son with the additional idea that the Son is greatly honoured and heir (Ps. 89. 27). Being heir He shall be brought again into the world of men and installed into His inheritance, and then shall all the angels worship Him. The present **saith** is used of words ever present in Scripture. **And let . . . worship Him.** Words somewhat similar are found in Ps. 97. 7, 'Worship Him all His angels' (LXX.). Most probably the exact words are taken from Deut. 32. 43 in the Greek translation, which here contains some verses not found in the Hebrew. The Song of Moses is there run out so as to present a picture of the consummation of all things, in which the manifestation of Jehovah for salvation and judgment, and the universal homage to Him of all beings constitute the main features. The point of view of the psalm is the same. But this manifestation of Jehovah is no other, as the progress of revelation has shown, than His manifestation in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Hence what is said of Jehovah is applied to Christ as He has appeared, and shall appear again for judgment and salvation"—DAVIDSON.

7. **Who maketh His angels.** "This implies, they are only creatures, whereas the Son is eternal (ver. 8); and the Creator Himself (ver. 10). **Spirits and a flame of fire**—which intimates not only their office, but also their nature; which is excellent indeed, the metaphor being taken from the most swift, subtle, and efficacious things on earth; but nevertheless infinitely below the majesty of the Son"—WESLEY.

His angels spirits—better, "His angels winds." The quotation is from Ps. 104. 4, according to the Greek translation. Two things are expressed—first, the service of the angels; and, second, their alliance in this service to the material elements; under God's transforming hand they suffer a change into winds and a flame of fire. This idea is not to be pressed so far as to imply that the angelic essence undergoes a transformation into material substance, but only that the angels are clothed with this material form, and in their service assume this shape to men.

8. **O God.** "God, in the singular number, is never in Scripture used absolutely of any but the supreme God. **Thy** reign, of which the **sceptre** is the ensign, is full of justice and equity"—WESLEY.

"The argument of the apostle here determines the sense in which he calls Jesus, the Son, **God**, and the view he entertains of His nature. Angels and men are the only rational created beings in the universe which are mentioned by the sacred writers. The apostle argues, that Christ is superior even to angels; that they are but ministers, He a Sovereign, seated on a throne; that they worship Him, and that He receives their worship; that they are creatures, but He the Creator"—WATSON. "In this and the following verses the apostle proceeds to exhibit from another passage in the Psalms how far exalted above the angels is the Son. The angels are subject to change, according to the will of God, whose servants they are, while HE is the unchangeable, ever-reigning KING. The chief point of the *antithesis* is the dependent and changing service, in contrast to the Divine and immutable sovereignty"—DELITZSCH.

9. **Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity**—"thou art infinitely pure and holy. **Therefore God**—who, as thou art Mediator, is **thy God—hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness**—with the Holy Ghost, the fountain of joy—**above Thy fellows**—above all the children of men"—WESLEY.

"God declares of Christ how He was qualified for the office of Mediator and how He was installed and confirmed in it. God's anointing of Christ signifies both His qualifying of Him for the office of Mediator, with the Holy Spirit and all His graces, and likewise His inauguration of Him into the office, as prophets, priests, and kings were, by anointing"—M. HENRY. **Anointed with oil . . . fellows.** As kings were anointed when called to the throne, the phrase means, made King. **Gladness** describes the height and joy of the rule to which this King is called. His "fellows" in the Psalms are probably other princes; if any special force be attached to the expression here, it no doubt means the angels as dwellers in the city of God (Heb. 12. 22), and thus the fellows of the Son.

10. **Thou**—"the same to whom the discourse is addressed in the preceding verse"—WESLEY.

"These words (vers. 10–12) are quoted from Ps. 102. 25–27, which all acknowledge to be a loftier description of the eternity of God. They are here applied to Christ; and of Him they affirm that He was before the material universe; that it was created by Him; that He has absolute power of it; that He shall destroy it; that He shall do this with infinite ease, as one folds up a vesture (ver. 12); and that, amidst the decays and changes of material things, He remains the same"—WATSON.

11. **And they all**, etc.—both the earth and the heavens. See Isa. 34. 4, "The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll"; and Isa. 51. 6, "The earth shall wax old like a garment."

12. **As a mantle**—"with all ease. **They shall be changed**—into new heavens and a new earth. **But thou art** eternally **the same**"—WESLEY.

And as a vesture—"rather (see ver. 10). **And as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up**

—**as a garment shall they also be changed.** The course of thought is easily traced; as the garment which has grown old is rolled up and changed, so the former heavens and earth shall give place to the new heavens and the new earth"—MOULTON.

13. **But to which of the angels.** "The final appeal is made to that Psalm which more frequently than any other is quoted in reference to Christ, and which we have already seen to be the source of all the New Testament references to the Saviour's session at the right hand of God. It is not necessary to say much here respecting Ps. 110., to which so many allusions will be made in the course of this Epistle. That it was regularly understood by the Jews of our Lord's time to be a messianic Psalm is clear both from Matt. 22. 43, 44, and from the independent notices which we possess. Most probably, it stands alone amongst the Psalms as being simply prophetic; the words of ver. 1 have never been addressed either to angels or to an earthly king"—MOULTON.

14. **Are they not all**—"though of various orders—**ministering spirits sent forth**—ministering before God, sent forth to men—**to attend on them**—in numerous offices of protection, care, and kindness. **Who**—having patiently continued in welldoing, **shall inherit** everlasting **salvation**"—WESLEY.

Final contrast between the place of the Son and that of angels in redemptive history. The Son who sits at God's right hand till all things be put in subjection under His feet (ch. 2. 9; 10. 13) is Himself the end and aim of this history; the angels are **all** but servants, helping forward its movements. God rules all for the Son; He sends forth the angels to do His service—a service which they render Him even in behalf of men, who shall be heirs of salvation. The citation is from Ps. 110. 1, which might be said to be the text of the Epistle: "Salvation" has two sides; positively, it is inheritance of the world to come, the destined heritage of man (chaps. 2. 3, 10; 5. 9; 6. 9; 9. 28); negatively, it is deliverance from death, which stands in the way of this heritage (ch. 2. 14, etc.; comp. ch. 5. 7), and from all evils that may oppress men till the revelation of the Son from heaven (ch. 7. 25; comp. ch. 9. 28).

TREFFRY says: "The apostle concludes the chapter, by stating the active relations severally of the Son of God and of angels to the evangelical work; a point of contrast not less decisive than those which precede. He sits upon the throne of God. They, on the other hand, are occupied in the services of love and tenderness which are to contribute to the security and joy of His **elect**, and to the consummation of His glory in the end of the ages." "The last word, **salvation**, expresses the Divine purpose indicated by all the prophecies that have passed under review. The chapter has been occupied with promises of the Christ: the last word brings before us Jesus, the Saviour"—MOULTON.

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1–4. These verses must be closely joined with the first chapter. Before advancing to the next step in his argument, the writer pauses to enforce the duty which results from what has been already established. But (as in ch. 4. 14–16) the exhortation does not interrupt the thought, but rather serves as a connecting link.

In this and the two following chapters, the apostle subjoins an exhortation, answering each head of the preceding chapter.

1. **Lest we should let them slip**—"as water out of a leaky vessel. So the Greek word properly signifies"—WESLEY.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard—"better, 'to the things heard'; for this expression contains the complement of the thought of ch. 1. 1. Both 'speak' and 'hear' are words which carry weighty emphasis in this Epistle. (See chaps. 1. 1; 2. 2; 12. 25; 3. 5, 7; 4. 2, *et al.*) Because of the supreme dignity of Him in whom at the last God speaks, men are bound to give the more earnest heed to the words spoken, whether heard by them from the Lord Himself or (as in this case, ver. 3) from His servants. **Lest at any time we should let them slip.** This translation (first introduced by the Genevan Bible of 1560) substantially gives the sense, but inverts the figure presented in the Greek. The words must be rendered 'lest possibly we drift away' (Wyclif, 'lest perauenture we fleten awey'). It is the man that is in danger of being carried along by the current; unless the mind be held closely to the words that God has spoken, it must drift away from them, and from the salvation which they promise. There seems no foundation for the rendering of the margin, first given in the Genevan Testament of 1557"—MOULTON.

2. "In giving the Law, God **spoke by angels**, but in proclaiming the gospel, by His Son. **Steadfast**—firm and valid. **Every transgression**—commission of sin. **Every disobedience**—omission of duty"—WESLEY.

The word spoken by angels—"or rather, 'through angels.' (Comp. ch. 1. 2.) The word was God's 'but angels were the medium through which it was given to men. In accordance with the tone of the whole passage (in which the thought is not the reward of obedience, but the peril of neglect of duty), 'the word' must denote Divine *commands* delivered by angels, and—as the close parallel presented by ch. 10. 28, 29, seems to prove—especially the commands of the Mosaic Law"—MOULTON.

3. **So great a salvation**—"a deliverance from so great wickedness and misery, into so great holiness and happiness. This was first **spoken of** (before He came it was not known) **by** Him who is **the Lord**—of angels as well as men. **And was confirmed to us**—of this age, even every article of it—**by them that had heard Him**—and had been themselves also

both eye-witnesses and ministers of the word"—WESLEY.

How shall we escape. "The 'we' (being expressed in the original) is emphatic—*we* who are sons, not servants. The verb means 'how shall we succeed in escaping,' or 'make good our escape'—namely, from similar but yet more awful punishment. (Comp. ch. 12. 25.) **If we neglect**—rather 'after neglecting,' or 'when we have neglected.' **So great salvation.** The transcendence (ch. 7. 25) of the safety provided is a measure of the guilt involved in ceasing to pay any attention to it. (Ch. 10. 29; John 12. 48.) It came from Christ, not from angels; its sanctions are more eternal; its promises more Divine; its whole character more spiritual. **Spoken by the Lord.** The gospels show that Jesus was the first preacher of His own gospel. (Mark 1. 14.) **The Lord**, standing alone, is very rarely, if ever, used as a title for Christ by S. Paul. 1 Thess. 4. 15; 2 Thess. 2. 2; 2 Tim. 4. 18, are, to say the least, indecisive"—FARRAR.

4. **By signs and wonders**—"while He lived—**and various miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost**—miraculous gifts, distributed after His exaltation—**according to His own will**—not theirs who received them"—WESLEY.

God also bearing them witness—"that is, 'bearing witness with them' to the truth they preached. Mark 16. 20 is a striking parallel; see also Acts 4. 30. The Divine attestation was given by miracle and by **gifts** (*lit.* 'distributions,' as in the margin, see 1 Cor. 12. 11) 'of the Holy Ghost.' We have here, as in Acts 2. 22 and 2 Cor. 12. 12, the full threefold expression of miracles, as **signs** and **wonders** and **powers**; as wonderful works that are wrought by Divine power, and are thus signs of the Divine presence, and symbols of a corresponding spiritual work"—MOULTON. "**Signs** to show that there was a power behind their witness; **portents**, to awaken the feeling of astonishment, and so arouse interest; and various **powers**. These are alluded to, or recorded, in Mark 16. 20; Acts 2. 43; 19. 11. S. Paul himself appealed to his own 'mighty signs and wonders' (Rom. 15. 18, 19; 1 Cor. 2. 4)"—FARRAR.

Vers. 5–18. It was needful that Jesus, as Author of salvation to man, should in all points be made like to those whom He saves, and in their likeness suffer and die; thus He becomes for them a merciful and faithful High Priest.

5. "This verse contains a proof of the third; the greater the salvation is, and the more glorious the Lord whom we despise, the greater will be our punishment. **God hath not subjected the world to come**—that is, the dispensation of the Messiah, which, being to succeed the Mosaic, was usually styled by the Jews, 'the world to come,' although it is still in great measure to come. **Whereof we now speak**—of which I am now speaking. In this last great dispensation the Son alone presides"—WESLEY.

For unto the angels hath He not, etc.—"rather, 'for not unto angels did He put in subjection. There is an unexpressed antithesis in both clauses of the verse—'not unto angels' (but, on the contrary, to man—as prophecy shows, ver. 6) 'did He subject the world to come' (as He subjected this world). The words are the author's general preliminary statement. This is supported by adducing Ps. 8., in which he finds both these things expressed; for that God subjected this world and its inhabitants to angels is expressed in the words, 'Thou madest Him for a little lower than the angels' (ver. 7); and that He did not subject the world to come to angels in the words, 'Thou crownedst Him with glory, and didst put all things under his feet' (vers. 7, 8). The former idea appears in ver. 2, and elsewhere in Scripture (Dan. 4. 13, 17, 23; 10. 13, 20), and in the writings of Jewish theologians. In Deut. 30. 8 the LXX. renders 'angels of God' where the Hebrew reads 'Children of Israel.' The indefinite *did put* expresses the almost legislative scheme of man's history drawn in Ps. 8. **The world to come**—*lit.* 'the inhabited world to come' (ch. 1. 6). The phrase 'to come' does not seem here merely to express the antithesis between 'this world' and the new order of things introduced through Christ; with this there is at least included the idea that this new order is still future. (Comp. 'city to come,' ch. 13. 14; 6. 5.) Throughout the Epistle the great antithesis is 'this world' and 'the world to come.' The former, visible, material, transient, to which belongs, as part of it, the first covenant; the other, real heavenly, and eternal, access into which is through the new covenant. The first is subjected to angels, particularly as revealers of the Law; but under their rule seems embraced the whole pre-Christian condition of things, embracing man in his earthly and mortal condition. Salvation is escape from this and possession of the heavenly world. In this world to come the angels have no more rule; all things, without exception, are put in subjection to man (ver. 8)"—DAVIDSON.

6. **What is man**—"to the vast expanse of heaven, to 'the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained'? This Psalm seems to have been composed by David, in a clear, moonshiny, and starlight night, while he was contemplating the wonderful fabric of heaven; because in his magnificent description of its luminaries, he takes no notice of the sun, the most glorious of them all. The words here cited concerning dominion were doubtless in some sense applicable to Adam; although in their complete and highest sense they belong to none but the second Adam. **Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?** The sense rises; we are **mindful** of Him that is absent; but to 'visit' denotes the care of a present God"—WESLEY.

But one in a certain place, etc.—"better, 'somewhere.' The expression is perfectly indefinite. (Comp. ch. 4. 4.) As a rule, the words of Scripture are in this Epistle quoted as God's own utterances; and though the nature of the quotation (which is an address to God) made this impossible here, the writer seems gladly to avoid the mention of the human prophet, perhaps as distracting the thought from the Divine prophecy. This studious indefiniteness in citation is common in Philo, and sometimes occurs where he cannot possibly have been in doubt as to the source of his quotation. **Testified**—that is, in biblical usage 'solemnly declared'; the words are no light exclamation of wonder"—MOULTON.

What is man. "The Hebrew word *enosh* means man in his weakness and humiliation. The 'what' expresses a double feeling—how mean in himself! how great in *Thy* love! David twice makes the exclamation, 'What is man?'—once when he is thinking of man's frailty in connection with his exaltation by God (Ps. 8); and once (Ps. 144. 3) when he is thinking only of man's emptiness and worthlessness, as being undeserving of God's care. (Comp. Job 7. 17)"—FARRAR.

7. "**Thou hast made him**—Adam—**a little lower than the angels.** The Hebrew is, 'a little lower than' (that is, next to) 'God.' Such was man as he came out of the hands of his Creator; it seems, the highest of all created beings. But these words are also, in a further sense, as the apostle here shows, applicable to the Son of God. It should be remembered that the apostles constantly cited the LXX. translation, very frequently without any variation. It was not their business, in writing to the Jews, who at that time had it in high esteem, to amend or alter this, which would, of consequence, have occasioned disputes without end"—WESLEY.

"There is one in whom the Divine purpose is fulfilled in all its parts. He was made a little (the rendering of the margin, 'a little while' is much less probable) lower than angels, and He is crowned with glory. In one point we note an apparent departure from the sense of the Psalm, since the words **a little lower**, which there denote dignity, here denote humiliation. This difference is not essential; in each case it is the position of man that is signified, and our Lord's assumption of human nature must in any case be spoken of as a descent to a lower sphere. There is a peculiar fitness in the use of the human name, Jesus, for Him in whom the Psalmist's words concerning man are literally fulfilled"—MOULTON.

8. "Now this **putting all things under Him** implies that there is **nothing that is not put under Him.** But it is plain this is not done now, with regard to man in general"—WESLEY.

"**Thou hast put**—rather 'Thou didst put' by one eternal decree. This clause should be added to the last verse. The clause applies, not to Christ (as in 1 Cor. 15. 25), but to man in his redeemed glory. **All things.** This is defined in the Psalm (8. 7, 8) to mean specially the animal world, but is here applied to the universe in accordance with its messianic application. (Matt. 28. 18.) **For.** The 'for' continues the reasoning of ver. 5. The writer with deep insight seizes upon the juxtaposition of 'humiliation' and 'dominion,' as a paradox which only found in Christ its full solution. **He left nothing that is not put under Him.** The inference intended to be drawn is not 'and therefore even angels will be subject to man,' but 'and therefore the control of angels will come to an end.' When, however, we read such a passage as 1 Cor. 6. 3, 'know ye not that we shall judge angels?' it is uncertain whether the author would not have admitted even the other inference. **But now**—*i.e.* 'but in this present earthly condition of things' man is not as yet supreme. We see as a fact man's humiliation; we perceive by faith the glorification of Jesus, and of all humanity in Him. **Under him**—*i.e.* under man"—FARRAR.

9. "It is done only with regard to Jesus, God-Man, who is now **crowned with glory and honour**—as a reward for His having suffered death. **He was made a little lower than the angels**—who cannot either suffer or die. **That by the grace of God, He might taste death**—an expression denoting both the reality of His death and the shortness of its continuance. **For every man**—that ever was or will be born into the world"—WESLEY.

In accordance with the order of the original, the verse should be rendered, **But we look upon Him who has been, for a little while, made low in comparison of angels—even Jesus—on account of the suffering of death, crowned,** etc. **Who was made a little lower than the angels.** This alludes to the temporal ("for a little while") and voluntary humiliation of the incarnate Lord. (See Phil. 2. 7-11.) For a short time Christ was liable to agony and death from which angels are exempt; and even to the "intolerable indignity" of the grave. **For the suffering of death**—rather, "*because of* the suffering of death." The *vitâ crucis* was the appointed *vitâ lucis.* (Comp. ch. 5. 7–10; 7. 26; 9. 12.) This truth—that the sufferings of Christ were the willing path of His perfectionment as the "Priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6. 13)—is brought out more distinctly in this than in any other Epistle. WATSON adds: "**to die for us** must be understood to mean in the place and stead of man, as a sacrificial oblation, by which satisfaction is made for the sins of the individual, so that they become remissible upon the terms of the evangelical covenant. When, therefore, it is said that Christ, **by the grace of God tasted death for every man**, it can only be fairly concluded from such a declaration, and from many other familiar texts, in which the same phraseology

is employed, that, by the death of Christ, the sins of every man are rendered remissible, and that salvation is consequently attainable by every man." "There is an apparent difficulty in the position of the last clause of the verse, 'that He should taste death for every man.' We cannot doubt that these words depend on those which immediately precede; and yet how can it be said that Jesus has been crowned with glory in order that He may 'taste death for every man'? Almost all difficulty is removed if we consider that (to use Dean Alford's words) 'it is on the triumphant issue of His sufferings that their efficacy depends.' But it is impossible for the Christian to separate, even in thought, the one from the other—the sufferings from the certain triumph. We might, perhaps, say that it is only by a misuse of human analogies that we separate them even in *time:* in the Gospel of S. John, at all events (if not in this very Epistle—see ver. 14), we are taught that *in His crucifixion* Jesus is exalted. This clause, then, brings us back to the thought of the glory reserved for man; through death the fulfilment of God's purpose might seem to be frustrated; through the death of Jesus on behalf of every man (1 Pet. 3. 18) it is fulfilled" —MOULTON.

10. "In this verse the apostle expresses, in his own words, what he expressed before in those of the psalmist. **It became Him**—it was suitable to all His attributes, both to His justice, goodness, and wisdom. **For whom**—as their ultimate end. **And by whom**—as their first clause—**are all things in bringing many** adopted **sons to glory**—to this very thing, that they are sons, and are treated as such. **To perfect the Captain**—Prince, leader, and author **of their salvation by** His atoning **sufferings** for them. To 'perfect' or consummate implies the bringing Him to a full and glorious end of all His troubles. (Heb. 5. 9.) This consummation by suffering intimates (1) the glory of Christ, to whom being consummated, all things are made subject; (2) the preceding sufferings. Of these he treats expressly (vers. 11-18); having before spoken of His glory, both to give an edge to his exhortation, and to remove the scandal of sufferings and death. A fuller consideration of both these points he interweaves with the following discourse on His priesthood. But what is here said of our Lord's being 'made perfect through sufferings,' has no relation to our being saved or sanctified by sufferings. Even He Himself was perfect, as God and as man, before ever He suffered. By His sufferings, in His life and death, He was made a perfect or complete sin-offering. But unless we were to be made the same sacrifice, and to atone for sin, what is said of Him in this respect is as much out of our sphere as His ascension into heaven. It is His atonement, and His Spirit carrying on 'the work of faith with power' in our hearts, that alone can sanctify us. Various afflictions, indeed, may be made subservient to this; and so far as they are blessed to the weaning us from sin, and causing our affections to be set on things above, so far they do indirectly help on our sanctification"—WESLEY.

"**For**—what seemed to Jews incredible, that the Christ should die, was ordained 'by the grace of God.' For thus to make sufferings the path to His kingdom was worthy of God, for whose glory and through whose power all things exist; who as Creator commands all agencies, and who cannot but do that which will subserve His glory. If the means at which men wondered were chosen by God, no one may doubt their supreme fitness for the end. In what this fitness consisted the following words partially explain. **In bringing.** It is doubtful whether the Greek word should not be rendered, 'having brought.' With this translation we must certainly explain the words on the same principle as the past tenses of vers. 7 and 8. As in the Divine counsels all things *were* subjected to man, with the same propriety it may be said that God *had* brought many sons to glory when the Saviour suffered and died. **Many sons.** The new thought here introduced is of great importance in the argument. The Divine purpose is to bring many sons (comp. ch. 1. 14) unto glory—the glory already spoken of as reserved for man—through His Son, who has Himself received this glory that He may make it theirs. **Captain.** This word occurs in three other places. In Acts 5. 31 it bears its original meaning, 'Leader' ('a Leader and a Saviour'); in ch. 12. 2 and Acts 3. 15 the idea of 'leading the way' has passed into that of origination"—MOULTON. "The term **Captain** means leader, then originator to others; in many cases the idea that the leader shares in that to which he leads others falls away, and the word merely means 'author.' **To make perfect** does not mean to endow with all excellent qualities, but to bring to the *end*, that is, the appropriate or appointed end, the end corresponding to the idea. What this end is in any case will be suggested from that which is made perfect. Here it is the Author of salvation, or, as He is called (ver. 11), the Sanctifier. To make Him perfect will be to bring Him into that condition in which He is ideally complete as the Author of salvation and Sanctifier. Coming so near 'crowned with glory' (ver. 9), and in the whole connection of chaps. 1, 2, 'perfection' describes the Son's supreme place in the economy of salvation. **It became . . . bringing many sons,** etc. What it befitted God to do was not, of course, to bring many sons to glory—such a statement did not need to be made: nor yet to make the Son the Captain of salvation—the fitness of this hardly required a special emphasis; but to make the Son, the Author of salvation, perfect through the suffering of death—and yet not this simply; what befitted God was to make perfect the Author of salvation through

sufferings, bringing (or when He brought) at the same time many sons to glory. The fitness was in God, Him on account of whom and through whom all things are. The act befitting Him was to make the Author of salvation perfect through sufferings. This was befitting when He brought many sons to glory. The ground of the fitness, so far as it is expressed, lay in the relation of this act to the other act, 'bringing,' etc. 'Many' is not used in opposition to 'all,' but states positively that the sons are many, and thus perhaps adds a shade of confirmation to the fitness"—DAVIDSON.

11. **For**—"they are nearly related to each other—**He that sanctifieth**—Christ (Heb. 13. 12)—**and all they that are sanctified**—that are brought to God; that draw near or come to Him, which are synonymous terms—**are all of one**—partakers of one nature, from one parent, Adam"—WESLEY.

For—the next three verses are an illustration of the moral fitness, and therefore of the Divine necessity, that there should be perfect unity and sympathy between the Saviour and the saved. **Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified.** The idea would perhaps be better, though less literally, expressed by "both the Sanctifier and the sanctified," for the idea of sanctification is here not so much that of progressive holiness as that of cleansing (ch. 13. 12). This writer seems to make but little difference between the words "to sanctify" and "to purify," because in the sphere of the Jewish Ceremonial Law, from which his analogies are largely drawn, "sanctification" meant the setting apart for service by various means of purification. (See ch. 9. 13, 14; 10. 10, 14; 13. 12, and comp. John 17. 17–19; 1 John 1. 7.) **Are all of one**—of one Father. This is the connecting link between ver. 11 and ver. 10 which speaks of the "many *sons*" and their Saviour. Though His Sonship is unique and infinitely exalted, He is not ashamed to own them as brethren.

12. **I will declare Thy name to My brethren.** "Christ declares the name of God, gracious and merciful, plenteous in goodness and truth, to all who believe, that they also may praise Him. **In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee**—as the precentor of the choir. This He did literally, in the midst of His apostles, on the night before His passion. And as it means, in a more general sense, setting forth the praise of God, He has done it in the church by His word and His Spirit; He still does, and will do it throughout all generations"—WESLEY.

"Vers. 12, 13 contain passages from Old Testament prophecy in which the relations of the Sanctifier and those sanctified in common to God, and the Son's consciousness of them are expressed. (1) These passages are here regarded as directly prophetic, expressing by anticipation the relation of the Son to those whom He saves, and their common relation to God. That conception of prophecy which we express by the term 'typical' does not seem anywhere entertained in the Epistle. (2) The question, When is the Son supposed to use these words regarding Himself and men? is quite unimportant, and was probably not before the writer's mind. The quotations are adduced, as usual (see on ch. 1. 5), simply for the sake of the relations which they express. They exhibit the Son entering into His actual vocation as Saviour" — DAVIDSON. **I will declare Thy name**, etc. The quotation is taken (with very slight variation) from ver. 22 of Ps. 22.—a Psalm remarkable for its close connection with the narratives of the passion of our Lord. DELITZSCH adds: "The author of this Epistle has a perfect right to assume that David is speaking here as a type of Christ—nay, that the Spirit of Christ is speaking in him, and so Christ Himself selecting David's trials and sufferings as symbols of His own. The Psalm is, therefore, both typical and prophetic, and it admits of no doubt that the writers of the New Testament allow themselves to quote utterances of typical Old Testament personages concerning themselves as utterances and words of Christ."

13. **And again**—"as one that has communion with His brethren in sufferings, as well as in nature, He says, **I will put my trust in Him**—to carry Me through them all. **And again**—with a like acknowledgment of His near relation to them, as younger brethren, who were yet but in their childhood, He presents all believers to God, saying, **Behold I and the children whom Thou hast given Me**"—WESLEY.

I will put my trust in Him . . . Behold I and the children, etc. "Of the two passages cited in this verse, the latter is certainly from Isa. 8. 18; and though the former might be derived from 2 Sam. 22. 3 or Isa. 12. 2, yet, as the words are also found in the same chapter of Isaiah (8. 17), we may with certainty consider this the source of the quotation. That the section of Isaiah's prophecies to which ch. 8 belongs is directly messianic, is a fact that must be kept in mind; but the stress of the quotation cannot be laid on this, The prophet, as the representative of God to the people, has given utterance to the Divine message: in these words, however, 'I will put my trust' (better 'I will *have* my trust,' for continuous confidence is what the words denote) 'in Him,' he retires into the same position with the people whom he has addressed; their relation towards God's word and the hope it inspires must be his also. This twofold position of the prophet symbolised the twofold nature of Him of whom every prophet was a type"—MOULTON.

14. **Since then these children partake of flesh and blood**—"of human nature with all its infirmities—**He also in like manner took**

part of the same; that through His own **death He might destroy** the tyranny of **him that had**, by God's permission, **the power of death** with regard to the ungodly. Death is the devil's servant and sergeant, delivering to him those whom he seizes in sin. **That is, the devil**—the power as manifest to all; but who exerted it, they saw not"—WESLEY.

Forasmuch then, etc. "The two members of this verse directly recall the thoughts of vers. 9. and 10. (1) It was the will of God that salvation should be won by the Son for sons; (2) This salvation could only be won by means of death. **The children**—said with reference to ver. 13. **Flesh and blood**—*lit.* 'blood and flesh,' the familiar order of the words being departed from here and in Eph. 6. 12. This designation of human nature on its material side is found four times in the New Testament, and is extremely common in Jewish writers. The emphasis of the following statement is noteworthy, 'He Himself also in like manner took part of the same things.' His assumption of our nature had for its object suffering and death. **Destroy him**—rather, 'bring him to nought'; annul his power. The comment on these words will be found in ch. 9. 15, 26; for it was as the lord of sin, which was the cause (Rom. 5. 12) and the sting (1 Cor. 15. 56) of death, that the devil held dominion over death (or, as the words might mean, wielded the power possessed by death). (Comp. 2 Tim. 1. 10; 1 John 3. 8; also Rev. 1. 18.) Combined with this is the thought which runs through this chapter—the assimilation of the Redeemer to the redeemed in the conditions of His earthly life. By meeting death Himself, He vanquishes and destroys death for them"—MOULTON. **That is, the devil.** This is the only place in this Epistle in which the name "devil" occurs. It is nowhere very frequent in the New Testament. The English reader is liable to be misled by the rendering "devils" for "demons" in the Gospels. Satan has the power of death, if that be the meaning here, not as lord, but as executioner (comp. Rev. 9. 11); his power is only a permissive power (John 8. 44; Rev. 12. 10).

15. **And deliver them, as many as through fear of death were all their lifetime**, till then, **subject to bondage.** Every man who fears death is subject to bondage, is in a slavish, uncomfortable state. And every man fears death more or less, who knows not Christ: death is unwelcome to him, if he knows what death is. But He delivers all true believers from this bondage"—WESLEY.

Deliver them who through fear of death, etc. "This verse brings into relief the former misery and the present freedom. We may well suppose these words to have been prompted by the intense sympathy of the writer with the persecuted and tempted Christians whom he addresses. He writes throughout as one who never forgets their need of sympathetic help, and who knows well the power of the motives, the allurements, and the threats employed to lead them into apostasy. The crushing power of the 'fear of death' over those who had not grasped the truth that, in Christ, life and immortality are brought to light, perhaps no thought of ours can reach"—MOULTON.

16. **For verily He taketh not hold of angels**—"He does not take their nature upon Him. **But He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham**—He takes human nature upon Him. S. Paul says 'the seed of Abraham,' rather than the seed of Adam, because to Abraham was the promise made"—WESLEY.

"The rendering of the margin approaches very nearly the true meaning of the verse. Having spoken in ver. 14 of our Lord's assumption of human nature, the writer in these words assigns the reason. Though the words **take hold**, which occur twice in the verse, probably cannot directly signify **help** (as is often maintained), they distinctly suggest laying hold for the sake of giving help: and a beautiful illustration may be found in some of the Gospel narratives of our Lord's work of healing. (Mark 8. 23; Luke 14. 4)"—MOULTON.

17. **Wherefore it behoved Him**—"it was highly fit and proper, yea necessary, in order to His design of redeeming them—**to be made in all things** — that essentially pertain to human nature, and in all sufferings and temptations—**like His brethren.** This is a recapitulation of all that goes before: the sum of all that follows is added immediately. **That He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest**—'merciful' toward sinners; 'faithful' toward God. A priest or high priest is one who has a right of approaching God, and of bringing others to Him. 'Faithful' is treated of, ch. 3. 2, etc., with its use; 'merciful,' ch. 4. 15, etc., with the use also; 'High Priest,' ch. 5. 4, etc.; 7. 1, etc. The use is added from ch. 10. 19. **In things pertaining to God, to expiate the sins of the people**—offering up their sacrifices and prayers to God; deriving God's grace, peace, and blessings upon them"—WESLEY.

Wherefore — "since it is 'the seed of Abraham,' His brethren, that He would help. **In all things.** These words must be taken with **made like.** In all respects (the single exception does not come into notice here, see ch. 4. 15) He must be made like to 'the brethren' (a reference to ver. 12); like them, He must be liable to, and must suffer, temptation, sorrow, pain, death. **That He might be** —rather, 'that He might prove or become' (the words imply what is more fully expressed in ch. 5. 8)—**a compassionate and faithful High Priest.** The high priest was the representative of men to God; without such likeness (see ch. 5. 1, 2) He could be no true High Priest for man"—MOULTON. "**Merciful** means compassionate; the shade of meaning

belonging to 'mercy' in modern English of sparing the guilty, formed no part of its old sense. **Faithful** is said of the high priest's relation to God rather than to men: see ch. 3. 2-6, where 'faithful' is again taken up. Faithfulness to the duties of the office toward God is mainly compassion towards men. Calvin's saying that Christ did not need to go through sufferings in order to become pitiful, but His doing so was necessary for us that we might be assured of His pity, is hardly just to the scope of the passage. **To make reconciliation**—rather, 'to make propitiation.' His becoming a merciful and faithful High Priest enabled Him to offer for the people with a right mind. See on ch. 5. 1, etc.—the **people** are again the seed of Abraham, the historical people of God, for the covenants are continuous"—DAVIDSON.

18. **For in that He hath suffered being tempted Himself, He is able to succour them that are tempted**—"that is, He has given a manifest, demonstrative proof that He is able so to do"—WESLEY.

For. "The necessity of being 'in all things made like to His brethren' has been shown from the nature of the case; it is now illustrated from the result. The 'brethren' and the 'people' of ver. 17 are here **the tempted.** Through the temptations arose those sins of the people for which He makes propitiation. In His having been tempted lies His special ability to help the tempted, by His sympathy, by His knowledge of the help that is needed, by the position of High Priest which He has gained through suffering. It is difficult to decide between two translations of the first words of the verse—(1) '**In that** He Himself,' (2) '**Wherein** He Himself hath suffered being tempted.' The former is simpler, but perhaps less natural as a rendering of the Greek. The latter may indeed at first seem to set a bound to our Lord's ability to help, but with the recollection of the infinitude of His life (comp. John 21. 25) all such limitation disappears"—MOULTON. "Christ has endured every conflict of temptation, and His experience moves His compassion, and His compassion engages His prayers; and where He has promised us His prayers, we may promise ourselves the success"—SOUTH.

CHAPTER III.

Ch. 3—ch. 4. 13. Having, therefore, this High Priest over the house of God—a faithful Son exalted above Moses the faithful servant—let us by faithfulness make sure our calling to be God's sons; that we may not, like those who through their disobedience in the wilderness provoked the Lord, be excluded from the promised rest.

1. **The heavenly calling.** "God calls from heaven, and to heaven, by the gospel. **Consider the Apostle**—the Messenger of God, who pleads the cause of God with us—**and High Priest**—who pleads our cause with God. Both are contained in the one word *Mediator.* He compares Christ, as an Apostle, with Moses; as a Priest, with Aaron. Both these offices, which Moses and Aaron severally bore, He bears together, and far more eminently. **Of our profession**—the religion we profess"—WESLEY.

Wherefore. "The address which here begins (the first direct address in the Epistle), bears the same relation to all that has preceded, as ch. 2. 1-4 bears to the first chapter. In particular, the contents of the second chapter are gathered up in this verse, almost every word of which recalls some previous statement or result. **Holy brethren**—united in one brotherhood in virtue of a common sonship (ch. 2. 10) and of a common brotherhood (ch. 2. 11) with Jesus, Him 'that sanctifieth' (ch. 2. 11). **Partakers**—through Him who 'took part' of our earthly nature (ch. 2. 14) we are partakers of a 'heavenly calling' as God's sons"—MOULTON. **The Apostle and High Priest,** etc. Here only is the name Apostle directly given to our Lord; but the thought is present in ch. 2. 3, and in the many passages in which Jesus designates Himself as the Sent of God, using the word from which "Apostle" is derived. (John 3. 17; 17. 18; 20. 21.) There is very little difference between "Apostle" and "Prophet," thus applied; but the one brings into relief the mission, the other the office and position. Each presents a thought complementary of that contained in High Priest. BENGEL says: "As **Apostle,** Jesus pleads the cause of God with us; as **High Priest,** He pleads our cause with God. True; but it is God that has appointed Him to be High Priest (ch. 5. 4), and it is to Him that He is faithful, not to us (ch. 2. 17; 3. 2), for faithfulness to Him is compassion to us (ch. 2. 17; 5. 1, 2). 'Our confession' is not whom we confess; nor yet quite, who is the substance or contents of our confession; but, who holds the place of Apostle and High Priest in our confession—where *our* is emphatic in opposition to the confession of Israel in which Moses held the same place. Christ is not regarded in this Epistle as He is in the Pauline Epistles as the direct object of faith; this is the promises or in general the word of God; see on ch. 11. 1. The words, **as also Moses,** etc., are virtually a quotation from Num. 12. 7, 'My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house.' Jesus does not come behind Moses in faithfulness, and with Hebrews to say this was to say much. It is the appointment or sphere in which He is faithful that raises Him above Moses. This is not yet named."

2. **His house**—"the Church of Israel, then the peculiar family of God"—WESLEY.

Who was faithful—"*lit.* 'being faithful,' *i.e.* as Cranmer excellently rendered it, 'how that He is faithful.' The word is suggested by the following contrast between Christ and

Moses, of whom it had been said, 'My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house' (Num. 12. 7). **To Him that appointed Him**—*lit.* 'To Him that *made* Him.' There can be little doubt that the expression means, as in the A.V., 'to Him that made Him *such*,' *i.e.* made Him an Apostle and High Priest. For the phrase is doubtless suggested by 1. Sam. 12. 6, where the LXX. has 'He that *made* Moses and Aaron' (A.V. 'advanced'). Comp. Mark 3. 14, 'and He *made* twelve, that they should be with Him.' Acts 2. 36, 'God made Him Lord and Christ.' The rendering 'appointed' is therefore a perfectly faithful one"—C. B.

3. **He that hath builded it hath more glory than the house**—"than the family itself, or any member of it"—WESLEY.

It is not said that Jesus is the Builder; but the relation in which He stands to the Builder of the house is compared with that of Moses to the house. (See vers. 5 and 6.) The meaning of the word **builded** is, He who prepared or formed the house, with all its necessary parts and arrangements.

4. "**Now** Christ, **He that built** not only this house, but **all things**, ■ **God**—and so infinitely greater than Moses or any creature"—WESLEY.

For every house is builded by some man—"rather, 'by some one': the thought of the house leads at once to the thought of the builder of it. The meaning of the several parts of this verse is very simple; but it is not easy to follow the reasoning with certainty. The second clause seems to be a condensed expression of this thought, 'But He that built this house is He that built all things, God.' Moses is possessed of lesser glory than the Apostle of our confession, as the house stands below its maker in honour. For this house, like every other, has its Maker;—it is He who made all things, even God"—MOULTON.

5. **And Moses verily**—"another proof of the pre-eminence of Christ above Moses—**was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of the things which were afterwards to be spoken**—that is, which was a full confirmation of the things which he afterward spake concerning Christ"—WESLEY.

"The contrast is the same as that between Christ and the angels: Christ is Son, heir of the world to come, the angels are ministering spirits in the sphere of salvation; Christ is Son over the house of God, Moses was a servant within it. Christ is heir of the worlds as Son, the dignity is conformable to the relation; so He is over the house as Son; and in both cases, because He was God's agent in making that over which He has been appointed Head. The point of agreement between Moses and Christ is faithfulness; the points of contrast are two: Moses was faithful as a **servant**, and as servant implies **within** the house; Christ is faithful as a **Son**, and the Son must be **over** the house. The glory or honour of each is not something distinct from their respective positions, but just these respective positions themselves. Though a servant, Moses' trust extended to *all* God's house"—DAVIDSON.

6. "**But Christ** was faithful **as a Son; whose house we are**, while we hold fast, and shall be unto the end, **if we hold fast our confidence** in God, **and glorying** in His promises; our faith and hope"—WESLEY.

But Christ as a Son over His own house—"rather, 'over His house.' Throughout this passage (vers. 2, 5, 6) 'His house' must be taken in the sense of the quotation, as the house of God. Whereas Moses was faithful as a servant in this house of God, Christ was faithful as ■ Son set over His Father's house. The antithesis is complete: the one is a servant for witness, the other a Son having a natural right to rule. The concluding words in ver. 5 have no formal answer here, but the contrast is not the less distinctly expressed. The name Christ (which here occurs for the first time) is in this Epistle never a mere name; it contains implicitly the thought that all that to which Moses bore witness has reached its fulfilment now. Christ has come: God's house, formerly typified by Israel, is now manifested as it really is, containing all 'sons' whom God leads to glory (ch. 2. 10). The terms applied by constant usage to the one nation are thus successively enlarged: the 'seed of Abraham' (ch. 2. 16), 'the people' (ch. 2. 17), the 'house of God' (see ch. 10. 21)"—MOULTON. **The rejoicing of the hope**—rather, the "glorying of our hope." The Greek word means "an object of boasting," as in Rom. 4. 2; 1 Cor. 5. 6, etc. EBRARD says: "The poor Christians had nothing of which to boast but the glory which they hoped to receive. Since that period the same has been substantially true of Christians. Hence, it is their duty now, as it was then, to hold fast the hope in which they glory."

7. **Wherefore**—"seeing He is faithful, be not ye unfaithful"—WESLEY.

To-day if ye will hear His voice. "The meaning of the Hebrew words is either (1) 'To-day, oh that ye would hearken to (that is, "obey") His voice!' or, (2) 'To-day if ye hearken to His voice.' The 'voice' is that which speaks in the following verses. As the words stand before us, the Psalmist does not formally complete the sentence here commenced ('if ye shall hear'). He introduces the Divine words of warning, but adds none in his own person. The entreaty, 'Harden not your hearts,' is at once the utterance of the Divine voice and the expression of his own urgent prayer. Other passages in which the hardening of the heart is spoken of as the work of man himself are Ex. 9. 34; 1 Sam. 6. 6; Prov. 28. 14"—MOULTON.

8. **As in the provocation**—"when Israel provoked Me by their strife and murmurings. **In the day of temptation**—when at

the same time they tempted Me, by distrusting My power and goodness"—WESLEY.

Harden not your hearts. "(Comp. Acts 19. 9.) Usually *God* is said to harden man's heart (Ex. 7. 3, etc.; Isa. 63. 17; Rom. 9. 18), an anthropomorphic way of expressing the inevitable results of neglect and of evil habit. But that this is man's own doing and choice is always recognised (Deut. 10. 16; 2 Kings 17. 14, etc.). **As in the provocation**—*lit.* 'In the embitterment.' The LXX. here seem to have read Marah (which means 'bitter') for Meribah, which, in Ex. 17. 1–7, they render by 'reproach.' This is not, however, certain, for though the substantive does not occur again, the verb 'I embitter' is frequently used of provoking God to anger. For the story of Meribah, see Num. 20. 7–13. **In the day of temptation**—rather, 'of the temptation,' *i.e.* at Massah (Ex. 17. 7; Deut. 6. 16), although the allusion might also be to Num. 14"—FARRAR.

9. **When your fathers**—"that hard-hearted and stiff-necked generation. So little cause had their descendants to glory in them—**tempted Me**—whether I could and would help them—**proved Me**—put My patience to the proof, even while they **saw My** glorious **works** both of judgment and mercy, and that for **forty years**"—WESLEY.

"According to our best MSS. this verse will run thus: **Where** (or, 'wherewith') **your fathers tempted by trial, and saw My works forty years.** The meaning of the Hebrew is, 'Where your fathers tempted Me, proved Me; also saw My work'"—MOULTON.

10. **Wherefore**—"to speak after the manner of men—**I was grieved**—displeased, offended **with that generation, and said, They always err in their hearts**—they are led astray by their stubborn will and vile affections. **And**—for this reason, because wickedness has blinded their understanding—**they have not known My ways**—by which I would have led them like a flock—**into My rest**—in the promised land"—WESLEY.

I was grieved with that generation—"rather, 'I was angry with this generation.' The Hebrew is very strong, 'I loathed a (whole) generation.' The first word, **Wherefore**, is not found in the Psalm, but is added to make the connection more distinct. **And they have not known My ways** — better, 'yet they took not knowledge of My ways.' Although throughout the forty years He had shown to them their disobedience and His displeasure, yet the warning and discipline were fruitless. They gained no knowledge of His ways. It is very important to observe this explicit reference to the *close*, as well as the beginning of the forty years. (See ver. 8)"—MOULTON.

11. **So**—"rather, 'as' (ch. 4. 3). It is with these as it was with their fathers, the generations that came out of Egypt (Num. 14. 21–24), unto whom God sware, 'They shall not enter into My rest.' The form in which these words appear below (ch. 4. 3, 5) in the A.V., 'If they shall enter into My rest,' is an imitation of the original construction. **Into My rest**—into the land where Jehovah shall give rest to His people and shall dwell with them. (See Deut. 12. 9; 1 Kings 8. 56; Ps. 132. 14; Isa. 66. 1; 1 Chron. 6. 31; 2 Chron. 6. 41)"—MOULTON.

12. **Take heed, lest there be in any of you**—"as there was in them—**an evil heart of unbelief**—unbelief is the parent of all evil, and the very essence of unbelief lies in **departing from God**, as **the living God**—the fountain of all our life, holiness, happiness"—WESLEY.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be. "It is evident that deep anxiety mixes with the warning. **In any of you.** The warning is expressed indefinitely; but if the Epistle was addressed to a small Hebrew community, the writer may have had in view some special person who was in danger. (Comp. chaps. 10. 25; 12. 15.) In any case the use of the singular might lead to individual searching of hearts. He here begins a homily founded on the quotation from the Psalms. **An evil heart of unbelief.** Unbelief has its deep source in the heart more often perhaps than in the mind. **In departing**—*lit.* 'in the apostatising from.' In that one word—apostasy—the moral peril of his Hebrew readers was evidently summed up. To apostatise *after* believing is more dangerous than not to have believed at all. **From the living God.** The epithet is not idle. It conveys *directly* the warning that God would not overlook the sin of apostasy, and *indirectly* the thought that Christ was in heaven at the right hand of God"—C. B.

13. **But,** to prevent it, **exhort one another, while it is called To-day.** "This 'to-day' will not last for ever. The day of life will end soon, and perhaps the day of grace yet sooner"—WESLEY.

Exhort one another. The verb implies the mutually *strengthening* intercourse of consolation and moral appeal. **While it is called To-day**—*i.e.* while our "day of visitation" lasts, and while we still "have the light." (Luke 19. 44; John 12. 35, 36.) **Be hardened.** The following clause indicates that God only "hardens" the heart, in the sense that man is inevitably suffered to render his own heart callous by indulgence in sin. This state of obdurateness is not always reached by one leap, and through intentional wickedness, but quite as often through being deceived and self-deception.

14. **For we are made partakers of Christ**—"and we shall still partake of Him and all His benefits, **if we hold fast our faith unto the end.** If—but not else; and a supposition made by the Holy Ghost is equal to the strongest assertion. Both the sentiment and

the manner of expression are the same as ver. 6"—WESLEY.

For—take heed (ver. 12) lest there be anything that may lead astray — **we have become partakers of the Christ if** (and only if) **we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end**"—MOULTON.

15. **To-day if ye will hear His voice.** "There are times wherein God parleys with the soul, and inclines it to the happy surrender."

16. **Were they not all that came out of Egypt**—"an awful consideration! The whole elect people of God (a very few excepted) **provoked God** presently after their great deliverance, continued to grieve His Spirit for forty years, and perished in their sin!"—WESLEY.

For some when . . . howbeit not all—rather, "for who were they that when they heard did provoke? Nay, was it not all?" The verse like the following must be taken interrogatively. The sharp interrogations set the progressive downfall of Israel vividly before the Hebrews. Israel and they are alike in both having heard (ver. 7; 4. 2); Israel when they heard provoked; and the danger of falling into the same example (ch. 4. 11) is seen from the fact that Israel's defection was universal, and that it happened when the memory of their deliverance from Egypt was fresh.

17. **But . . . grieved**—rather, "and . . . wroth." The next step.

18. **That believed not**, etc. — "rather, 'obeyed not.' The third step"—DAVIDSON.

19. **So we see they could not enter in**—"though afterward they desired it"—WESLEY.

So we see—or "and we see." The words are not an inference, rather a statement in the historical chain, though expressing the last link of it. They form the transition to ch. 4, stating that Israel failed to enter in because of unbelief, and implying that the rest of which they came short is still left. This last idea, with the accompanying exhortation not to come short of the rest that is left, forms the substance of the following passage (ch. 4. 1–13).

CHAPTER IV.

THIS chapter is manifestly a continuation of the last, and should not have been detached from it. As with the exhortation of ch. 3. 12, 13, are interwoven some of the early words of the quotation from Ps. 95, so here the later thoughts of the same passage are taken up and applied.

1. **Let us therefore fear.** "The emphasis rests upon 'fear,' not upon 'us.' It is noteworthy that the writer begins with 'Let us,' though about to write 'let any of *you*'; he will have gained his object if he brings his readers to share his fear. **Lest a promise being left us**—rather, 'lest haply, a promise being (still) left.' No word must be inserted here that can diminish the generality of the words; in the sequel the statement will be repeated with all possible clearness. Here it is simply said that such a promise remains unexhausted, waiting for complete fulfilment. No Hebrew Christian would doubt this. As in ch. 1, the writer's aim is not to establish a truth absolutely new, but to show that in this and in that scripture a received truth lies contained. Most of our earlier versions (following Luther and Erasmus) give to this clause a different turn, which cannot be correct, 'Lest any of you by forsaking the promise of entering in His rest'"—MOULTON.

2. **But the word** which they heard **did not profit them**—"so far from it, that it increased their damnation. It is then only when **it is mixed with faith**, that it exerts its saving power"—WESLEY.

3. **For we** only **that have believed enter into the rest.** "The proposition is, There remains a rest for us. This is proved (vers. 3–11), thus: That Psalm mentions a rest; yet it does not mean—(1) God's rest from creating; for this was long before the time of Moses. Therefore in his time another rest was expected, of which they who then heard fell short. Nor is it (2) the rest which Israel obtained through Joshua; for the Psalmist wrote after him. Therefore it is (3) the eternal rest in heaven. **As He said**—clearly showing that there is a further rest than that which followed the finishing of the creation. **Though the works were finished** — before: whence it is plain, God did not speak of resting from them"—WESLEY.

For we which have believed. "The emphasis is twofold, resting both on 'believed' and on 'we enter.' The former looks back to ver. 2, 'by faith'—'*for* it is we who believed that enter.' The latter looks forward to the remainder of the verse, the purport of which is that the rest exists, and that 'entering into the rest' may still be spoken of. **As I have sworn**—rather (as above), as 'I sware in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest.' (See ch. 3. 11.) If in the Scripture (Ps. 95. 8) God warns men of a later age not to imitate the guilt of those whom He excluded from His rest, it follows (see below on ver. 10) that the time for entering into the rest of God was not then past and gone. **Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.** And therefore the rest into which God will enter with His redeemed people is not that which succeeded the works of creation"—MOULTON.

4. "**For**, long after He had **rested from His works**, He speaks again"—WESLEY.

He spake in a certain place — "rather, 'He *hath said somewhere*.' By the indefinite 'He' is meant 'God,' a form of citation not used in the same way by S. Paul, but common in Philo and the Rabbis. The 'somewhere' of the original is here expressed in the A.V.

by 'in a certain place,' see note on ch. 2. 6. The reference is to Gen. 2. 2; Ex. 20. 11; 31. 17. The writer always regards the Old Testament not as a dead letter, but as a living voice"—C. B.

5. **"In this** Psalm, of a rest yet to come"—WESLEY.

6. **It remaineth.** The promise is still left open, is unexhausted. **Because of unbelief**—rather, "because of *disobedience.*" It was not the Israelites of the wilderness, but their descendants, who came to Shiloh, and so enjoyed a sort of earthly type of the heavenly rest. (Josh. 18. 1.)

7. **After so long a time.** "It was above four hundred years from the time of Moses and Joshua to David. **As it was said before**—S. Paul here refers to the text he had just cited"—WESLEY.

"There is less hope for us each year and day we live in sin. Every hour we are drifting out to sea—the helpless, helmless barque is leaving the lessening shore farther and farther behind. The difficulty of resisting the bad and corrupt passions of our nature grows with man's growth, and strengthens with his strength. Some things become weak, and wear away by use; but not the power of sin"—GUTHRIE.

8. **The rest**—"all the rest which God had promised"—WESLEY.

For, had the promise been fulfilled in Joshua's conquest, the Psalm (God in the Psalm) would not be speaking of another day, saying, "To-day" (ver. 7)—MOULTON.

9. **Therefore**—"since he still speaks of another day, **there** must **remain** a further, even an eternal, **rest for the people of God**"—WESLEY.

"There is contained in the **rest**, a cessation from motion or action; not of all the actions, but of that which hath the nature of a means, and implies the absence of the end. When we have obtained the haven, we have done with the sailing. All motion ends at the centre, and all means cease when we have the end"—BAXTER.

10. **For they do not yet so rest**—"therefore a fuller rest remains for them"—WESLEY.

"They that enter into God's rest cease from their works as He did from His. The 'works' from which man rests are all the works appointed to him here of God, not merely pains and toils, but the great sum of the task which he is set to accomplish, the result of which he shall carry with him into the rest of God. What that may be even in individuals we cannot know, for who can estimate the fruit of any life? and much less can we surmise what the accumulated gains garnered by mankind shall be. When looking deep into eternity we become blinded by the overpowering glory, and return to the thought that such Sabbath rest is not to be conceived as without work and activity, we are so far right, for God's rest is at the same time an eternal life of infinite activity; but we must be on our guard that our weaknesses do not mix up what is earthly with the heavenly, or open up, even in the city of God itself, a new, long-extended street-view of 'eternal perfectionating.' Rather must we strive with all the power of our spirit to realise the feeling of the true rest, the perfected contentment and satisfaction, which in God has attained to all, and which has to reach nothing more in eternity"—STIER.

11. **Lest anyone should fall**—"into perdition"—WESLEY.

Labour—"rather, 'give diligence, strive earnestly.' It is the necessity of watchful and constant faithfulness that is enforced"—MOULTON.

12. **For the word of God**—"preached (ver. 2), and armed with threatenings (ver. 3)—**is living and powerful**—attended with the power of the living God, and conveying either life or death to the hearers. **Sharper than any two-edged sword**—penetrating the heart more than this does the body. **Piercing**—quite through, and laying open—**the soul and spirit, joints and marrow**—the inmost recesses of the mind, which the apostle beautifully and strongly expresses by this heap of figurative words. **And is a discerner**—not only **of the thoughts**, but also of the **intentions**"—WESLEY.

"The exhortation impressed by reference to the word of God, which offers the rest and warns us against hardening our hearts. The **word of God** is personified here, and endowed with all the attributes of God Himself, with whom it is identified (ver. 13). The identification, however, is with God, not with the Son, for there is no trace of the personal Word or Logos here. **Quick.** *i.e.* 'living,' as in the phrases, the quick and the dead, to cut to the quick, etc. As God is the living God, His word is instinct with His life. It is not separate from Him, but filled out with all His attributes. It remains so, however long it has been spoken, never becoming cold or dead. **And powerful**—rather, 'active,' working. (Comp. Eph. 1. 11; Phil. 2. 13; Isa. 55. 11.) Life is measured by activity; full life is perfect activity. **Sharper . . . sword**, a frequent comparison in Scripture. (Comp. Eph. 6. 17; Rev. 1. 16; 2. 12; 19. 15; Isa. 49. 2; Hos. 6. 5.) The two-edged sword, that is, with no back, is naturally thinner and sharper than the ordinary one. **Piercing.** This is how its activity and sharpness manifest themselves. The Divine word cuts open and lays bare (ver. 13), and exposes in its most secret movements and framework the whole mental nature of man on all its sides"—DAVIDSON.

13. **In His sight.** "It is God whose word is 'thus powerful'; it is God in whose sight every **creature is manifest**—and of this His word, working on the conscience, gives the fullest conviction. **But all things are naked and opened**—plainly alluding to the sacri-

fices under the Law which were first flayed, and then (as the Greek word literally means) 'cleft asunder through the neck' and backbone; so that everything both without and within was exposed to open view"—WESLEY.

In His sight. God being present in His word as living, active, and judging the thoughts, a transition is made here from the word to Himself. **And opened**—*i.e.* "laid open." The word means having the head thrown back and the neck laid bare; it is uncertain, however, to what the allusion is, whether to one overthrown by a wrestler, the meaning being *prone*, or to the practice of thrusting back the head of criminals to expose their face to the gaze of spectators. "Touched by this word of God, every creature 'returns of force to its own likeness'—shows itself as it is"—MOULTON.

14. **Having therefore a great High Priest**—"great indeed, being the eternal **Son of God, that is passed through the heavens**—as the Jewish high priest passed through the veil into the Holy of Holies, carrying with him the blood of the sacrifices, on the yearly day of atonement; so our great High Priest went once for all through the visible heavens, with the virtue of His own blood, into the immediate presence of God"—WESLEY.

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest. "These verses refer back to ch. 2. 17; 3. 1, and form the transition to the long proof and illustration of Christ's superiority to the Levitic priesthood which occupies the Epistle to ch. 10. 18. The writer here reverts to his central thought, to which he has already twice alluded (ch. 2. 17; 3. 1). He had proved that Christ is superior to angels, the ministers, and to Moses, the servant, of the old dispensation, and (quite incidentally) to Joshua. He has now to prove that He is like Aaron, in all that made Aaron's priesthood precious, but infinitely superior to him and his successors, and a pledge to us of the grace by which the true rest can be obtained. Christ is not only a High Priest, but 'a *great* High Priest'"—C. B. "All the chief points of the earlier chapters are brought together in this verse and the next—the high priests (ch. 2. 17; 3. 1); His exaltation (ch. 1. 3, 4, 13; 2. 9); His Divine Sonship (ch. 1; 3. 6); His compassion towards the brethren whose lot He came to share (ch. 2. 11–18). **That is passed into the heavens**—rather, 'that hath passed through the heavens.' As the high priest passed through the holy place to enter the Holy of Holies, Jesus 'ascended up far above all heavens,' and sat at the right hand of God. This thought is developed in ch. 8 to 10"—MOULTON.

15. "He **sympathises with** us even in **our** innocent **infirmities**, wants, weaknesses, miseries, dangers. **Yet without sin**—and, therefore, is indisputably able to preserve us from it in all our temptations"—WESLEY.

"We cannot but note again how the power of the exhortation (especially to those immediately addressed) lay in the combination of the two thoughts—the greatness and the tender compassion of the High Priest of our confession. The two are united in the words of ver. 16, 'the *throne* of *grace*.' (Comp. ch. 8. 1.) The beautiful rendering, **touched with the feeling of our infirmities**, is due to the Genevan Testament of 1557. **But was in all points**, etc.—better, 'but one that hath in all points been tempted in like manner, apart from sin.' These words show the nature and the limits of this sympathy of Christ. He suffers with His people, not merely showing compassion to those who are suffering and tempted, but taking to Himself a joint feeling of their weaknesses"—MOULTON.

16. **Let us therefore come boldly**—"without any doubt or fear—**unto the throne of God**, our reconciled Father, even His throne of **grace**. Grace erected it, and reigns there, and dispenses all blessings in a way of mere, unmerited favour"—WESLEY.

"Rather, **Let us then approach with confidence.** The notion of 'approach' to God in the Levitical service (Lev. 21. 17; 22. 3) is prominent in this Epistle (ch. 10. 1–22; 11. 6; 12. 18–22). In S. Paul it only occurs once (1 Tim. 6. 13), and then in a different sense. His ideal of the Christian life is not 'access to God' but 'oneness with Christ.' **Boldly**—*lit.* 'with confidence' (ch. 3. 6)"—C. B. **Obtain mercy.** "The real meaning is, 'receive compassion' (ch. 2. 17) in our weakness and trials. The thought of obtaining 'mercy' for guilt is not in these words, taken by themselves; but **grace** meets every need. If the last verse brought evidence that our High Priest has perfect knowledge of the help required, this gives the assurance that the help shall be given as needed, and in the time of need"—MOULTON.

CHAPTER V.

1. **For every high priest being taken from among men**—"is, till he is taken, of the same rank with them—**and is appointed**—that is, is wont to be appointed—**in things pertaining to God**—to bring God near to men, and men to God—**that he may offer both gifts**—out of things inanimate, **and** animal **sacrifices**"—WESLEY.

Vers. 1–10 link themselves with the last words of ch. 4. The thoughts which have been briefly expressed in vers. 14, 15, and on which ver. 16 rests, are resumed, and in this section fully developed. Hence ch. 4. 16 is connected both with what precedes (by **therefore**) and with the present chapter (by **For**): "For as every human high priest shares the nature of those on behalf of whom he appears before God, and thus can be compassionate towards them, and, moreover, can only receive his appointment from God; so Christ is God-appointed, He has learnt His obedience through sufferings, and, thus made perfect, is declared

by God High Priest for ever"—MOULTON. "The author here describes the first essential characteristic of the high priest, according to the ordinances of the Divine laws; and, doing this, proceeds on the assumption, that whatever may characterise the high priest as such, will be found also in Christ"—DELITZSCH.

2. **Who can have compassion**—"in proportion to the offence; so the Greek word signifies. **On the ignorant**—them that are in error. **And the wandering**—them that are in sin. **Seeing himself also is compassed with infirmity**—even with sinful infirmity; and so needs the compassion which he shows to others"—WESLEY.

"**Who can have compassion**—*lit.* 'being able to feel gently towards.' The word expresses the feeling that lies between apathy and undue excitement; here the feeling of moderation or leniency towards others, which is far removed from severity. The ignorant and erring or out of the way are those falling into sins which are to be described as not wilful or done with a high hand, usually called 'sins of ignorance.' Under this head fall not merely sins done inadvertently, but sins into which one may be betrayed by selfishness or passion (Lev. 5. 1; 19. 20–22) or force of circumstances. For such sins the sacrifices were provided. For the other class of sins, those done wilfully and aimed against the covenant itself, there was no sacrifice. The author carries this Old Testament principle over into the new covenant; for rebellion against the covenant itself there is no sacrifice (ch. 10. 26). It seems probable, indeed, that only sins coming under this class of 'errors' are regarded by him as pardonable through sacrifice, and that to this class belong the transgressions under the first covenant (ch. 9. 15) which the offering of the Son redeemed. **For that he . . . infirmity**. The high priest's own consciousness of infirmity makes him bear gently with the erring"—DAVIDSON.

3. "The law of the day of atonement required a sin-offering of a bullock and a burnt-offering of a ram for the high priest himself, and for the congregation a sin-offering of two he-goats and a burnt-offering of a ram. Over his own sin-offering the high priest made confession of sins, first for himself and his household, then for the priests; over the goat sent into the wilderness, the sins of the people were confessed"—MOULTON.

4. "The apostle begins here to treat of the priesthood of Christ. The sum of what he observes concerning it is, Whatever is excellent in the Levitical priesthood is in Christ, and in a more eminent manner; and whatever is wanting in those priests is in Him. **And no one taketh this honour**—the priesthood—**to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron**—and his posterity, who were all of them called at one and the same time. But it is observable Aaron did not preach at all; preaching being no part of the priestly office"—WESLEY.

Here is a principle:—A man takes the office, not out of personal assumption, but when called of God; and an illustration—the case of Aaron. (Ex. 28. 1.) Were the office arrogated to himself by anyone, the same arrogancy might mark his exercise of it. But God appoints to the office, and the appointment is in behalf of men (ver. 1), and this is security for the fit disposition in the high priest. CLARKE adds: "God Himself appointed the tribe and family out of which the high priest was to be taken, and Aaron and his sons were expressly chosen by God to fill the office of the high priesthood. As God alone had the right to appoint His own priest for the Jewish nation, and *man* had no authority here; so God alone could provide and appoint a High Priest for the whole human race. Aaron was thus appointed for the Jewish people; Christ, for all mankind."

5. **So also Christ glorified not Himself to be an High Priest**—"that is, did not take this honour to Himself, but received it from Him **who said, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee**—not, indeed, at the same time; for His generation was from eternity"—WESLEY.

"**So also Christ** — rather, 'So even the Christ.' Jesus, the Messiah, the true Anointed Priest, possessed both these qualifications. **Glorified not Himself**. He has already called the high priesthood 'an honour,' but of Christ's priesthood He uses a still stronger word, 'glory' (ch. 2. 9; John 12. 28; 13. 31). **But He that said unto Him**—God glorified Him, and the writer again offers the admitted messianic prophecies of Ps. 2. 7 and 110. 4, as a sufficient illustration of this. The fact of His Sonship demonstrates that His call to the priesthood was a call of God. Jesus said, '*If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing:* it is My Father that honoureth Me; of whom ye say, that He is your God' (John 8. 54)"—C. B.

6. "**In another place** (Ps. 110. 4). This Psalm was so universally accepted as messianic that the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the first verse of it, 'The Lord *said to His Word.*' **After the order**—'according to the style of.' (Comp. ch. 7. 15, 'after the likeness of Melchisedec.') **After the order of Melchisedec**. The writer here with consummate literary skill introduces the name Melchisedec, to prepare incidentally for the long argument which is to follow in ch. 7; just as he twice introduces the idea of high priesthood (ch. 2. 17; 3. 1) before directly dealing with it. The reason why the Psalmist had spoken of his ideal theocratic King as a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and not after the order of Aaron, lies in the words **for ever**, as subsequently explained"—C. B.

7. "The sum of the things treated of in the seventh and following chapters is contained (vers. 7–10); and in this sum is admirably com-

prised the process of His passion, with its inmost causes, in the very terms used by the Evangelists. **Who in the days of His flesh**—those two days, in particular, wherein His sufferings were at the height—**having offered up prayers and supplications**—thrice—**with strong crying and tears**—in the garden—**to Him that was able to save Him from death**—which yet He endured, in obedience to the will of His Father. **And being heard in that** which **He** particularly **feared**—when the cup was offered Him first, there was set before Him that horrible image of a painful, shameful, accursed death, which moved Him to pray conditionally against it; for, if He had desired it, His heavenly Father would have sent Him more than twelve legions of angels to have delivered Him. But what He most exceedingly feared was the weight of infinite justice; the being 'bruised' and 'put to grief' by the hand of God Himself. Compared with this everything else was a mere nothing; and yet, so greatly did He even thirst to be obedient to the righteous will of His Father, and to 'lay down' even 'His life for the sheep,' that He vehemently longed to be baptized with this baptism. (Luke 12. 50.) Indeed, His human nature needed the support of Omnipotence; and for this He sent up 'strong crying and tears'; but, throughout His whole life, He showed that it was not the sufferings He was to undergo, but the dishonour that sin had done to so holy a God, that grieved His spotless soul. The consideration of its being the will of God tempered His fear, and afterwards swallowed it up; and He was 'heard,' not so that the cup should pass away, but so that He drank it without any fear"—WESLEY.

"The following rendering will, it is believed, best show the meaning of this and the following verse, and the connection of the several parts: **Who, in the days of His flesh, having with a strong cry and tears offered up prayers and supplications unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and having been heard for His reverent fear, though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered**"—MOULTON. "The statement is: **Who in the days of His flesh, though He was a Son, yet learned obedience from the things which He suffered.** The 'days of His flesh' means His life upon the earth. Though He was a Son, He learned obedience; this is stated to obviate the very idea of assumption on His part. It is not remarkable that a son should be obedient, and it is not meant that the disposition of obedience was ever wanting to Him. But the disposition had to maintain itself in the face of greater and greater demands upon it. And as He had to meet these demands rising with the rising tide of things which He suffered, He entered ever more deeply into the experience of what obedience was. For the demands could not be met without the resistance and shrinking of His human nature (Matt. 26. 39), and the overcoming of this was an advance in obedience. (Comp. ch. 12. 2.) The progress may perhaps even be seen in Matt. 26. 39 with 42. When the writer says 'learned' obedience, he has no doubt in his mind the contrast between the Son's former state and His state in the days of His flesh, the latter of which, especially on its side of suffering, was to Him a thing wholly new. This was the disposition and demeanour of Jesus while on the way towards that glory of His appointment to which God called Him. The clauses, **having offered up prayers . . . and having been heard for His godly fear**, illustrate the statement, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Here He is seen learning obedience. The example brought forward is, His supreme act of obedience, viz. suffering, death (ch. 10. 5, etc.; Phil 2. 8), and the language of the passage reflects the scene in Gethsemane. The evangelical tradition preserved to us does not mention 'tears'; the oral account heard by the author may have contained this trait, or he may have supposed it included (Matt. 26. 37; Ps. 22. 25); comp. the two accounts of Jacob's wrestling, Gen. 32. 26 and Hos. 12. 4. The **strong crying** need not necessarily refer to the cry on the cross, though this may be included, the general scene being that of the Son's great, final act of obedience. Then He offered supplications to Him that was able to save Him **from death**, or, 'out of death.' These words might mean either that he prayed to be saved from dying, or, that He prayed to be delivered out of the power of death, a sense which would admit that He contemplated falling into its power for a time"—DAVIDSON.

8. **Though He were a Son.** "This is interposed, lest any should be offended at all these instances of human weakness. In the garden, how frequently did He call God His Father! (Matt. 26. 39, etc.) And hence it most evidently appears that His being the Son of God did not arise merely from His resurrection. **Yet learned He**—the word 'learned,' premised to the word **suffered**, elegantly shows how willingly He learned. He **learned obedience**, when He began to suffer; when He applied Himself to drink that cup: obedience in suffering and dying"—WESLEY.

Though He were a Son. "These words may be connected with what precedes (implying that He was heard for His reverent fear, not because, in the pre-eminent sense, He was God's Son); but they are still more closely joined with the following sentence, 'Though He was a Son, He *learnt* His obedience by the things which He suffered.' 'The disposition of obedience Jesus possessed before He suffered, but the proof that this disposition existed must be shown in deed: this progress from the disposition to the deed of obedience is a practical learning of the virtue of obedience' (Lunemann). The suffering recorded in ver. 7 is

regarded as the culmination of His life of suffering"—MOULTON.

9. **And being perfected**—"by sufferings (Heb. 2. 10); brought through all to glory. **He became the author**—the procuring and efficient cause—**of eternal salvation to all that obey Him**—by doing and suffering His whole will"—WESLEY.

And being made perfect—"having been brought to the goal and consummation in the glory which followed this mediatorial work. (See ch. 2. 10. and comp. Luke 13. 32, 'the third day I *shall be perfected.*') **Salvation unto all them that obey Him.** In an author so polished and rhetorical there seems to be an intentional force and beauty in the repetition in this verse of the two leading words in the last. Christ prayed to God who was able to 'save' Him out of death, and He became the cause of 'eternal *salvation*' from final death; Christ learnt 'obedience' by His life of self-sacrifice, and He became a Saviour to them that 'obey' Him"—C. B.

10. **Called.** "The Greek word here properly signifies 'surnamed.' His name is, 'the Son of God.' The Holy Ghost seems to have concealed who **Melchisedec** was, on purpose that he might be the more eminent type of Christ. This only we know—that he was a priest, and king of Salem, or Jerusalem"—WESLEY.

Called—"rather, 'addressed.' The Divine words are, 'Thou art a priest for ever.' In the quotation from the Psalm, 'priest' is now altered into 'High Priest.' The purport remains the same; or, rather, it is by this change of word that the meaning of the Psalm is fully expressed. This repetition of the words of ver. 6 at the close of the paragraph is singularly impressive.

"At this point the course of the argument is interrupted by a long digression (ch. 5. 11 to ch. 6. 20), to which the writer is led by reflection on the inability of his readers to receive the teaching which befits their Christian standing. If, however, we remember the practical aim that is predominant in the Epistle, we can hardly call this a digression, so powerfully is every portion of it made subservient to one great purpose"—MOULTON.

11. **Concerning whom.** "The apostle here begins an important digression, wherein he reproves, admonishes, and exhorts the Hebrews. **We**—preachers of the gospel—**have many things to say, and hard to be explained**—though not so much for the subject-matter, as from your slothfulness in considering, and dulness in apprehending the things of God"—WESLEY.

"**Of whom,** *i.e.* not of Melchisedec, but of Christ, 'an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec' (ver. 10). Concerning this subject the author has, first, **many things to say**—the subject as he has it in his mind is large (it occupies ch. 7. 1 to ch. 10. 18 of the Epistle); and, second, what he has to say is **hard to be uttered,** or 'hard to interpret,' that is, expound or express in the right way. The reason of this difficulty—**seeing ye are dull**—rather, 'are become' dull of hearing. The condition was one into which they had fallen. Dulness of hearing is a figure for slowness of understanding. As it is difficult to strike the right tone and key to make a deaf person hear, it was difficult to find such forms of thought and expression as would make their way into the ear of their mind"—DAVIDSON.

12. **Ye have need that one teach you again which are the first principles of** religion. "Accordingly these are enumerated in the first verse of the ensuing chapter. **And have need of milk**—the first and plainest doctrines"—WESLEY.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers—"that is, 'though you ought, by this time, to be teachers, considering how long a time has elapsed since your conversion.' The passage is important as bearing on the date of the Epistle. **Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles**—rather, 'ye again have need that some one teach you the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God.' It is uncertain whether we should read τινὰ 'that *some one* teach you,' or τινα 'that (one) teach you *which are.*' The difference in sense is not great, but perhaps the indefinite 'some one' enhances the irony of a severe remark. For the word 'rudiments,' see Gal. 4. 3, 9. **The oracles of God.** Here not the Old Testament as in Rom. 3. 2. **Such as have need of milk.** So the young students or neophytes in the Rabbinic schools were called *thinokoth*, 'sucklings'"—C. B.

13. **Everyone that useth milk**—"that neither desires, nor can digest, anything else: otherwise strong men use milk; but not milk chiefly, and much less that only. **Is unexperienced in the word of righteousness**—the sublimer truths of the gospel. Such are all who desire and can digest nothing but the doctrine of justification and imputed righteousness"—WESLEY.

"The change of expression from 'having need of milk' to **partaking of milk** (that is, making it the *sole* food) is significant. Those who are addressed had lost interest in the deeper truths of Christianity, those truths which alone expressed and explained its proper nature. Their temptation apparently was towards mingling a rudimentary Christian doctrine with the teaching of the synagogue. Yielding to this they would lose all real knowledge of the very elements of Christian truth, and with this all true knowledge of the Old Testament itself. The connection between this verse and the last may probably be, 'Ye have come to need milk, for—making it by choice your sole food—ye stand self-confessed as babes'"—MOULTON.

14. **But strong meat**—"these sublimer truths relating to 'perfection' (Heb. 6. 1) **belong to them of full age, who by habit.**

Habit here signifies strength of spiritual understanding, arising from maturity of spiritual age. 'By,' or in consequence of, this habit they exercise themselves in these things with ease, readiness, cheerfulness, and profit"—WESLEY.

Ver. 13 expanded the last clause of ver. 12, exposing the condition into which the Hebrews had fallen, which made them unfit to receive the solid food which the apostle desired to offer; ver. 14, by contrast, shows the kind of persons for whom his solid food is suitable—solid food (such as I offer) is for full-grown men. **Strong meat. . . . full age**; or "solid food is for the full grown"—for such as are not babes, familiar only with milk, but whose organs of sense are exercised through their use of them, and who are able to discern good and evil, that is, what is wholesome and what is injurious. The expressions in this verse are opposed to those in ver. 13—**solid food** to "milk," **full grown** to "babes," and **senses exercised** to "without experience," etc.

CHAPTER VI.

1. **Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ**—"that is, saying no more of them for the present. **Let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works**—from open sins, the very first thing to be insisted on. **And faith in God**—the very next point. So S. Paul in his very first sermon at Lystra (Acts 14. 15), 'Turn from these vanities unto the living God.' And when they believed, they were to be baptized with the baptism, not of the Jews, or of John, but of Christ. The next thing was, to lay hands upon them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: after which they were more fully instructed, touching the resurrection, and the general judgment; called eternal, because the sentence then pronounced is irreversible, and the effects of it remain for ever"—WESLEY.

"**Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ** — *lit.* 'leaving the discourse of the beginning of Christ,' *i.e.* 'getting beyond' the earliest principles of Christian teaching. He does not of course mean that these first principles are to be neglected, still less forgotten, but merely that his readers ought to be so familiar with them as to be able to advance to less obvious knowledge. **Let us go on**—*lit.* 'let us be borne along,' as by the current of a stream. He invites his readers to advance with him to doctrines which lie beyond the range of rudimentary Christian teaching. They must come with him out of the limits of this Jewish-Christian catechism. **Unto perfection.** The 'perfection' intended is the 'full growth' of those who are mature in Christian knowledge (see ch. 5. 14). They ought not to be lingering among the elementary subjects of catechetical instruction which in great measure belonged no less to Jews than to Christians, **Not laying again.** There is no need for a 'foundation' to be laid **a second time.** He is not in the least degree disparaging the importance of the truths and doctrines which he tells them to 'leave,' but only urging them to build on those deep foundations the necessary superstructure. **The foundation** — *lit.* '*a* foundation.' The subjects here alluded to probably formed the basis of instruction for Christian catechumens. They were not, however, exclusively Christian; they belonged equally to Jews, and therefore baptized Christian converts ought to have got beyond them. **Repentance from dead works.** Repentance is the first lesson of the gospel (Mark 1. 15). 'Dead works' are such as cause defilement, and require purification (ch. 9. 14), because they are sinful (Gal. 5. 19–21), and because their wages is death (Rom. 6. 23); but 'the works of the Law,' as having no life in them (see our Article 13), may be included in the epithet. **Faith towards God.** This is also one of the *initial* steps in religious knowledge. How little the writer meant any *disparagement* of it may be seen from ch. 11. 1, 2, 6"—C. B.

2. The writer specifies *four principal objects* of instruction: **baptism and laying on of hands**, which belong to the beginning of the Christian life, and with which are connected the forgiveness of sins and bestowal of gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the **resurrection**, together with the **judgment**, in which the life of the Christian Church finds its consummation, and which forms the object of the Christian *hope*.

3. **And this we will do**—"we will go on to perfection; and so much the more diligently, because—ver. 4–7"—WESLEY.

And this we will do, if God permit. "There may be some with whom it will be impossible for him thus to press on to maturity of teaching and of Christian experience. There is a case excepted by God Himself from all efforts of the Christian teacher; in this case, though nothing can avail except the laying of a new foundation of repentance, God has appointed no agencies by which such foundation can be laid"—MOULTON.

4. **It is impossible for those who were once enlightened**—"with the light of the glorious love of God in Christ—**and have tasted the heavenly gift**—remission of sins, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb—**and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost**—of the witness and the fruit of the Spirit"—WESLEY.

"**For it is impossible.** 'For' is based on the words in ver. 3, 'this will we do,' not on 'if God permit,' on which no emphasis falls. The following words read literally, **For those once having been enlightened, and having tasted . . . and having become partakers . . . and having tasted . . . and having fallen away, it is impossible to renew again unto repentance.** The proposition is; it is

impossible to renew again unto repentance those who, having once been enlightened . . . fell away. The passage corresponds in a general way to vers. 1-3. It describes those in whose case a foundation had been laid in teaching, which had been responded to by believing, followed by experiencing, who then had fallen away; and it is affirmed that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. The case is put generally, though in a historical form"—DAVIDSON. "It will be seen that the greater part of this long sentence is dependent on the word 'renew' in ver. 6, 'It is impossible to renew again unto repentance those who were once, etc.'"—MOULTON.

5. **And have tasted the good word of God**—"have had a relish for, and a delight in it—**and the powers of the world to come**—which everyone tastes, who has a hope full of immortality. Every child that is naturally born, first sees the light, then receives and tastes proper nourishment, and partakes of the things of this world. In like manner, the apostle, comparing spiritual with natural things, speaks of one born of the Spirit, as seeing the light, tasting the sweetness, and partaking of the things 'of the world to come'"—WESLEY.

And have tasted. "The metaphor means 'to partake of,' and 'enjoy,' as in Philo, who speaks of one 'who has quaffed much pure wine of God's benevolent power, and banqueted upon sacred words and doctrines.' **The powers of the world to come.** Here again it is not easy to see what is *exactly* intended by 'the powers of the future age.' If the future age be the messianic age, then its 'powers' may be, as S. Chrysostom said, 'the earnest of the Spirit,' or the powers mentioned in ch. 2. 4; Gal. 3. 5. If, on the other hand, it mean 'the world to come,' its 'powers' bring the foretaste of its glorious fruition. It will then be seen that we cannot attach a definitely certain or exact meaning to the separate expressions; on the other hand, nothing can be clearer than the fact that, but for dogmatic prepossessions, no one would have dreamed of explaining them to mean anything less than full conversion"—C. B.

6. **And have fallen away.** "Here is not a supposition, but a plain relation of fact. The apostle here describes the case of those who have cast away both the power and the form of godliness; who have lost both their faith, hope, and love (ver. 10, etc.), and that wilfully (Heb. 10. 26). Of these wilful total apostates he declares, **it is impossible to renew them again to repentance** (though they were renewed once), either to the foundation, or anything built thereon. **Seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh**—they use Him with the utmost indignity—**and put Him to an open shame**—causing His glorious name to be blasphemed"—WESLEY.

If they shall fall away. "This is one of the most erroneous translations in the A.V. The words can only mean 'and have fallen away.' (Comp. ch. 2. 1; 3. 12; 10. 26, 29), and the position of the participle gives it tremendous force. It was once thought that our translators had here been influenced by theological bias to give such a rendering as should least conflict with their Calvinistic belief in the 'indefectibility of grace' or in 'final perseverance'—*i.e.* that no converted person, no one who has ever become regenerate, and belonged to the number of 'the elect'—can *ever* fall away. It was thought that, for this reason, they had put this clause in the form of a *mere hypothesis.* It is now known, however, that the mistake of our translators was derived from older sources (*e.g.* Tyndale and the Genevan), and was not due to bias. Calvin was himself far too good a scholar to defend this view of the clause. He attempted to get rid of it by denying that the strong expressions in vers. 4, 5, describe the regenerate. He applies them to false converts or half converts who become reprobate—a view which, as we have seen, is not tenable. The falling *away* means apostasy, the complete and wilful renunciation of Christianity. **To renew them again unto repentance.** The verb here used came to mean 'to rebaptize.' The solution of any difficulty is not to be arrived at by tampering with plain words. What the author says is that, 'When those who have tasted the heavenly gift have fallen away, it is *impossible* to renew them to repentance.' He does not say that the Hebrews *have* so fallen away; nor does he directly assert that any true convert *can* thus fall away; but he does say that *when such apostasy occurs* and — a point of extreme importance which is constantly overlooked—*so long as it lasts* (see the next clause) a vital renewal is **impossible.** There can, he implies, be no *second* 'second birth.' The sternness of the passage is in exact accordance with ch. 10. 26-29 (comp. 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21); but 'the impossibility *lies merely within the limits of the hypothesis itself.*' **Seeing they crucify**—rather 'while crucifying,' '*crucifying as they are doing.*' Thus the words imply not only an absolute, but a *continuous* apostasy, for the participle is changed from the past into the present tense. While men continue in wilful and willing sin they preclude all possibility of the action of grace. So long as they cling deliberately to their sins, they shut against themselves the open door of grace. The plain meaning of this passage is, that so long as wilful apostasy continues there is no visible hope for it. The writer is pointing out to Hebrew Christians with awful faithfulness the fatal end of deliberate and insolent apostasy. But we have no right to suppose that he has anything in view beyond the horizon of *revealed* possibilities. He is thinking of the teaching and ministry of the Church, not of the omnipotence of God. With men it

is impossible that a camel should 'go through the eye of a needle,' but with God all things are possible' (Matt. 19. 26; Mark 10. 20-27; Luke 18. 27). In the face of sin—above all of deliberate wretchlessness—we must remember that 'God is not mocked' (Gal. 6. 7), and that our human remedies are then exhausted. On he other hand, to *close* the gate of repentance against any contrite sinner is to contradict all the Gospels and all the Epistles alike, as well as the Law and the Prophets"—C. B.

7. **For the earth**—"rather, 'for the land which has drunk in.' Land which not only receives, but also drinks in abundance of rain (Deut. 11. 11), in such a climate as is here thought of, must either 'bring forth herbage' or be condemned as irretrievably barren. **By whom it is dressed**—rather, 'for whom it is also tilled.' This clause is added to show that nothing is wanting on the part of the owner or of the tillers of the land. **Receiveth blessing from God**—receives as a reward a share in the blessing which God pronounces on the fruitful earth, resulting in increased fertility. (Gen. 27. 27; 49. 25; Deut. 33. 13.) In the application of the parable, God is the owner of the land, men the tillers; men also are 'God's field' (1 Cor. 3. 9), who bring forth fruit unto God"—MOULTON.

8. **That which beareth thorns and briars**—"only or chiefly—**is rejected**—no more labour is bestowed upon it—**whose end is to be burned**—as Jerusalem was shortly after"—WESLEY.

But that which beareth—"rather, 'but if it bear thorns and briars it is rejected.' We are told that the presence of briars (*i.e.* caltrops) is a sure evidence of a poor soil, on which labour will be wasted. The words are partially a quotation from Gen. 3. 18. The change of translation here is important; if that very land which has drunk in the abundant rain, and has received careful culture, still prove unfruitful, it is rejected. Men can do no more; and the curse of God is **near**; its end is **for burning**. The explanation of the last words is probably found in Deut. 29. 23, which speaks of the land of Sodom which God overthrew, which 'is brimstone, and salt, and burning.' The connection between these two verses and the preceding passages is obvious. In the case of the apostates there described, man is helpless; God's curse is near. But, as S. Chrysostom says, in this very word there is mercy; 'the end' is not yet come"—MOULTON.

9. **But, beloved.** "In this one place he calls them so. He never uses this appellation but in exhorting. **We are persuaded of you things that accompany salvation**—we are persuaded you are now saved from your sins; and that ye have that faith, love, and holiness, which lead to final salvation. **Though we thus speak**—to warn you, lest you should fall from your present steadfastness"—WESLEY.

The writer now turns to the other side of the subject, to the comforting hope that, in the case of his readers, it has not yet come to a falling away. "If we thus speak to you (in this style of earnest warning) we are yet persuaded of better things concerning you, of things that pertain to salvation." The change here from severity to gentleness reminds us of the Pauline passages, Gal. 4. 12, 19; 2 Cor. 10. 11.

10. **For**—"ye give plain proof of your faith and love, which the righteous God will surely reward"—WESLEY.

Because the readers have already evinced, and still evince, the visible *fruits* of faith in works of love and service, the author cherishes the persuasion that God will not let them fall, will not withdraw His Spirit and the help of His grace from them.

11. **But we desire you may show the same diligence unto the end**—"and therefore we thus speak. **To the full assurance of hope**—which you cannot expect, if you abate your diligence. The full assurance of faith relates to present pardon; the full assurance of hope, to future glory. The former is the highest degree of Divine evidence that God is reconciled to *me* in the Son of His love; the latter is the same degree of Divine evidence (wrought in the soul by the same immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost) of persevering grace, and of eternal glory. So much, and no more, as faith every moment 'beholds with open face,' so much does hope see to all eternity. But this assurance of faith and hope is not an opinion, not a bare construction of Scripture, but is given immediately by the power of the Holy Ghost; and what none can have for another, but for himself only"—WESLEY.

"**We desire . . . same diligence**, etc. Fully acknowledging what was praiseworthy in them, the author desires that **every one** of them (ch. 3. 13; 4. 1; 12. 15, 16) would show the same diligence in regard to his own Christian hope as they had shown, and were showing, in regard to sympathy and love to their brethren. Their public life and public spirit were exemplary, if the same steadiness and resolution only marked their inner life! Here wavering or even unconcern seemed to have begun to threaten them. **To the full assurance . . . end**; or, 'in respect of the fulness of hope . . . end.' The word is again used of faith (ch. 10. 22). Fulness or full assurance of faith and hope is not anything distinct from faith and hope, lying outside of them, and to which they may lead; it is a condition of faith and hope themselves, the perfect condition. The author desires that they should give diligence to have their hope full, and to sustain it in this fulness unto the end"—DAVIDSON. "**Full assurance**—rather, 'fulness' (full productiveness) 'of hope' (ch. 10. 22). His desire is that the zeal which they have manifested in works of love may be directed toward the attainment of the full harvest of

Christian hope—may be shown unto the very end (ch. 3. 6, 14)"—MOULTON.

12. **Inherited the promises**—"the promised rest; paradise"—WESLEY.

That ye be not slothful—"rather, 'that ye become not sluggish.' The same word is used as in ch. 5. 11, there applied to apprehension of truth, here to the Christian hope and life; if the truth be not welcomed, there will be no vigour in the life. **Followers**—better, 'imitators.' (Comp. ch. 13. 7; 1 Cor. 11. 1.) They are not the first to whom 'hope' has been given, and who have needed zeal that they might not fail of their hope"—MOULTON.

13. **For**—"ye have abundant encouragement, seeing no stronger promise could be made than that great promise which God made to Abraham, and in him to us"—WESLEY.

For when God. "The 'for' implies 'and you may feel absolute confidence about the promises; for,' etc. **Made promise to Abraham.** Abraham is here only selected as 'the father of the faithful' (Rom. 4. 13); and not as the *sole* example of persevering constancy, but as an example specially illustrious (Calvin). **Because He could swear by no greater.** In the Jewish treatise Berachoth Moses is introduced as saying to God, 'Hadst Thou sworn by heaven and earth, I should have said, *they* will perish, and therefore so may Thy oath; but as Thou hast sworn by Thy great name, that oath shall endure for ever'"—C. B. **God when He made promise sware.** This fulfilment received by Abraham does not consist in this, that as a just man he is now made perfect (ch. 12. 23), but in this, that the words "multiplying I will multiply thee" (ver. 14), were through his patient waiting realised, as we see (ch. 11. 12), and as he lived to see in some measure (Gen. 25. 7, etc.). It seems fairest to limit the promise to Abraham, which he obtained by patient waiting, to these words of ver. 14), and to take the words in their simple sense according to ch. 11. 12, without importing any deeper messianic meaning into them. The promises, of course, all belong to the same class, and they have the same characteristics.

15. **After he had waited**—"thirty years. **He obtained the promise**—Isaac, the pledge of all the promises"—WESLEY.

"Better, **And thus** (thus being in possession of the promise and the oath of God), **having patiently waited** (ver. 12), **he obtained the promise**—the promised gift. Though some portions of the promise received a partial accomplishment during Abraham's life, it is not this that the writer has in view. (See ver. 12, and ch. 11. 13.)"—MOULTON.

16. **Men** generally **swear** by Him who is infinitely **greater** than themselves, **and an oath for confirmation**, to confirm what is promised or asserted, usually puts **an end to all contradiction.** This shows that an oath taken in a religious manner is lawful even under the gospel; otherwise the apostle would never have mentioned it with so much honour, as a proper means to confirm the truth"—WESLEY.

Men verily swear by the greater. "(Gen. 21. 23; 24. 3; 26. 30, 31.) The passage is important as showing the lawfulness of Christian oaths. **Strife**—rather, 'for to them an oath is the end of all gainsaying' (or 'controversy' as *to facts* 'with a view to confirmation.' It is meant that when men swear in confirmation of a disputed point their word is believed"—C. B.

17. **God interposed by an oath**—"amazing condescension! He who is greatest of all, acts as if He were a middle person; as if, while He swears, He were less than Himself, by whom He swears! Thou that hearest the promise, dost thou not yet believe?"—WESLEY.

"**Wherein**—rather, 'on which principle,' 'in accordance with this human custom.' **Willing**—rather, 'wishing' **More abundantly**—*i.e.* than if He had not sworn. **Unto the heirs of promise**—rather 'of *the* promise.' The heirs of the promise were primarily Abraham and his seed, and then all Christians. (Gal. 3. 29.) **The immutability of His counsel.** 'I am the Lord, I *change not*' (Mal. 3. 6). (See too Isa. 46. 10, 11; Ps. 33. 11; Jas. 1. 17.) His changeless 'decree' was that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the world should be blessed. On the other hand the Mosaic Law was mutable (ch. 7. 12; 12. 27). **Confirmed it by an oath**—rather, 'intervened with an oath,' *i.e.* made His oath intermediate between Himself and Abraham"—C. B. When men appeal to God, the greater One, they bring Him in as Surety between themselves and those to whom they make promise or affirmation. In condescension to their practice, and in order to show the immutability of His purpose contained in His promise, God took this way; but being unable to appeal to a greater than Himself, He brought in Himself as Surety, He mediated or came in between men and Himself, through the oath by Himself.

18. **That by two unchangeable things**—"His promise and His oath, in either, much more in both of **which, it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation**—swallowing up all doubt and fear. **Who have fled**—after having been tossed by many storms—**to lay hold on the hope set before us**—on Christ, the object of our hope, and the glory we hope for through Him"—WESLEY.

Two immutable things—"the promise and the oath. **Consolation**—rather, 'encouragement.' For us, rather than for Abraham alone, was the encouragement designed; for us, who (as men in danger of their lives flee to the sanctuary) **fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us** in the promise. Up to this point we read of what God has done; here of what must be done by man. The 'lay-

ing hold' expresses the 'faith' and implies the 'patient waiting' (ver. 12); by it we become true 'heirs of the promise' (ver. 17)"—MOULTON.

19. "**Which hope** in Christ **we have as an anchor of the soul**—entering into heaven itself, and fixed there—**within the veil.** Thus he slides back to the priesthood of Christ"—WESLEY.

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul. "A beautiful image, introduced for a moment only to set forth the security of the soul, though tossed by the waves of trouble. This symbol of hope, so familiar to us in Christian art, is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but is found in Greek proverbial sayings, and (it is said) appears on ancient coins. **Both sure and steadfast.** These words and the following *may*, indeed, form part of the figure; but more probably relate to the hope itself—a hope unfailing, firm, which entereth where no human sight can follow, even into the Most Holy Place, into heaven itself. The hope becomes personified, that the reader's thought may be led to Him who is Himself our hope"—MOULTON. "We have here a description of the absolute certainty of this Christian hope, and also a designation of the Most Holy Place. (Comp. Ex. 26. 33; Lev. 16. 2, 12, 15.) The Most Holy Place is spoken of as a symbol of heaven, where God is enthroned in His glory, and at His right hand is enthroned the exalted Christ"—LUNEMANN.

20. "A **forerunner** uses to be less in dignity than those that are to follow him. But it is not so here; for Christ who is gone before us is infinitely superior to us. What an honour is it to believers, to have so glorious a Forerunner, now appearing in the presence of God for them!"—WESLEY.

"**Whither the Forerunner—made an High Priest**; or, 'a Forerunner'—'having become an High Priest' (*i.e.* on entering); or in a slightly different way, 'whither as Forerunner for us Jesus entered, becoming an High Priest' (*i.e.* when He entered). Our hope is sure and steadfast, because it enters within the veil, and it enters within the veil because it rests on the Melchisedec priesthood of Jesus, who exercises His priesthood there. This is true whether the hope be internal or external. The object of hope is the inheritance set forth in the promises. The Christian hope fastens on this. Either hope rests on the promise guaranteed by the oath. But hope rests also on the fact which is the means to the fulfilment of the promise, the Melchisedec ministry of the Son. Jesus is entered into that which is within the veil, 'having obtained eternal redemption' (ch. 9. 12), and for this cause He is the Mediator of a new covenant, that they which have been called may receive the 'promise of eternal inheritance' (ch. 9. 15). Our hope enters there with Him, and holds us secure; He is Forerunner whom we shall follow where the inheritance lies"—DAVIDSON. "There can be no Forerunner except where there is a company to follow Him, for whom He goes forward to prepare. Now Christ is the Forerunner, and the race is following after Him"—BEECHER.

CHAPTER VII.

1. "The sum of this chapter is Christ, as appears from His type, Melchisedec, who was greater than Abraham himself, from whom Levi descended, has a priesthood altogether excellent, new, firm, perpetual"—WESLEY.

For this Melchisedec. "All that is historically known of Melchisedec is found in three verses of the Book of Genesis (ch. 14. 18, 19, 20). In all the twenty centuries of sacred history he is only mentioned once, in Ps. 110. 4. This chapter is a mystical explanation of the significance of these two brief allusions. It was not wholly new, since the Jews attached high honour to the name of Melchisedec, whom they identified with Shem"—C. B.

2. **Being first**—"according to the meaning of his own name—**King of righteousness, then**—according to the name of his city—**King of peace**—so in him, as in Christ, righteousness and peace were joined. And so they are in all that believe in Him"—WESLEY.

"**Gave a tenth part**—*lit.* 'divided a tenth.' This point is fully treated of in vers. 4–9. **King of righteousness**—Josephus notes the significance of this name. 'The first founder of Jerusalem was a chief of the Canaanites, who in our tongue is called Righteous King; for indeed such he was.' The special interest of these titles for the writer lies in the application to Jesus the Messiah. (See ch. 1. 8, 9; Isa. 9. 6, 7; 32. 1; Jer. 23. 5, 6; Zech. 9. 9; Eph. 2. 14.) On this, as obvious to every Christian reader, he does not further dwell"—MOULTON.

3. **Without father, without mother, without pedigree**—"recorded without any account of his descent from any ancestors of the priestly order. **Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life**—mentioned by Moses. **But being**—in all these respects—**made like the Son of God**—who is really 'without father,' as to His human nature; 'without mother,' as to His Divine; and in this also, 'without pedigree.' Neither descended from any ancestors of the priestly order. **Remaineth a priest continually**—nothing is recorded of the death or successor of Melchisedec. But Christ alone does really remain without death, and without successor"—WESLEY.

"**Without father . . . without descent**—rather, 'without genealogy,' or register of descent. The two preceding characteristics indicate that Melchisedec was king as well as priest, and that he and his kingdom were righteous and peaceful. These characteristics now introduced refer to the person of the priest. His priesthood is independent of father or mother or genealogical register, The words do not mean that Melchisedec came

into existence having no father and no mother, but that in the picture presented of him in Scripture, he stands unconnected with any family, and yet a priest. **Beginning of days or end of life.** These words also refer to the picture in Gen. 14. No history of his birth is given, nor any of his death, as is usual in Scripture, and the omission is significant. In regard to the words 'without father,' etc., it might be true, in fact, that as a priest Melchisedec had no progenitor; his priesthood might belong to himself, being exercised in virtue of his high place among his people. If he followed another who was priest, his priesthood would not be the same, but one belonging to himself. The question of what the facts were ought not here to be raised. **Without beginning of days**, etc., show these words must mean, of whom no beginning of days is recorded. Otherwise Melchisedec becomes magnified into a supernatural being, contrary to the plain scope of Gen. 14. **But made like unto the Son of God**, *i.e.* in this particular, that he had neither beginning of days nor end of life. The clause is connected only with the preceding, not with the words 'without father,' etc. The Son of God is spoken of here as the Epistle represents Him, existing from eternity (ch. 9. 14; 1. 2), and living for ever (ch. 1. 10–12). Such a comparison is decisive against attributing these characteristics to Melchisedec in a real sense. They belong to the portrait of him, which was so drawn that he was 'made like' the Son of God. As we see Melchisedec in that picture of him, which is a prophetic copy of another, he is a priest continually. Like a portrait, he is always the same; he follows us about with his eyes, a king and a priest, always alone, with no ancestry of priesthood before him, and none succeeding to his priesthood after him, always living—so Scripture shows him, and so continually in its pages we behold him"—DAVIDSON.

4. "The greatness of Melchisedec is described in all the preceding and following particulars. But the most manifest proof of it was, that Abraham gave him tithes as to a priest of God and a superior; though he was himself a patriarch, greater than a king, and a progenitor of many kings"—WESLEY.

How great this man was—"better 'is'; the greatness abides, set forth in the words of Scripture. In the rest of the verse (where the best MSS. omit the word 'even') it is well to follow the literal rendering, **under whom Abraham gave a tenth out of the chief spoils**—**(Abraham) the patriarch.** 'He gave him tithes of all' (Gen. 14. 20), but the tenth was selected from the choicest part of the spoils. 'Patriarch' is a word used in the LXX. (in Chronicles only) for the head of a family or chief of a clan. In the New Testament it is used of David in Acts 2. 29, and twice in Acts 7. of Jacob's sons. The next verse deals with the same subject, but under a new aspect. Here the thought is, Melchisedec received tithes even from Abraham the patriarch; there, he has been thus honoured, though no enactment of law invested him with superior rights"—MOULTON.

5. **The sons of Levi take tithes of their brethren**—"sprung from Abraham as well as themselves. The Levites, therefore, are greater than they; but the priests are greater than the Levites, the patriarch Abraham than the priests, and Melchisedec than him"—WESLEY.

To take tithes, etc.—"indirectly, through the agency of the Levites. Delitzsch argues that after the Exile the priests collected the tithes themselves. It cannot, however, be proved that the priests themselves tithed the people. This was done by the Levites, who gave the tithe of *their* tithes to the priests. (Num. 18. 22–26; Neh. 10. 38.) There is, however, no real difficulty about the expression, for the priests *might* tithe the people, as Jewish tradition *says* that they did in the days of Ezra. There is, therefore, no need to alter 'the people' into Levi. The priests stood alone in *receiving* tithes and giving none"—C. B.

6. **He who is not from them**—"the Levites—**blessed**—another proof of his superiority. **Even him that had the promises**—that was so highly favoured of God. When S. Paul speaks of Christ, he says, 'the promise'; 'promises' refer to other blessings also"—WESLEY.

"**And blessed**—*lit.* 'and hath blessed.' Second point of superiority. The act is regarded as permanent, and still continuous in its effects, in accordance with the writer's manner of regarding Scripture as a living and present entity. Notwithstanding the privileged position of the Levitical priests (ver. 5), Melchisedec yet occupies a far higher position. The clause **and blessed him who had the promises** serves yet further to make manifest the dignity and exaltedness of Melchisedec. For, by the fact that Abraham had received the Divine promises, that his seed should be multiplied, and in him all nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. 12. 2 f.; 13. 14 f.), he had been already most highly favoured of God. How high thus must that man stand who imparts his blessing to one already so highly favoured, since truly—as is immediately expressly added, ver. 7—the dispenser of the blessing is ever more exalted than the recipient of the blessing"—LUNEMANN.

7. **The less is blessed**—"authoritatively, **of the greater**"—WESLEY.

Blessing was one of the recognised priestly functions. (Num. 6. 23–26.)

8. **And here**—"in the Levitical priesthood. **But there**—in the case of Melchisedec. **He of whom it is testified that he liveth**—who is not spoken of as one that died for another to succeed him, but is represented only as living,

no mention being made either of his birth or death"—WESLEY.

Another aspect of the superiority of Melchisedec.—**Here men that die . . . liveth.** The Levitical priests are mortal men. Melchisedec is borne witness to that he liveth. No express testimony of this kind is found, but it is virtually contained in the silence of Scripture regarding his death, and in the picture of him as living, which the Author interprets to mean that he had "neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (ver. 3). Here all that the author has in view is the point of superiority; Melchisedec liveth, the Levitical priests are mortal men. The consequences of this superiority are alluded to later (ver. 25). Their priesthood belongs to them as a body, and they retain it for a time. His is wholly his own, and he retains it always.

9. **And even Levi, who received tithes**—"not in person, but in his successors, as it were, **paid tithes**—in the person of Abraham"—WESLEY.

"Levi may be said to have directly acknowledged the superiority of Melchisedec, for being in the loins of Abraham he, so to speak, paid tithes to him. In these verses (4-10) the apostle gives a summary of the points in his view significant in the Melchisedec priesthood, giving it superiority to the Aaronic or Levitical. He lays hold of two points: that Melchisedec exercised his priestly functions of tithing and blessing, not in virtue of belonging to a priestly family empowered by law to exercise the priesthood, but in virtue of what he was in himself as a person; and that he liveth. The Levitical priests are so in virtue of a mere law, not from any personal superiority to their brethren; and they are men that die. These points both touch the person of the priest, and have no reference to ministry in itself, and this shows what the Epistle means by 'order' of priesthood. Further, the royalty of the priest is not alluded to in this summary"—DAVIDSON.

11. "The apostle now demonstrates that the Levitical priesthood must yield to the priesthood of Christ, because Melchisedec, after whose order He is a priest—(1) Is opposed to Aaron (vers. 11-14); (2) Hath no end of life (vers. 15-19), but 'remaineth a priest continually.' **If now perfection were by the Levitical priesthood**—if this perfectly answered all God's designs and man's wants. **For under it the people received the Law**—whence some might infer, that perfection was by that priesthood. **What further need was there, that another priest**—of a new order, should be set up? From this single consideration it is plain that both the priesthood and the Law, which were inseparably connected, were now to give way to a better priesthood and more excellent dispensation"—WESLEY.

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood. "At this point begins the argument which occupies the next nine verses. 'Perfection' (comp. the verb in ch. 9. 9; 10. 1, 14; 11. 40) means power of perfectionment, capacity to achieve the end in view; but this was not to be attained through the Levitic priesthood. The *fifth* point of superiority is that the Melchisedec priesthood implies the abrogation of the Levitic, and of the whole Law which was based upon it. **For under it**—rather, 'for on the basis of it.' The writer regards the priesthood rather than the Law as constituting the basis of the whole Mosaic system; so that into this slight parenthesis he really infuses the essence of his argument. The priesthood is obviously changed. For otherwise the theocratic King of Ps. 110 would not have been called 'a Priest after the order *of Melchisedec*' but 'after the order *of Aaron*. Clearly then 'the order of Aaron' admitted of no attainment of perfection through its means. But if the priesthood was thus condemned as imperfect and inefficient, the Law was equally disparaged as a transitory institution. Righteousness did not 'come by the Law'; if it could so have come Christ would have died in vain (Gal. 2. 21; comp. Heb. 10. 1-14)"—C. B.

12. **For**—"one of these cannot be changed without the other"—WESLEY.

"This verse connects itself with the parenthesis in ver. 11. **For if the priesthood is changed there takes place also of necessity a change of law.** It is no light matter to speak of the order of Aaron as set aside: this carries with it a change of law"—MOULTON.

13. "But the priesthood is manifestly changed from one order to another, and from one tribe to another. **For He of whom these things are spoken**—namely, Jesus—**pertaineth to another tribe**—that of Judah—**of which no man** was suffered by the Law to **attend on**, or minister at, **the altar**"—WESLEY.

That Jesus is **He of whom these things are spoken**, the author does not prove, and needs not to prove. His readers did not doubt that Jesus was the Messiah; the question only was, whether by this Messiah the Old Testament cultus was abolished, or whether it still continues.

14. **For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah**—"whatever difficulties have arisen since, during so long a tract of time, it was then clear beyond dispute"—WESLEY.

Confirming what is said in ver. 13, the author appeals to the *manifest historical fact* that **our Lord sprang from the tribe of Judah.** We have, here, therefore, rather a most significant proof, that the descent of Jesus from the tribe of Judah was a well and universally known fact before the destruction of Jerusalem. In the same years in which the Gospels of Mark and Luke were written, the descent of Jesus from David was already universally known.

15. **And it is still far more evident that**

—"both the priesthood and the Law are changed, because the priest now raised up is not only of another tribe, but of a quite different order"—WESLEY.

And it is—"that which is **yet far more evident** is the proposition of the preceding verses, viz. the failure of the Levitical priesthood to bring 'perfection' (ver. 11), a failure placed beyond doubt by the change of priesthood (vers. 13, 14). 'And what we are speaking of is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchisedec there ariseth a different priest, who hath been made (priest) not according to a law of a carnal commandment, but according to power of indissoluble life.' Hitherto, in vers. 12-14, the thought has rested on what is *given up*, viz. the priesthood of Aaron, set aside by the words of prophecy (Ps. 110. 4); and so far as these three verses are concerned, nothing more might be intended than the transference of the priesthood to *another line of men*. Far more striking will the proof appear, when we look upon the other side, and observe what is *brought in*—a priesthood like Melchisedec's, resting not on mere positive enactment, but assumed by inherent power, by right of 'life' (ver. 8)"—MOULTON.

16. **Who is made**—"a Priest—**not after the law of a carnal commandment**—not according to the Mosaic Law, which consisted chiefly of 'commandments' that were 'carnal,' compared to the spirituality of the gospel. **But after the power of an endless life**—which He has in Himself, as the Eternal Son of God"—WESLEY.

After the law of a carnal commandment—"rather, 'in accordance with the law of a fleshen (*i.e.* earthly *commandment*).' Neither this writer, nor even S. Paul, ever called or would have called the Law 'carnal,' a term which S. Paul implicitly disclaims when he says that the Law is 'spiritual' (Rom. 7. 14); but to call it 'fleshen' is merely to say that it is hedged about with earthly limitations and relationships, and therefore unfit to be adapted to eternal conditions. Its ordinances indeed might be called ordinances of the flesh (ch. 9. 10), because they had to do, almost exclusively, with externals. An attentive reader will see that even in the closest apparent resemblances to the language of S. Paul there are differences in this Epistle. For instance, his relative disparagement of the Law turns almost exclusively on the conditions of its *hierarchy;* and his use of the word 'flesh' and 'fleshen' refers not to the sensual passions but to mortality and transience. **Of an endless life**—*lit.* 'of an indissoluble life,' the life of a tabernacle which 'could not be dissolved.' The priest of this new law and priesthood is 'the Prince of Life' (Acts 3. 15)"—C. B.

18. "**For there is** implied in this new and everlasting priesthood, and in the new dispensation connected therewith, **a disannulling of the preceding commandment**—an abrogation of the Mosaic Law. **For the weakness and unprofitableness thereof**—for its insufficiency either to justify or sanctify"—WESLEY.

For the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. "The writer here shows how completely he is of the school of S. Paul, notwithstanding the strength of his Judaic sympathies. For S. Paul was the first who clearly demonstrated that Christianity involved the abrogation of the Law, and thereby proved its partial, transitory, and inefficacious character as intended only to be a *preparation for* the gospel. (Rom. 8. 3.) The Law was only the 'tutor' or attendant-slave to lead men to Christ, or train their boyhood till it could attain to full Christian manhood. (Gal. 2. 23, 24.) It was only *after* the consummation of the gospel that its disciplinary institutions became reduced to 'weak and beggarly rudiments' (Gal. 4. 9)"—C. B.

19. **For the Law**—"taken by itself, separate from the gospel—**made nothing perfect**—could not perfect its votaries, either in faith or love, in happiness or holiness. **But the bringing in of a better hope**—of the gospel dispensation, which gives us a better ground of confidence, does. **By which we draw nigh to God**—yea, so nigh as to be one spirit with Him. And this is true perfection"—WESLEY.

"In this Epistle the Law is the commandment of the priesthood, and the flesh is the physical descent, bodily conditions, and mortal lives, to which it has reference; and the weakness of the Law is inherent in itself, because it has reference to such things. In S. Paul the Law which is holy and good in itself is something to be obeyed, and it is without power to produce righteousness, because the carnal mind cannot be subject to it. In this Epistle the Law is not a commandment to be obeyed by man, obedience to which is righteousness, but an institution designed to effect atonement for men's sins; and it is unable to accomplish this from its own inherent weakness, because it has reference only to the flesh, and does not apply to the conscience ch. 9. 9, 10, 13, 14; 10. 2)"—DAVIDSON.

20. **And**—"the greater solemnity wherewith He was made Priest, further proves the superior excellency of His priesthood"—WESLEY.

From the terms of the prophecy, now fulfilled, the author passes to the circumstances accompanying the giving of it. These also are full of meaning. The oath that accompanies it reveals its eternal nature, and the change by it from the temporary to the eternal covenant (ch. 13. 20).

21. **The Lord sware and will not repent**—"Hence also it appears, that His is an unchangeable priesthood"—WESLEY.

"What was typical in Melchisedec is real

in our Lord. He is **made** a priest, 'not according to a law of fleshly,' frail, and perishable, 'ordinances,' 'but with reference to' that 'power' which belonged to His Divine nature and **endless Being**. Hence the perpetuity of His priesthood is secured by an oath"—TREFFRY.

22. **Of so much better a covenant**—"unchangeable, eternal—**was Jesus made a Surety**—or Mediator. The word 'covenant' frequently occurs in the remaining part of this Epistle. The original word means either a covenant or a last will and testament. S. Paul takes it sometimes in the former, sometimes in the latter, sense; sometimes he includes both"—WESLEY.

Of a better testament. "A clearer rendering would be 'by so much better was the covenant of which Jesus has been made surety.' The words—which might be taken as the keynote of the whole Epistle—should undoubtedly be rendered 'of a better *covenant*.' The Greek word *diathēkē* is the rendering of the Hebrew *Berith*, which means a covenant. Of 'testaments' the Hebrews knew nothing until they learnt the custom of 'making a will' from the Romans. So completely was this the case that there is no word in Hebrew which means 'a will'"—C. B. **By so much was Jesus made**—"better, 'by so much also hath Jesus become surety of a better covenant.' The form of the sentence recalls ch. 1. 4. As the priest whose appointment is confirmed by the oath of God is raised above all former priests, in the same proportion is the covenant of which Jesus is surety higher, better, than the former covenant. For the 'better hope' of ver. 19 we now read 'better covenant'; the new idea is not different in substance, but is more definite and clear. The very promise of the 'other priest' brought with it a 'better hope'; the recollection of the Divine oath is fitly succeeded by the mention of a 'covenant'"—MOULTON.

23. **They were many priests**—"one after another"—WESLEY.

"Rather, **have been made priests many** (*i.e.* 'in large numbers'), **because by death they were prevented from continuing**. (Comp. ver. 8, where the thought is somewhat similar")—MOULTON.

24. **He continueth for ever**—"in life and in His priesthood—**that passeth not away**—to any successor"—WESLEY.

But this man—"better, 'but He, because He remaineth for ever, hath His priesthood inviolable (or unchangeable'). The former ordinance related to a race, and the individuals were ever passing away; since His life is 'indissoluble' (ver. 16), none can trespass on His right and invade His priesthood. The rendering of the margin, 'that passeth not from one to another,' expresses nearly the same thought; but it is very doubtful whether the Greek will bear this meaning"—MOULTON. The Old Testament priest being mortal, was not suffered to remain, and his priesthood passed to another, or was entered upon by another: **He**, "because He abideth in life for ever, has His priesthood of such a kind that He cannot overstep it, or of such a kind that another cannot step into it."

25. **Wherefore He is able to save to the uttermost**—"from all the guilt, power, root, and consequence of sin—**them who come**—by faith—**to God through Him**—as their Priest. **Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession**—that is He ever lives and intercedes. He died once; He intercedes perpetually"—WESLEY.

To save to the uttermost them that draw near. "The word 'uttermost' does not refer to time, to generation after generation,—such an idea, though true in itself, could not occur here,—but to degree or perfection of salvation. The offering of Christ enables men to draw near unto God; those that thus draw near He is able to save completely, to bring them through all hindrances to that honour and glory designed for them (ch. 2. 7, 10), which He Himself has reached as the Captain of their salvation (ch. 2. 9, 10; 5. 7–9). **Seeing . . to make intercession**—through His intercession they receive help in their temptations (ch. 2. 18; 4. 16), and are enabled to hold fast their faith unto the end (ch. 3. 6; 10. 23); and thus through all vicissitudes, by patient endurance, they are saved to the uttermost, and inherit the promises. With regard to this intercession of the Son it may be said, that of course it is not to be understood as made through words. Again, it is not to be confounded with His offering of Himself in the heavenly sanctuary. This He did once for all and without repetition (ch. 9. 26–28; 20. 18); His intercession is continued. Neither is His intercession merely His appearance and constant presence before the face of God for us (ch. 9. 24), as if God, having Him ever in His sight, were held in unbroken remembrance of His work for men, and had in Him, who was tempted in all points like as we are, continually before His eyes a type and representative of His people upon the earth, and was thus for ever appealed to in a double way. The intercession is regarded rather as a direct representation to God on the part of the Son. Immediately connected with it seems to be that we draw near unto God through Him (comp. chaps. 7. 25 with 10. 19 and 21), and that through Him we 'offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually' (ch. 13. 15). That which will enable Him to make it pointed on our behalf is His fellow-feeling with us (ch. 4. 14–5. 10); that which will give it power with God may be His having offered Himself, and that He is the Son of God; and that which is the effect of it, is grace to help in time of need (ch. 4. 16). To define it in itself may be impossible. He has left us an example (John 17.) how He interceded in human speech to God in the days of His flesh, and translating

this into the modes of heavenly communion, so far as we can imagine them, we may form some conception of it"—DAVIDSON. **Wherefore**—since His priesthood is inviolable, His power of saving is *complete*—MOULTON.

26. **For such an High Priest suited us**—"unholy, mischievous, defiled sinners: a blessed paradox! **Holy**—with respect to God. **Harmless**—with respect to men. **Undefiled**—with any sin in Himself. **Separated from sinners**—as well as free from sin. And so He was when He left the world. **And made**—even in His human nature — **higher than the heavens**—and all their inhabitants"—WESLEY.

"**For such a High Priest became us.** The 'for' clinches the whole argument with a moral consideration. There was a *spiritual fitness* in this annulment of the imperfect Law and priesthood, and the introduction of a better hope and covenant. So great and so sympathetic and so innocent an High Priest was suited to our necessities. There is much rhetorical beauty in the order of the Greek. He might have written it in the order of the English, but he keeps the word 'priest' by way of emphasis as the last word of the clause, and then substitutes High Priest for it. **Holy** towards God (Lev. 20. 26; Ps. 16. 10; Acts 2. 27). He bore 'holiness to the Lord' not on a golden mitre-plate, but as the inscription of all His life as 'the Holy One of God' (Mark 1. 24). **Harmless**—as regards men. **Undefiled**—not stained (Isa. 53. 9), and as the word implies unstainable — with any of the defilements which belonged to the Levitic priests from their confessed sinfulness. Christ was 'without sin' (ch. 4. 15); 'without spot' (ch. 9. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 19). He 'knew no sin' (2 Cor. 5. 21). **Separate from sinners**—*lit.* 'Having been separated from sinners.' The writer is already beginning to introduce the subject of the day of atonement, on which he proceeds to speak. To enable the high priest to perform the functions of that day aright the most scrupulous precautions were taken to obviate the smallest chance of ceremonial pollution (Lev. 21. 10-15); yet even these rigid precautions had at least once in living memory been frustrated—when the high priest Ishmael ben Phabi had been incapacitated from his duties, because in conversing with Hareth (Aretas) Emir of Arabia, a speck of the Emir's saliva had fallen upon the high priest's beard. But Christ was free not only from ceremonial pollution, but from that far graver moral stain of which the ceremonial was a mere external figure; and had now been exalted above all contact with sin in the Heaven of Heavens (ch. 4. 14)"—C. B.

27. **Who needed not to offer up sacrifices daily**—"that is, on every yearly day of expiation; for He offered **once for all**: not **for His own sins**, for He then offered up Himself 'without spot to God'"—WESLEY.

"This verse carries on the description, presenting what follows from this purity and sinlessness. **For this He did once** — rather, 'once for all.' These words and those that follow, 'when He offered up Himself,' are best understood as a parenthesis. The truth stated in the former part of the verse, that Jesus needeth not, like the high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then 'for those of the people,' finds its explanation in ver. 28, 'For the Law,' etc. But, having introduced the thought of a sacrifice for the sins of the people—a thought not yet expressly mentioned in any part of the Epistle in connection with Jesus, though virtually presented, as we have seen, in many earlier words—the writer will not pass on without the most emphatic statement that such a sacrifice was offered once for all, in the sacrifice of Himself"—MOULTON. **Offered Himself.** Christ is thus not only the High Priest of the new covenant, but also the victim offered. (Comp. 8. 3; 9. 1, 2, 14, 25 f.; 10. 10, 12, 14; Eph. 5. 2)"—LUNEMANN.

28. **The Law maketh men high priests that have infirmity**—"that are both weak, mortal, and sinful. **But the oath which was since the Law**—namely in the time of David —**maketh the Son, who is consecrated for ever**—who, being now free, both from sin and death, from natural and moral infirmity, **remaineth a priest for ever**"—WESLEY.

"The Son was appointed Priest, having been made perfect. The term **made perfect** is a single word that embraces it in all the different points enumerated in ver. 26, relating both to the moral being and present sphere of existence of the Son. It is the high priest's infirmity that makes his offering for himself necessary. This infirmity is described as his own sins. It is implied in the Son's perfection that He has no infirmity, but it is to press the expression 'made perfect' unduly to infer from it that before His perfection the Son had infirmity—taking that infirmity even in the sense of innocent human weakness, or a moral condition still under probation. The idea of a moral probation of the Son seems foreign to the Epistle; and there seems no reference even to human weaknesses here. There is strictly no contrast between the state of the Son before perfection and when perfected. The contrast is between a Son made perfect and the human high priest who has infirmity. The Son's being made perfect excludes the idea of infirmity, and therefore the necessity of offering for Himself; but the author's language does not suggest any contrast between the Son's state of perfection and His condition in the flesh, beyond this, that He is 'separated from sinners' and become higher than the heavens,' words referring to His surroundings, not to His own moral condition"—DAVIDSON.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE mode in which this chapter is introduced shows that, in the writer's own arrangement, a new division of the argument begins here. On examination we shall find that there is a clear difference between the topics discussed before and after this point; though it was hardly possible, and certainly was not the intention of the writer, strictly to maintain this distinction in every particular"—MOULTON.

1. **We have such an High Priest.** "Having finished his description of the type in Melchisedec, the apostle begins to treat directly of the excellency of Christ's priesthood beyond the Levitical. **Who is set down**—having finished His oblation—**at the right hand of the Majesty** — of God"—WESLEY.

"The chief point is as follows:—We have a High Priest who sat down . . . a minister, etc. **Such an High Priest . . . set**; or, 'who sat down.' 'Such is explained by the words 'who sat down,' etc. This is a trait in the history of this High Priest, and indicates both His greatness and the sphere where He is. He sat down, and He is a minister of the true tabernacle. Of course His sitting down did not precede but followed His ministry there. His **sitting down** and His being a minister in the *true* sanctuary have the same meaning, and imply the *finality* of His offering. All that may be said of the High Priest and His ministry is grouped together so as to be taken in at one glance, and His sitting down at the right hand of God is a token both of His greatness and of the finality of the offering which He made as a minister in the true tabernacle (ch. 10. 11, 12). The apostle combines the two prophetical passages, 'Sit Thou at My right hand' (Ps. 110. 1), and 'Thou art a Priest' (Ps. 110. 4); the first is the basis of ver. 1 and the second of ver. 2; and the two verses imply that our High Priest is in the heavens and has His high-priestly ministry there, and suggest the finality of His offering there"—DAVIDSON.

2. **A minister**—"who represents his own sacrifice, as the high priest did the blood of those sacrifices once a year—**of the sanctuary**—heaven, typified by the Holy of Holies. **And of the true tabernacle**—perhaps His human nature, of which the old tabernacle was a type. **Which the Lord hath fixed**—for ever. **Not man** — as Moses fixed the tabernacle"—WESLEY.

Of the sanctuary. "The word here rendered 'minister' (see ch. 1. 7, 14) is very commonly used in the LXX. for the officiating priest. It is difficult, however, to decide on the meaning of the words here joined with it—whether they denote holy things or holy place; if the latter, what is the distinction between this holy place and 'the true tabernacle'? The ordinary usage of the Epistle would suggest 'holy place,' and perhaps the occurrence of both expressions in ch. 9. 11, 12 (where there is no doubt as to the translation) is sufficient to remove any hesitation here. The 'sanctuary,' therefore, will probably be the heavenly counterpart of the Holiest Place; **the true** (or 'real') **tabernacle**, the counterpart of the sacred tent of Moses, containing both the holy place and the holiest of all (ch. 9. 2–4)"—MOULTON. "This verse declares the capacity in which Christ has sat down at the right hand of God, as a sacrificing priest of the **true** sanctuary and tabernacle, which the **Lord** erected, not a man"—LUNEMANN.

3. **Have somewhat also to offer**—namely, the blood of His one sacrifice. The point is one of the extremest importance, and though the writer does not pause to explain *what* was the sacrifice which Christ offered as High Priest, he purposely introduces the subject here to prepare for his subsequent development of it in ch. 9. 12; 10. 5–7, 11, 12. Similarly S. Paul tells us, "Christ hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5. 2).

4. **But if He were on earth**—"if His priesthood terminated here—**He could not be a priest**—at all, consistently with the Jewish institutions. **There being other priests**—to whom alone this office is allotted"—WESLEY.

For if He were—"rather, 'now if He were still on earth.' **If He were on earth.** His sanctuary *must* be a heavenly one, for in the earthly one He had no standpoint. **He should not be a priest.** He would not be so much as a priest at all; still less even a High Priest; for He was of the tribe of Judah (ch. 7. 14), and the Law had distinctly ordained that 'no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord' (Num. 16. 40). **Seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the Law**—rather (omitting 'priests' with the best MSS.), since 'there are (already) those who offer their gifts according to the Law.' The writer could not possibly have used these *present tenses* if the Epistle had been written after the fall of Jerusalem. Jewish institutions are, indeed, spoken of in the present tense, after the fall of Jerusalem, by Barnabas and Clement of Rome; but they are merely using an every-day figure of speech. In case of the Epistle to the Hebrews the argument would have gained such indefinite force and weight in passages like this by appealing to a fact so startling as the annulment of the Mosaic system by God Himself, working by the unmistakable demonstrations of history, that no writer similarly circumstanced could possibly have passed over such a point in silence"—FARRAR.

5. **Who serve**—"the Temple, which was not yet destroyed—**after the pattern and shadow of heavenly things**—of spiritual, evangelical worship, and of everlasting glory. **The pattern**

—somewhat like the strokes pencilled out upon a piece of fine linen, which exhibit the figures of leaves and flowers, but have not yet received their splendid colours and curious shades. **And shadow** — or shadowy representation, which gives you some dim and imperfect idea of the body, but not the fine features, not the distinguishing air ; none of those living graces which adorn the real person. Yet both the pattern and shadow lead our minds to something nobler than themselves : the 'pattern,' to that holiness and glory which complete it ; the 'shadow,' to that which occasions it"—WESLEY.

The earthly sanctuary and tabernacle, though in some sense a representation of the heavenly things, are an imperfect likeness. In heaven are the true sanctuary and tabernacle. The point which it is desired to make is that the earthly tabernacle, made of what was shown in the Mount, is but **a copy** ; the true original tabernacle is in heaven. EDWARDS says : "The Jewish priesthood itself teaches the existence of a heavenly sanctuary. All the arrangements of tabernacle and ritual were made after a pattern shown to Moses on Mount Sinai. The priests, in the tabernacle and through their ritual, ministered to the holy place, as the visible image and outline of the real holiest place—that is, heaven—which the Lord pitched, not man. Now Christ's more excellent ministry as High Priest in heaven carries in its bosom all that the apostle contends for, the establishment of a new covenant of the Law. 'He has obtained a ministry the more excellent, by how much He is the Mediator of a better covenant.' These words contain in a nutshell the entire argument, or series of arguments, that extends from this verse to ver. 18 of ch. 10."

6. **And now He hath obtained a more excellent ministry**—"His priesthood as much excels theirs, as the promises of the gospel (whereof He is a surety) excel those of the Law. These **better promises** are specified (vers. 10, 11), those in the Law were mostly temporal promises"—WESLEY.

"The great point of contrast here is precisely the same as in the former example ; and the argument upon which the entire discourse depends is that Moses was *the servant*, and that Christ is '*the Son*'"—TREFFRY. "The ministry of the Levitical priests in the Mosaic tabernacle stands related to the ministry of Christ in the 'heavenly things' precisely as the old 'covenant' does to the new. The new covenant is founded on better promises ; for (comp. vers. 9, 10) the old covenant promised salvation and blessing only to him who perfectly fulfilled the Law ; the new covenant, on the other hand, *gives first* before it *asks*"—OLSHAUSEN.

7. **For if the first had been faultless**—"if that dispensation had answered all God's designs and man's wants, if it had not been weak and unprofitable, unable to make anything perfect, **no place would have been for a second**"—WESLEY.

"This verse serves to obviate an objection that might arise in the minds of the readers at ver. 6. They were wont to consider Moses, and the covenant of God with Moses, as the proper and most sacred kernel of the Israelitish true religion. Had not the Messiah Himself, according to their view, been promised and given precisely to the members of the *Mosaic covenant people!* Now to say that this covenant of God with Moses was lowered in value by another covenant, must have appeared to them as almost frivolous. Therefore the author explains to them that he is at liberty to depreciate, nay to find fault with, the old covenant, and why he is so. **If that first covenant had been faultless, then there had been no room for desiring a second**"—EBRARD.

8. "But there is ; **for finding fault with them**—who were under the old covenant. **He saith, I make a new covenant with the house of Israel**—with all the Israel of God, in all ages and nations. It is new in many respects, though not as to the substance of it—(1) being ratified by the death of Christ ; (2) freed from those burdensome rites and ceremonies ; (3) containing a more full and clear account of spiritual religion ; (4) attended with larger influences of the Spirit ; (5) extended to all men ; and (6) never to be abolished"—WESLEY.

For finding fault with them. "The 'for' introduces his proof that 'place for a better covenant was being sought for.' The persons blamed are not expressed, for the word 'them' belongs to **He says.** Perhaps the meaning is 'blaming the first covenant, He says to them' (who were under it). The 'He' is God speaking to the prophet. **Behold, the days come.** "The quotation is from Jer. 31. 31–34. **I will make.** The Hebrew word means literally, 'I will cut,' alluding perhaps to the slaying of victims at the inauguration of a covenant. But the LXX. and the writer of the Epistle substitute a less literal word"—C. B.

9. **When I took them by the hand**—"with the care and tenderness of a parent. And just while this was fresh in their memory, they obeyed ; but presently after they shook off the yoke. **They continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not**—so that covenant was soon broken in pieces"—WESLEY.

Because they continued not in My covenant. "The disobedience of the Israelites was a cause for nullifying the covenant which they had transgressed. (Judg. 2. 20, 21 ; 2 Kings 17. 15–18.) (Comp. Hos. 1. 9, 'Ye are not My people, and I will not be your God.') **And I regarded them not.** These words correspond to the 'though I was a Husband unto them' of the original. The quotation is from the LXX., who perhaps followed a slightly different reading. Rabbi Kimchi holds that the rendering of the LXX. is justifiable even with the present reading"—C. B.

10. **This is the covenant I will make after**

those days—"after the Mosaic dispensation is abolished—**I will put My laws in their minds**—I will open their eyes, and enlighten their understanding, to see the true, full, spiritual meaning thereof. **And write them on their hearts**—so that they shall inwardly experience whatever I have commanded. **And I will be to them a God**—their all-sufficient portion, and exceeding great reward. **And they shall be to Me a people**—My treasure, My beloved, loving, and obedient children"—WESLEY.

"The first promise is that the Law shall be written on the heart, no more on mere outward tables of stone. Written on the heart it is first knowledge, and then impulse; its obedience follows as by a spiritual instinct. The apostle here comes in contact with the Pauline 'law of the Spirit' (Rom. 8. 2), but he nowhere connects this law of the heart with the Spirit. To this promise is attached the statement, **I will be their God.** That statement expresses the *idea* of a covenant between God and man; in those days this idea shall be verified, the covenant relation will be real between God and His people"—DAVIDSON.

11. "**And they** who are under this covenant (though in other respects they will have need to teach each other to their lives' end, yet) **shall not** need to **teach every one his brother saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me**—all real Christians—**from the least to the greatest.** In this order the saving knowledge of God ever did and ever will proceed; not first to the greatest, and then to the least. But 'the Lord shall save the tents,' the poorest, 'of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David,' the royal seed, 'and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem,' the nobles and the rich citizens, 'do not magnify themselves' (Zech. 12. 7)"—WESLEY.

"The second promise of universal knowledge may be regarded as the result of what was contained in the first promise, or it may be a mere expansion of the first. The words, **They shall no more teach every man his fellow-citizen and brother,** are not strictly part of the promise, but a graphic mode of describing the state of things when knowledge of God is universal. An external law can be known only to some, and these must be the teachers of others. A law written on the heart, like a universal principle of the mind, is known to all, no priest or prophet is required to teach it; and such classes disappear, or rather all the Lord's people are prophets (Num. 11. 29; Joel 2. 28); and as it is a *law* as well as knowledge, exhortation is not needed to the observance of it. This description, it need not be said, is ideal; the prophets in their delineations of the future Church always contemplate it in its perfect condition. (Comp. Joel 2. 28; Isa. 11. 9; 54. 13)"—DAVIDSON.

12. "**For I will** justify them, which is the root of all true knowledge of God. This, therefore, is God's method. First, a sinner is pardoned; then he knows God, as gracious and merciful; then God's laws are written on his heart: he is God's and God is his"—WESLEY.

The third promise, that of final forgiveness of sin, being introduced by the word **for,** is seen to be the basis of the preceding ones; and so the apostle regards it as virtually the whole promise on which the new covenant is enacted. (Ch. 10. 16, 17.) Here lay the defect of the first covenant and its ministry (ch. 9. 9; 10. 4, 11); and here the ministry of the new is more excellent (ver. 6; ch. 9. 14; 10. 14). Those thus forgiven have access to the very throne of God (ch. 4. 16; 10. 19); they know Him and can serve Him free from the consciousness of sin (ch. 9. 14), and with a true heart (ch. 10. 22).

13. **In saying, A new covenant, He hath antiquated the first**—"hath shown that it is disannulled, and out of date. **Now that which is antiquated is ready to vanish away**—as it did quickly after, when the Temple was destroyed"—WESLEY.

In that He saith, etc,—"rather, 'in saying, "new" He hath made the first old: now that which groweth old and is failing for age is nigh unto vanishing away.' The very language of the prophet contains a declaration of the speedy dissolution of the former covenant. If **nigh unto vanishing** at the time when Jeremiah wrote, well might it now be believed to have passed away"—MOULTON.

CHAPTER IX.

1. "**The first covenant had ordinances of** outward **worship, and a worldly,** visible, material **sanctuary,** or tabernacle. Of this **sanctuary** he treats, vers. 2–5; of those **ordinances,** vers. 6–10"—WESLEY.

"The subject commenced in the last chapter (vers. 1–6) is continued here. The mention of the 'more excellent ministry' led to the description of the new covenant with which it is united (vers. 6–13). This verse, then, attaches itself to the vers. 5 and 6 of ch. 8. **Even the first (covenant), then, had ordinances of Divine service and its sanctuary, of this world.** The 'service' is spoken of again in ver. 6; the 'ordinances' in ver. 10, where they are called 'carnal.' Very similar is the language here, for the words so emphatically standing at the close of the verse are probably descriptive, not of the 'sanctuary' only, but also of the 'ordinances.' Both place and ministrations belonged to *this world,* and thus stand in contrast with 'the heavenly things' of which the tabernacle was a token and shadow"—MOULTON.

2. **The first**—"the outward tabernacle—**in which was the candlestick and the table—the shewbread,** shown continually before God and all the people, consisting of twelve loaves, according to the number of the tribes, was placed on this table in two rows, six upon one another in each row. This candlestick and

bread seem to have typified the light and life which are more largely dispensed under the gospel by Him who is the Light of the world, and the Bread of life"—WESLEY.

Tabernacle. "It must be carefully observed that the Epistle throughout refers to the tabernacle, and not once to the temples which succeeded it. Though they were formed on the same general model, their very nature and design necessitated changes of plan and detail which unfitted them for the writer's argument here. So far the Temple was a copy of the tabernacle, and so far only was it made 'after the pattern' that Moses had seen; and so far only was its symbolism of Divine and not human origin"—MOULTON. "The structure of thought is this: The old covenant had a sanctuary of its own, and that of a cosmic nature, for a tabernacle was constructed—first, the outer part, which was called the Holies or Holy Place, and then another part called the Holy of Holies. Three ornaments are enumerated as belonging to the outer tabernacle. The sacred writer proceeds to describe the inner division of the tabernacle"—DELITZSCH.

3. "**The second veil** divided the holy place from the most holy, as the first veil did the holy place from the courts"—WESLEY.

After the second veil—*i.e.* "behind," going in westward from the entrance. The second veil is what is usually called the veil (ch. 10. 20; Mark 15. 38); it is called second, because the entrance on the east of the holy place was also formed by a curtain, not a door. (Ex. 26. 36.) On the veil see Ex. 26. 31–33; 40. 3, 21.

4. **Having the golden censer**—"used by the high priest only, on the great day of atonement—**and the ark**, or chest, **of the covenant**—so called from **the tables of the covenant** contained therein. **Wherein was the manna**—the monument of God's care over Israel—**and Aaron's rod**—the monument of the regular priesthood—**and the tables of the covenant**—the two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments were written by the finger of God; the most venerable monument of all"—WESLEY.

Which had . . . censer—or "having . . . altar of incense." The word used has both meanings, but the latter sense is more probable here, on account of the important use made of this altar on the day of atonement (Lev. 16. 18–20; Ex. 30. 8–10); and though this actually stood in the holy place, the author fails to mention it when speaking of this. He uses the word "having" in a general sense, not to indicate the local position of the altar of incense, but its close connection with the ministry of the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement, of which he is speaking. In this he follows the precedent of the Old Testament itself.

5. **And over it were the cherubim of glory**—"over which the glory of God used to appear. Some suppose each of these had four faces, and so represented the Three-One God, with the manhood assumed by the Second Person. With outspread wings **shadowing the mercy-seat**—which was a lid or plate of gold covering the ark"—WESLEY.

"**The cherubims**—rather, 'the Cherubim,' since *im* is the Hebrew plural termination—**of glory.** Not 'the glorious Cherubim,' but 'the Cherubim of the Shechinah,' or cloud of glory. This was regarded as the symbol of God's presence, and was believed to rest between their outspread wings. (See 1 Sam. 4. 22; 2 Kings 19. 15; Hagg. 2. 7–9.) They were emblems of all that was highest and best in animated nature—the grandest products of creation combined in one living angelic symbol (Ezek. 10. 4)—upholding the throne of the Eternal as on 'a chariot,' and bending in adoring contemplation of the Moral Law as the revelation of God's will. **Mercy-seat.** The word probably meant no more than 'lid' or 'cover,' but the LXX. understood it metaphorically of the covering of sins or expiation, because the blood of the expiatory offering was sprinkled upon it. **Of which we cannot now speak particularly**—rather, 'severally,' 'in detail.' It was no part of the writer's immediate purpose to enter upon an explanation of that symbolism of the tabernacle which has largely occupied the attention of Jewish historians and Talmudists as well as of modern writers. Had he done so he would doubtless have thrown light upon much that is now obscure. But he is pressing on to his point, which is to show that even the most solemn and magnificent acts of the whole Jewish ritual—the ceremony of the day of atonement—bears upon its face the sign of complete transitoriness and inefficiency when compared with the work of Christ"—C. B.

6. **Always**—"every day"—**accomplishing their services**—lighting the lamps, changing the shewbread, burning incense, and sprinkling the blood of the sin-offerings"—WESLEY.

Now when these things were thus ordained, etc.—"better, 'And when these things have been thus prepared, into the first tabernacle the priests enter continually, accomplishing the services.' As has been already observed (ver. 2), the present tense is used throughout these verses (6–10), not because the writer refers to the services as still continuing, but because he is still tracing the ordinance of Scripture. It is of the tabernacle alone that he speaks. The words of ver. 4 would have been entirely incorrect in regard to the Temple of his day, in which the most holy place was empty"—MOULTON.

7. **Errors**—"that is, sins of ignorance, to which only those atonements extended"—WESLEY.

Errors—"*lit.* 'ignorances.' (See ch. 5. 2, 3; 7. 27.) By **once in the year** we must, of course, understand on one day of the year,

viz. the tenth day of Tisri. On that day, according to Lev. 16, it was the duty of the high priest to enter the Holy of Holies twice—(1) with the incense and with the blood of the bullock, his own sin-offering (Lev. 16. 12–14); (2) with the blood of the same bullock and that of the goat, the sin-offering for the people (vers. 15–19)"—MOULTON. "The writer's purpose is to show how the highest act of the Levitical worship, the entrance of the high priest into the Holy of Holies, itself exhibited the imperfection of the covenant to which that worship belonged"—DELITZSCH.

8. **The Holy Ghost evidently showing**—"by this token—**that the way into the holiest**—into heaven—**was not made manifest**—not so clearly revealed—**while the first tabernacle**, and its service, **were still subsisting**—and remaining in force"—WESLEY.

That the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest—"rather, 'that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been made manifest.' By 'sanctuary,' or 'holy place,' is here meant the Holy of Holies; not, however, as existing upon earth, in type and figure, but in the sense of ch. 8. 2; 9. 24. These external arrangements show that the way into the holy place (of the tabernacle) is not open: by this the Holy Spirit, whose word we are reading, whenever we trace the injunctions of the Law, teaches this lesson, that the way into God's immediate presence is not yet manifest"—MOULTON.

9. **Which**—"tabernacle, with all its furniture and services—**is a figure**—or type, of good things to come—**which cannot perfect the worshipper**—neither the priest nor him who brought the offering—**as to his conscience**—so that he should be no longer conscious of the guilt or power of sin. Observe, the Temple was as yet standing"—WESLEY.

"The tabernacle itself is called a figure, or parable. It was a parable by which the evangelical and spiritual doctrines were taught; it was an appointed parable, because limited to a certain time, **for the time then present**, that is, until the bringing in of the things signified, to which it had this designed relation"—WATSON.

10. "They could not so perfect him, **with** all their train of precepts relating to **meats and drinks, and carnal**, gross, external **ordinances**; and were therefore **imposed** only **till the time of reformation**—till Christ came"—WESLEY.

"The statements of this passage, taken backwards, are mainly these—(1) The Old Testament offerings are ordinances having reference to the flesh, and of a class with meats and drinks and divers washings. (Comp. the parallel statement in regard to the priesthood, ch. 7. 16.) (2) Ordinances of this sort are ineffectual to purify the conscience and give the worshipper freedom of access into the presence of God. Such offerings must be provisional and temporary. (3) This imperfection of access and service and atonement is characteristic of the Old Testament or Levitical period. (4) The Mosaic tabernacle or place of service is an emblem of this condition of the Old Testament period. Its first division or holy place, the stated sphere of Old Testament ministration, though a certain approach to God's presence, is an obstacle to true access, standing as it does before the holiest, and by its veil barring the way to it; only by its removal is the holiest thrown open; in other words, only by the removal of the Levitical system is access to God's true presence obtained"—DAVIDSON.

11. **A High Priest of good things to come**—"described, ver. 15. **Entered through a greater**, that is, a more noble, **and perfect tabernacle**—namely, His own body. **Not of this creation**—not framed by man, as that tabernacle was"—WESLEY.

A High Priest of good things to come. "Another and perhaps better reading is 'of the good things that have come' (γενομένων B, D, not μελλόντων). The writer here transfers himself from the Jewish to the Christian standpoint. The 'good things' of which the Law was only the 'shadow' (ch. 10. 1) were still future to the Jew, but to the Christian they had already come. **By a greater and more perfect tabernacle**—the preposition *dia* rendered 'by' may mean either 'through'—in which case 'the greater and better tabernacle' means the outer heavens through which Christ (anthropomorphically speaking) passed (see ver. 24 and ch. 4. 14); or 'by means of'—in which case 'the better tabernacle' is left undefined, and may *here* mean either the human nature in which for the time 'He tabernacled' (ch. 10. 20; John 1. 14; 2. 19; Col. 2. 9; 2 Cor. 5. 1), or as in ch. 8. 2, the ideal Church of the firstborn in heaven (comp. Eph. 1. 3). **Not made with hands**—because whatever tabernacle is specifically meant it is one which 'the Lord pitched, not man'"—C. B.

12. **The holy place**—"heaven—**for us**—all that believe"—WESLEY.

By the blood of goats and calves—"'by means of the blood of goats and calves' (this is the order of the words in the best MSS.). It is not meant that the sacrifices of the old covenant were *useless*, but only that when they were regarded as meritorious *in themselves*—apart from the faith and the grace of God, by which they could be blessed to sincere and humble worshippers—they could neither purge the conscience, nor give access to God. When the Prophets speak of sacrifices with such stern disparagement they are only denouncing the superstition which regarded the mere *opus operatum* as sufficient apart from repentance and holiness. (Hos. 6. 6; Isa. 1. 10–17, etc.) **By His own blood**—His own blood was the offering by which He was admitted as our High Priest and Eternal Redeemer into the

Holy of Holies of God's immediate presence. (Ch. 13. 20; Rev. 5. 6)"—FARRAR.

13. **If the ashes of an heifer**—"consumed by fire as a sin-offering, being sprinkled on them who were legally **unclean—purified the flesh**—removed that legal uncleanness, and readmitted them to the Temple and the congregation"—WESLEY.

14. **How much more shall the blood of Christ**—"the merit of all His sufferings. **Who through the Eternal Spirit**—the work of redemption being the work of the whole Trinity. Neither is the Second Person alone concerned even in the amazing condescension that was needful to complete it. The Father delivers up the kingdom to the Son; and the Holy Ghost becomes the gift of the Messiah, being, as it were, sent according to His good pleasure. **Offered Himself**—infinitely more precious than any created victim, and that **without spot to God. Purge our conscience**—our inmost soul—**from dead works**—from all the inward and outward works of the devil, which spring from spiritual death in the soul, and lead to death everlasting—**to serve the living God**—in the life of faith, in perfect love and spotless holiness"—WESLEY.

"Christ entered the true holiest place by His own blood. He offered Himself. The High Priest is the sacrifice. Under the old covenant the victim must be **without spot.** But the high priest was not without blemish, and he offered for himself as well as for the errors of the people. But in the offering of Christ, the spotless purity of the Victim ensures that the High Priest Himself is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. For this reason it is said here that He offered Himself **through an Eternal Spirit**, or, as we should say in modern phrase, 'through His Eternal Personality.' He is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedec; and He invests the sacrifice with all the personal greatness of the High Priest. Is He 'without beginning of days or end of life'? So also His sacrifice abides for ever. His power of an indissoluble life belongs to His atonement. Is He untouched by the rolling stream of time? His death was of infinite merit in reference to the past and to the future, though it took place historically at the end of the ages. His eternal personality made it unnecessary for Him to suffer often since the foundation of the world. Because of His personal greatness it sufficed that He should suffer once only and enter once into the holiest place. The eternal High Priest in one transitory act of death offered a sacrifice that remains eternally, and obtains for us an eternal redemption"—EDWARDS. "The purpose of this justifying and sanctifying operation of the blood of Christ is to produce a living witness of its reality, in a life of holy service. The man ceremonially cleansed and externally atoned for under the Old Testament had at once a right to join in the outward worship of God and the outward common life of the congregation of Israel, although no inward change may have passed over him; but he who has been reconciled and cleansed by the inward operation of the blood of Christ stands henceforth in living communion with God his Saviour, and is empowered to serve the living God with living works and inward service"—DELITZSCH.

15. **And for this end He is the Mediator of a new covenant, that they who are called**—"to the engagements and benefits thereof—**might receive the eternal inheritance** promised to Abraham: not **by means** of legal sacrifices, but **of** His meritorious **death. For the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant**—that is, for the redemption of transgressors from the guilt and punishment of those sins which were committed in the time of the old covenant. The article of his death properly divides the old covenant from the new"—WESLEY.

"For **the new testament** we must certainly read 'a new covenant': whatever may be thought of the following group of verses, the rendering 'testament' has no place here. The leading thought of ch. 8. is the establishment of a new covenant, and the former covenant has been referred to three times in this very chapter (vers. 1, 4). **That by means of death**—rather, 'that, death having taken place for redemption from the transgressions,' etc. The first covenant had been broken by 'transgressions': unless there be redemption from these—that is, from the bondage penalty which has resulted from these—there can be no promise and no new covenant. In respect of this bondage, this penalty, the death of Christ was a ransom—an offering to God looked at in the light of a payment in the place of death, service, or penalty due. When debt and payment are changed into the corresponding ideas of sin and punishment, the *ransom* gives place to the *sin-offering*, of which the principle was the acknowledgment of death deserved, and the vicarious suffering of death. So far our thought has rested on the removal of the results of the past. The covenant and the promise relate to the establishment of the better future. Death was necessary alike for both. The offering of Christ's life (Matt. 20. 28) was a ransom or an offering for sin; it was also a sacrifice inaugurating a new covenant"—MOULTON. "This verse attaches itself closely to the preceding context, and points back to the main thought contained in vers. 9–14; just for this reason, that the sacrifice of Christ accomplishes that which the Levitical sacrifices are unable to accomplish; namely, that, presented by virtue of Eternal Spirit, brings in an eternal redemption; these, on the other hand, as ordinances of the flesh, are able to effect only purity of the flesh"—LUNEMANN.

16. "I say by means of death; **for where such a covenant is, there must be the death of him by whom it is confirmed**—seeing it is by his death that the benefits of it are purchased. It seems beneath the dignity of the apostle to play upon the ambiguity of the Greek word, as the common translation supposes him to do"—WESLEY.

Death of the testator—or, "of him who made it" (not "makes"). The statement is general, and of a fact which anyone knows. This general statement is meant to be applied in illustration of the death of the Son (ver. 15).

17. **After he is dead.** "Neither this, nor 'after men are dead' is a literal translation of the words. It is a very perplexed passage"—WESLEY.

"**After men are dead**—*lit.* 'over dead.' Here, again, as the author is illustrating the one point of the necessity of a death, he uses phraseology somewhat indefinite—'in the case of the dead'—**the testator liveth**; or, 'for it is of no force while he that made it liveth.' The words may also be taken as a question, 'for hath it ever force while,' etc.? In ver. 15, Jesus was called Mediator. This word must be taken in a full sense as meaning one with powers to make the arrangements of the covenant. In ver. 16 He is alluded to as making the testament or covenant conveying an inheritance. All things connected with the making of the covenant or the disposing of the inheritance are put into His hand. In a sense the inheritance which we are to receive was committed to Him by God. Through Him we receive it. And we receive it in the way inheritance is received among men, by the death of Him who makes the testamentary disposition. (Comp. Luke 22. 15, 16, 19, 30—I dispone unto you as My Father disponed unto Me a kingdom.) This is the only idea illustrated"—DAVIDSON.

18. **Whence neither was the first**—"the Jewish covenant, **originally transacted without the blood** of an appointed sacrifice"—WESLEY.

The reference is to the great covenant sacrifice of Ex. 24, which followed immediately on the promulgation of the Sinaitic code of laws (ch. 19–23), then first committed to writing in the "book of the covenant."

19. **He took the blood of calves**—"or heifers—**and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop.** All these circumstances are not particularly mentioned in that chapter of Exodus, but are supposed to be already known from other passages of Moses. **And the book itself**—which contained all he had said. **And sprinkled all the people**—who were near him. The blood was mixed with water to prevent its growing too stiff for sprinkling; perhaps also to typify that blood and water (John 19. 34)"—WESLEY.

And of goats. "This is not specially mentioned, but it may be supposed that 'goats' were among the burnt-offerings mentioned in Ex. 24. 5. **Water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop** — these again are not mentioned in Ex. 24. 6, but are perhaps added from tradition on the analogy of Num. 19. 6; and Lev. 14. 4–6. **Hyssop**—the dry stalks of a plant resembling marjoram. **Both the book**—see Ex. 24. 6–8, where, however, it is not specially mentioned that the book was sprinkled. The Jewish tradition was that it lay upon the altar. The 'book' seems to have been the written record of what was uttered to Moses in Ex. 20. 22–23. 33. This is one of several instances in which the writer shows himself learned in the Jewish legends (*Hagadoth*)"—C. B. This verse is historic proof for the assertion in ver. 18, with free reference to Ex. 24. 3–8.

20. **Saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined** me to deliver **unto you**—"by this it is established"—WESLEY.

This is—"in the Hebrew 'Behold!' Some have supposed that the writer adopted the variation from a reminiscence of our Lord's words, 'This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt. 26. 28). But if such a reference or comparison had been at all present to his mind, he would hardly have been likely to pass it over in complete silence. **Which God hath enjoined unto you**—rather, 'which God commanded with regard to you,' *i.e.* which (covenant) Jehovah commanded me to deliver to you"—C. B.

21. "**And in like manner he** ordered **the tabernacle**—when it was made, and all its vessels, to be sprinkled with blood once a year"—WESLEY.

The main point is this; that in both cases the dedication did not take place without the employment of sacrificial blood.

22. **And almost all things** — "for some were purified by water or fire—**are according to the Law purified with blood**—offered or sprinkled. **And**, according to the Law, **there is no forgiveness** of sins **without shedding of blood.** All this pointed to the blood of Christ effectually cleansing from all sin, and intimated, there can be no purification from it by any other means"—WESLEY.

And almost all things. "The meaning of the word 'almost,' as it stands in the Greek, is rather, 'One may almost lay down the rule.' 'One may almost say.' What follows, in both parts of the verse, is a general saying, modified by these introductory words. 'And one may almost say—according to the Law, all things are cleansed in blood, and apart from the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.' To the first rule an exception is found in the various purifications by water or by fire (see Num. 31. 22–24); to the second in the remarkable law of Lev. 5. 11–13. The expres-

sion **'in** blood' is used because sprinkling with the blood of the slain victim was in figure a surrounding with, or inclusion within, the purifying element. On 'cleansed' the best comment is found in Lev. 16. 19, 30; on 'forgiveness,' in the words which in Lev. 4. are repeatedly (vers. 20, 26, 31, 35) used of the effect of the sin-offering, 'it shall be forgiven him.' The second clause of the verse is founded on Lev. 17. 11. By **shedding of blood** we must probably understand the slaying of the animal, rather than the pouring out of the blood by the altar (Lev. 4. 34, *et al.*). With these words compare Luke 22. 20"—MOULTON.

23. **Therefore**—"that is, it plainly appears from what has been said—**it was necessary**—according to the appointment of God—**that the** tabernacle and all its utensils, which were **patterns**, shadowy representations, **of things in heaven, should be purified by these**—sacrifices and sprinklings. **But the heavenly things themselves**—our heaven-born spirits (what more this may mean we know not yet)—**by better sacrifices than these**—that is, by a better sacrifice, which is here opposed to all the legal sacrifices, and is expressed plurally, because it includes the signification of them all, and is of so much more eminent virtue"—WESLEY.

From the premises laid down in the preceding verse, a twofold consequence is drawn in this,—the main stress being laid on its second part. "If the one is or was necessary, then must the other be or have been necessary too"—DELITZSCH.

24. **For Christ did not enter into the holy place made with hands.** "He never went into the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem, **the figure of the true** tabernacle in heaven (Heb. 8. 2). **But into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us**—as our glorious High Priest and powerful Intercessor"—WESLEY.

"The connection by **for** is with the last words of ver. 23. Better sacrifices were needful when the true tabernacle was to be purified, the sacrifice of the Son, as has taken place (ver. 15). Two ideas are combined: if the heavenly things were to be purified, a better sacrifice was necessary; and, this better sacrifice has been offered, evidence of which is the fact, as we know from His ascension, that Jesus entered into the heaven itself. **Is not entered into the holy places**—or, 'entered not into a holy place, a figure' (*lit.* 'antitype') of the true. **Heaven itself** is the highest or farthest heaven, true abode of God; a heaven transcending all created space. **Now to appear**, etc.—or 'now to be manifested' (to) before the face of God. To be manifested is to enter into God's immediate and full view; but as God views immediately the face of the Son, He with equal immediateness views the face of God. The word expresses the single act of entering in and manifesting Himself unto God. 'Now' implies that this condition of manifestation continues"—DAVIDSON.

26. **For then He must often have suffered from the foundation of the world.** "This supposes — (1) that by suffering once He atoned for all the sins which had been committed from the foundation of the world; (2) that He could not have atoned for them without suffering. **At the consummation of the ages.** The sacrifice of Christ divides the whole age or duration of the world into two parts, and extends its virtue backward and forward, from this middle point wherein they meet, to **abolish** both the guilt and power of **sin**"—WESLEY.

"The apostle makes the **offering** and the **suffering** identical; declares that it was made but **once**, and states that in it the penalty due to the sin of many was endured. The reference, therefore, is not to the perpetual oblation which Christ is supposed to present 'in His eternal state or condition,' but to the one vicarious and sacrificial act on the cross"—TREFFRY.

27. **After this, the judgment**—"of the great day. At the moment of death every man's final state is determined. But there is not a word in Scripture of a particular judgment immediately after death"—WESLEY.

"More literally, **And as there is laid up for men once to die, and after this judgment.** Man's life and works on earth end with death: what remains is the result of this life and these works, as determined by God's 'judgment.' Man does not return to die a second time"—MOULTON.

28. "**Christ having once** died **to bear the sins**—the punishment due to them—**of many**—even as many as are born into the world—**will appear the second time**—when He comes to judgment—**without sin**—not as He did before, bearing on Himself the sins of many, but to bestow everlasting salvation"—WESLEY.

"The parallelism of these verses is man dies once, and is judged; Christ died once and shall return—he might have said 'to be man's *judge*' (Acts 17. 31)—but he does say, **He shall return . . . for salvation.** We may sum up some of the contrasts of this and the previous chapter as follows. The descendants of Aaron were but priests; Christ, like Melchisedec, was both Priest and King. They were for a time: He is a Priest for ever. They were but links in a long succession, inheriting from forefathers, transmitting to dependants; He stands alone, without lineage, without successor. They were established by a transitory ordinance, He by an eternal oath. They were sinful, He is sinless. They weak, He all-powerful. Their sacrifices were ineffectual, His was perfect. Their sacrifices were offered daily, His once for all. Theirs did but cleanse from ceremonial defilement,

His purged the conscience. Their tabernacle was but a copy, and their service a shadow; His tabernacle was the Archetype, and His service the substance. They died and passed away; He sits to intercede for us for ever at God's right hand. Their covenant is doomed to abrogation; His, founded on better promises, is to endure unto the end. Their high priest could but enter once and that with awful precautions, with the blood of bulls and goats, into a material shrine; He, entering with the blood of His one perfect sacrifice into the heaven of heavens, has thrown open to all the right of continual and fearless access to God. What a sin then was it, and what a folly, to look back with apostatising glances at the shadows of a petty Levitism, while Christ, the Mediator of a new, of a better, of a final dispensation—Christ whose blood had a real and no mere symbolic efficacy—had died once for all, and alone for all, as the sinless Son of God, to obtain for us an eternal redemption, and to return for our salvation as the everlasting Victor over sin and death!"—FARRAR.

CHAPTER X.

1. "FROM all that has been said, it appears that the Law, the Mosaic dispensation, being a bare, unsubstantial **shadow of good things to come**, of the gospel blessings, **and not the** substantial, solid **image of them, can never with the same** kind of **sacrifices**, though continually repeated, **make the comers thereunto perfect**, either as to justification or sanctification. How is it possible that any who consider this should suppose the attainments of David, or any who were under that dispensation, to be the proper measure of gospel holiness; and that Christian experience is to rise no higher than Jewish?"—WESLEY.

"The latter part of the ninth chapter was an expansion of vers. 11, 12. In particular, vers. 23-28 have been occupied with the theme, 'Christ entered once for all into the holy place, having won eternal redemption.' The repeated offerings presented by the high priests have been contrasted with the sacrifice which He has offered. To this thought the opening verses of this chapter attach themselves, explaining more fully the inefficacy of the one, the power and virtue of the other. Gradually the main thoughts of the preceding chapters are gathered up, and the last and chief division of the argument of the Epistle is brought to a close in ver. 18. **A shadow of good things to come.** These words have already come before us; the 'shadow' in ch. 8. 5, and the 'good things to come' in the ordinary reading of ch. 9. 11. **Not the very image.** The antithesis is hardly what we should have expected. The word 'image' is indeed consistent with the very closest and most perfect likeness; but why is the contrast to 'shadow' expressed by a word which cannot denote more than likeness, and not by a reference to the things themselves? The answer would seem to be that, from the very nature of the 'good things to come,' the Law could not be conceived of as having the things themselves; but had it possessed 'the very image' of them, a representation so perfect might have been found to bring with it equal efficacy"—MOULTON.

2. "They who had **been once** perfectly **purged, would have** been no longer **conscious** either of the guilt or power of their **sins**"—WESLEY.

Once purged . . . conscience of sin—or, "once purified." As there is a single offering for sin, so there is thereby a single act of purifying or cleansing the conscience. The conscience once purified, *i.e.* the consciousness of sin once removed, the people are free from the sense of sin. This of course refers to sin in that sense in which sacrifice removes it, not to sin as a moral condition of the mind. Further, the reference here is to the conscience of the people, because it is the people of God, as a people, that is sanctified (ch. 13. 12).

3. "**There is a** public **commemoration of** the **sins** both of the last and of all the preceding years; a clear proof that the guilt thereof is not perfectly purged away"—WESLEY.

"**A remembrance of sins**—or, 'a remembrance made of sins.' The continual sacrifice was a constant making remembrance of sin, and testimony to the abiding conscience of it, and proof that the sacrifices failed to take it away. This view of sacrifices—that they are 'a calling to mind of sins yearly'—is very remarkable. It seems to be derived from Num. 5. 15, where the 'offering of jealousy' is called 'an offering of memorial, **bringing iniquity to remembrance.**' Philo also speaks of sacrifices as providing 'not an *oblivion* of sins, but a *reminding* of them.' But if the sacrifices thus called sins to remembrance, they also daily symbolised the means of their removal, so that when offered obediently, with repentance and faith, they became valid symbols"—C. B.

4. **It is impossible the blood of goats should take away sins**—"either the guilt or the power of them"—WESLEY.

"This verse explains those which precede. No inconsistency really belonged to these sacrifices and this ceremonial, though so often repeated; for it was impossible that any such sacrifice should really remove sin. The offering was necessary, and it answered its purpose; but it could not remove the necessity for another and a better offering"—MOULTON. "Proof that it cannot be otherwise drawn from the matter itself which is under consideration. By a rudely sensuous means we cannot attain to a high spiritual good"—LUNEMANN. "**It is not possible**, etc. This plain statement of the nullity of sacrifices *in themselves*, and regarded as mere outward

acts, only expresses what had been deeply felt by many a worshipper under the old covenant. It should be compared with the weighty utterances on this subject in the Old Testament. (1 Sam. 15. 22; Isa. 1. 11-17; Jer. 6. 20; 7. 21-23; Amos. 5. 21-24; Micah 6. 6-8; Ps. 40. 6-8 (quoted in the next verses); and Ps. 50 and 51; and, above all, Hos. 6. 6, which, being a pregnant summary of the principle involved, was a frequent quotation of our Lord.) Any value which the system of sacrifices possessed was not theirs intrinsically (*propriâ virtute*), but relatively and typically (*per accidens*). 'By a rudely sensuous means,' says Luuemann, 'we cannot attain to a high spiritual good.' Philo, in one of his finest passages, shows how deeply he had realised that sacrifices were valueless apart from holiness, and that no mere external acts can cleanse the soul from moral guilt. He adds that God accepts the innocent even when they offer no sacrifices, and delights in unkindled altars if the virtues dance around them"—C. B.

5. **When He cometh into the world.** "In the fortieth Psalm the Messiah's coming into the world is represented. It is said 'into the world,' not into the tabernacle (Heb. 9. 1), because all the world is interested in His sacrifice. **A body hast thou prepared for Me**—that I may offer up Myself"—WESLEY.

"**Wherefore when He cometh.** 'Wherefore,' *i.e.* such being the ineffectiveness of the sacrifices of the Law and men's condition under it. When He cometh—*lit.* 'coming,' refers to the Son. 'Coming into the world' does not seem to refer to the time prior to His coming, for in this case **a body didst Thou prepare Me** would not describe anything actual, but only a purpose, which is unlikely. Nor is the reference to the time before the Son's entry upon His official life, as if coming into the world could mean entering upon a public career in the world. The words rather contrast the Son's two states, His heavenly and His state in the flesh, and describe Him under the aspect of the latter. No point of time in His earthly life is specially referred to, but the state of His mind or consciousness is pictured towards God, having in it two points: first, Thou didst not will offerings of beasts, Thou didst prepare Me a body; and, second, I am come to do Thy will (implied in preparing Him a body)"—DAVIDSON.

7. **In the volume of the book**—"in this very Psalm—**it is written of Me.** Accordingly, **I come to do Thy will**—by the sacrifice of Myself"—WESLEY.

(See Ps. 40.) "The words **it is written of Me** may mean in the Hebrew 'it has been prescribed to Me,' and others take the clause to mean, 'I am come with the roll of the book which is written for Me.' If we ask, *What* was **the book** to which the *author of the Psalm referred*, the answer is not easy; it may have been the Law, or the book of God's unwritten counsels, as in Ps. 139. 16; the writer of the Epistle, transferring and applying David's words to Christ, thought doubtless of the whole Old Testament. (Comp. Luke 24. 26, 27)"—FARRAR.

8. **Above when He said, Sacrifice Thou hast not chosen**—"that is, when the psalmist pronounced those words in His name"—WESLEY.

"For the very reason that God's will and desire is not set on material sacrifices, the coming Christ declares His readiness to make an offering of Himself in order to accomplish that will"—DELITZSCH.

9. **Then said He**—"in that very instant He subjoined—**Lo, I come to do Thy will**—to offer a more acceptable sacrifice; and by this very act **He taketh away the** legal, **that He may establish the** evangelical, dispensation"—WESLEY.

He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. "It is important to inquire how this is done, first in the case of the writer of the Psalm, then as the words are used of Jesus. David perceiving that that which God seeks is the subjection of man's will, refuses to rest in the sacrifices of the Law. No one will think that burnt-offering or gift or sacrifice for sin was henceforth at an end for him: the confession of his iniquities (ver. 12) implied a recourse to the appointed means of approach to God: even the sacrifices themselves were taken up into the service of obedience. But to the symbols shall be added the consecration and the sacrifices of praise (Ps. 50. 23) which they typified. The application to the Saviour must be interpreted by this context). In making these words His own, He declares the sacrifices of the Law to be in themselves without virtue; Jehovah seeks them not from Him, but, having prepared a human body for Him, seeks only the fulfilment of His will. But included in that will of God was Christ's offering of Himself for the world; and, on the other hand, it was His perfect surrender of Himself that gave completeness to that offering. His death was at once the antitype of the sacrifice for sin and the consummation of the words, **I am come to do Thy will, O God.** Hence, in saying, **Lo, I am come to do Thy will** (that which God has really willed), He taketh away the sacrifices of slain animals that He may establish the doing of God's will. That such sacrifices as were formerly offered are no longer according to God's pleasure follows as an inference from this"—MOULTON.

10. **By which will**—"of God, done and suffered by Christ—**we are sanctified**—cleansed from guilt, and consecrated to God"—WESLEY.

By the which will we are sanctified—"better, 'in which will we have been sanctified.' In the last verse we read of that which

Jesus established—the doing of the will of God. He did that will when He offered the sacrifice of His perfect obedience—'obedience as far as death' (Phil. 2. 8). In this will of God which He accomplished lies our sanctification, effected **through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.** In ch. 9. 13, 14 the efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse the conscience is contrasted with the power of the offerings of the Law to 'sanctify in regard to cleanness of the flesh': here the real sanctification is joined with 'the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.' In the word 'body' lies a reference to ver. 8, where the body is looked on as the instrument of obedient service (comp. Rom. 12. 1); but the word 'offering' still preserves its sacrificial character, and contains an allusion to the presentation of the body of the slain victim. (Comp. ch. 13. 11.) As this offering has been presented 'once for all' (ch. 7. 27; 9. 12), so 'once for all' has the work of sanctification been achieved"—MOULTON.

11. **Every priest standeth**—"as a servant in an humble posture"—WESLEY.

MENKEN says: "The priest of the Old Testament stands timid and uneasy in the holy place, anxiously performing his awful service there, and hasting to depart when the service is done, as from a place where he has no free access, and can never feel at home; whereas Christ sits down in everlasting rest and blessedness at the right hand of majesty in the Holy of Holies, His work accomplished, and He awaiting its reward" (ver. 12).

12, 13. **But He**—"the virtue of whose **one sacrifice** remains **for ever—sat down**—as a Son, in majesty and honour"—WESLEY.

"It is the enthronement for eternity. Christ is no longer indeed a ministering, but a ruling Priest—a royal Priest—a Priest, in fact, after the order of Melchisedec. By the **enemies** are to be understood all opposing powers. (1 Cor. 15. 23–26.) For their subjection He will wait all the remaining time till the end of the present world, in whose history the great turn was made by His great self-sacrifice (ch. 9. 26). That end will consist in His second advent (ch. 9. 28), when the victory accomplished by His death and resurrection will be fully realised by the separation, binding, and elimination of everything in the universe opposed to God in the order described by S. Paul. (1 Cor. 15)"—DELITZSCH.

14. **He hath perfected them for ever**—"that is, has done all that was needful in order to their full reconciliation with God"—WESLEY.

(See ch. 7. 11, 25.) Those who submit themselves to the gracious rule of the high-priestly King, find in Him all that they need for their perfecting. He has provided all that they can require by His one self-sacrifice; they can add nothing to His perfect work.

15-17. "In this and the three following verses, the apostle winds up his argument concerning the excellency and perfection of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ. He had proved this before by a quotation from Jeremiah; which he here repeats, describing the new covenant as now completely ratified, and all the blessings of it secured to us by the one offering of Christ, which renders all other expiatory sacrifices, and any repetition of His own, utterly needless"—WESLEY.

Whereof the Holy Ghost—rather, "And the Holy Ghost." The words afford an additional evidence. The sentence formed by these verses in English is incomplete. It is probable that before ver. 17 some such words as "then He saith" should be understood. The passage (ch. 9. 15, etc.) began with showing that the offering of the Son being a final putting away of sin, was the dedication of a new covenant. This precise idea gradually assumed the form of an illustration of the finality of the Son's offering, with the consequence that it superseded all other offerings (ch. 9. 25 – 10. 18). Being the foundation of a new covenant, all sacrifices are superseded by it; for this is expressly intimated in prophecies regarding the new covenant (ver. 17); where sins are put away there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.

18. **Now where remission**, etc. "That in Christ Jesus all our sins are once for all forgiven; that we have nothing to do but to receive this forgiveness in humble faith; and that when we fall into sin the covenant foundation still remains, and needs not the repetition of legal sacrifices to give it fresh validity—this indeed is the principal and fundamental prerogative of the new covenant; for **'where forgiveness of sins is, there is also life and salvation'**"—LUTHER.

19. "Having finished the doctrinal part of his Epistle, the apostle now proceeds to exhortation, deduced from what has been treated of from Heb. 5. 4, which he begins by a brief recapitulation. **Having therefore liberty to enter**"—WESLEY.

"**Having therefore boldness**; *therefore* reposes on the finality of the Son's offering for sin (ch. 10. 1–18), which 'purges the conscience *to serve* the living God' (ch. 9. 14). Uniting himself with his readers, whom he calls 'brethren' (ch. 3. 1; 13. 22), the author proceeds, **Let us** (vers. 22, 23, 24; on 'boldness,' see ch. 3. 6) **by the blood of Jesus.** This belongs to the whole preceding clause, **joyous confidence to enter.** Christians do not enter the holiest *with* the blood of Jesus, for then they would be priests, anew opening up the way, whenever they approached, by a new offering; the view of the passage is that the way is opened up once for all by the offering of the Son (ch. 9. 12, 28; 10. 12), and lies for ever open because He abides before the face of God for us (ch. 9. 24); and it is on this fact, called here the blood of Jesus, that the glad

confidence of believers in regard to entrance is based"—DAVIDSON.

20. **By a living way**—"the way of faith, whereby we live indeed—**which He hath consecrated** — prepared, dedicated, and established **for us. Through the veil, that is, His flesh.** As by rending the veil in the Temple, the Holy of Holies became visible and accessible, so by wounding the body of Christ, the God of heaven was manifested, and the way to heaven opened"—WESLEY.

"This beautiful allegorising of the veil cannot, of course, be made part of a consistent and complete typology. It is not meant for this. But as the veil stood locally before the Holiest in the Mosaic tabernacle, the way into which lay through it, so Christ's life in the flesh stood between Him and His entrance before God, and His flesh had to be rent ere He could enter. This is the fact and the history which suggest the figure. But under this fact lie principles in the mind of God, and in the public law of the universe, and in the heart and mind of man, the object to be awakened and touched, which give to *through* a deeper sense, and in this sense, for us also the way lies through His flesh"—DAVIDSON. The way into the sanctuary of the Old Testament was simply a lifeless pavement trodden by the high priest and by him alone; the way opened by Jesus Christ is one that really leads and carries all who enter it into the heavenly rest, being in fact the reconciliation of mankind with God, once and for ever effected by Him through His ascension to the Father,—a "living way," because one with the living person and abiding work of Jesus Christ.

21. The best commentary on this verse is ch. 4. 14–16.

22. **Let us draw near**—"to God—**with a true heart**—in godly sincerity—**having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience**—so as to condemn us no longer — **and our bodies washed with pure water** — all our conversation spotless and holy, which is far more acceptable to God than all the legal sprinklings and washings"—WESLEY.

"The two conditions which the apostle reminds His readers that they possess are—**hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience**, that is, a sense of sin removed by the offering of Christ (chaps. 9. 9; 10. 2, with 9. 14); and bodies washed with pure water. The heart and the body comprehend the whole man, inner and outer. The point lies in the purity of the water, making the body an organ of the inner life, equally pure with the life itself. The author may have had before his mind such passages as Ex. 29. 21; Lev. 8. 30, according to which priests were sprinkled with blood when dedicated to their office, and Ex. 29. 4; 30. 20; 40. 30, where they are said to have been washed with water, and where they are commanded to wash in the laver before entering the sanctuary. Two hindrances to service presented themselves. The sinfulness of the heart concentrated itself in the conscience, and hindered all free service; an evil conscience and a true heart are the opposites of one another. This hindrance was removed by the sprinkling. Defilements adhering to the body, or defilements considered under that aspect, were removed by washing. The language is borrowed from the external operations, and baptism, if it be alluded to, is brought into connection with the body, because it was in fact applied to it. The words picture one wholly purified for service, both without and within"—DAVIDSON.

"We Christians have and possess, in consequence of Christ's return to the Father, and His majestic session at God's right hand, a twofold position of privilege—(1) a right of entrance into the Divine sanctuary; and (2), as a consequence of having this right, a joyous confidence to avail ourselves of it"—DELITZSCH.

23. **The profession of our hope**—"the hope which we professed at our baptism"—WESLEY.

"Here is an exhortation to perseverance in Christian faith and hope, in order to the actual enjoyment of the great reward. We have a promise of eternal glory, as the reward of our perseverance. This promise is God's promise, not man's, and the promise of a faithful God, who cannot change; **He is faithful that promised**"—BURKITT.

24. "Gradually the writer passes from that which belongs to the individual (vers. 19, 20), to the mutual duties of a member of a community. Possibly he knew that amongst those whom he addresses there had existed **provocations** that did not tend toward brotherly love. The strict meaning may simply be, let us take note of one another, to stimulate one another to good works; but in the result, if not the expression, is included the converse thought, **that we may ourselves be thus provoked**"—MOULTON.

25. **Not forsaking the assembling ourselves**—"in public or private worship—**as the manner of some is**—either through fear of persecution, or from a vain imagination that they were above external ordinances. **But exhorting one another**—to faith, love, and good works—**and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching**—the great day is ever in your eye"—WESLEY.

"The command to publish the gospel includes the obligation of assembling to hear it. The name by which a Christian society is designated in Scripture is a Church, which signifies an assembly for the transaction of some business; and, in the case of a Christian assembly, the business must be necessarily spiritual, and include the sacred exercises of prayer, praise, and hearing the Scriptures"—WATSON. "**The assembling of ourselves together** — *i.e.* 'our Christian gatherings.' Apparently the flagging zeal and waning faith of the Hebrews had led some of them to neglect the Christian assemblies for worship

and holy communion. (Acts 2. 42.) The word here used only occurs in 2 Thess. 2. 1, and is perhaps chosen to avoid the Jewish word 'synagogue,' and the more so because the duty of attending the 'synagogue' was insisted on by Jewish teachers. In the neglect of public worship the writer saw the dangerous germ of apostasy. **Exhorting one another**—this implies the duty of mutual *encouragement.* **Ye see the day approaching.** The day which Christians expected was the last day. (1 Cor. 3. 13.) They failed to see that the day which our Lord had *primarily* in view in His great eschatological discourse (Matt. 24) was the close of the old dispensation in the fall of Jerusalem. The signs of this were already in the air, and that approaching day of the Lord was destined to be 'the bloody and fiery dawn' of the last great day—the day of days, the ending-day of all days, the settling-day of all days, the day of the promotion of time into eternity, the day which for the Church breaks through and breaks off the night of this present world"—DELITZSCH.

26. **For when we**—"any of us Christians—**sin wilfully**—by total apostasy from God, termed 'drawing back' (ver. 38). **After having received the** experimental **knowledge of the** gospel **truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins**—none but that which we obstinately reject"—WESLEY.

For if we sin wilfully. "The word 'wilfully' stands in contrast with sins of weakness, ignorance, and error. If the writer meant to say that, after the commission of wilful and heinous sins, **there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins**, this would not only be the most terrible passage in Scripture, but would do away with the very object of redemption, and the possibility of any forgiveness of sins. But the meaning rather is, 'if we are willing sinners,' 'if we are in a state of deliberate and voluntary defiance to the will of God.' He is alluding, not only to those sins which the Jews described as being committed presumptuously 'with uplifted hand' (Num. 15. 30; Ps. 19. 13; see ch. 6. 4–8; 12. 16, 17), but to the *deliberate continuity of such sins as a self-chosen law of life;* as, for instance, when a man has closed against himself the door of repentance, and said, 'Evil be thou my good.' Such a state is glanced at in 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21; Matt. 12. 43–45. **After that we have received the knowledge of the truth**—rather, 'the **full** knowledge of the truth.' Something more is meant than mere historical knowledge. He is contemplating Christians who have made some real advance, and then have relapsed into 'desperation, or the wretchedness of unclean living.' **There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin**—*lit.* 'no sacrifice for sins is any longer left for them.' They have rejected the work of Christ, and it cannot be done for them over again. There is one atoning sacrifice, and that they have repudiated. He does not say that they have exhausted the infinite mercy of God, nor can we justly assert that he held such a conclusion; he only says that they have, so long as they continue in such a state, put themselves out of God's covenant, and that there are no other covenanted means of grace. For they have trampled under foot the offer of mercy in Christ, and there is no salvation in any other (Acts 4. 12)"—C. B.

27. **But a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness of fire** (R.V.). They who abandon "the people of God" are apostates for whom remaineth the jealous wrath of a devouring fire. (Comp. ch. 12. 29; Mal. 4.)

28. **He that,** in capital cases, **despised** (presumptuously transgressed) **the Law of Moses died without mercy**—without any delay or mitigation of his punishment"—WESLEY.

A man that hath set at nought Moses' Law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses (R.V.). "The reference is to Deut. 17. 2–7, the last words being a direct quotation from ver. 6 in that section. There the subject is apostasy from Jehovah to the worship of idols. That sin which, by the acknowledgment of all, had in ancient times robbed Israel of the name of God's people is tacitly placed by the side of the sin of those who forsake Christ"—MOULTON.

29. **Of how much sorer punishment is he worthy, who**—"by wilful, total apostasy. It does not appear that this passage refers to any other sin. **Hath,** as it were, **trodden under foot the Son of God**—a Lawgiver far more honourable than Moses—**and counted the blood wherewith the better covenant** was established—**an unholy,** a common worthless **thing. By which he hath been sanctified**—therefore Christ died for him also, and he was at least justified once. **And done despite to the Spirit of grace**—by rejecting all His motions"—WESLEY.

"The sin of apostasy from the new covenant is drawn in all its aggravation and meaning. It is (1) **To tread under foot,** that is, 'reject with public contumely' (ch. 6. 6) **the Son of God,** who revealed the covenant, and is its High Priest, and hath indeed been manifested (ch. 9. 26). (2) It is to count the blood of the covenant (ch. 9. 15–20), which belonged to the things most holy (Lev. 6. 29, etc.), **unholy,** that is, either 'common' ordinary blood, or even unclean, the blood of a malefactor; and to do this after experiencing its sanctifying influence (ch. 9. 14; 10. 10; 13. 12). (3) It is to do **despite unto the Spirit of grace,** the Holy Spirit. The 'Spirit of grace' may be the Spirit who imparts grace or who is the gift of grace. With the exception of ch. 2. 9 grace is spoken of in the Epistle, not as the principle in God from which the mission of the Son originates, but as the result of His death. Because He is our High Priest at God's right

hand, the throne of God is a throne of grace (ch. 4. 16). They who fall from the faith of Christ turn away from the grace of God (ch. 12. 15). By grace, not meats, the heart is established (ch. 13. 9). Hence the Epistle closes with a prayer that 'grace be with all' (ch. 13. 25)"—DAVIDSON.

30. **The Lord will judge His people**—"yea, far more rigorously than the heathens, if they rebel against Him"—WESLEY.

We know—such is the main thought here—the judicial earnestness and severity of God: that earnestness, that severity, is testified to in God's own word, in Holy Scripture.

31. **To fall into the hands**—"of His avenging justice"—WESLEY.

"The hands of God are His almighty operation, whether in love or wrath. The energy of His action is measured by the absoluteness of His energy of life. How fearful to fall into His punitive hands, who is at once Almighty and the ever-living One!"—DELITZSCH.

32. **Enlightened**—"with the knowledge of God and of His truth"—WESLEY.

"In the last six verses the writer has enforced his exhortation by an appeal to the danger of falling away, and the fearful consequences of unfaithfulness. From warning he now turns to encouragement, as in ch. 6; and here, as there, he thankfully recalls the earlier proofs which his readers had given of their Christian constancy and love. Let them call to mind and ever keep in remembrance what the grace of God had already enabled them to endure"—MOULTON.

33. Not **companions** only, but sharers of the lot of their persecuted brethren, both by sympathy and by voluntary association with their sufferings.

33. "**For ye sympathised with** all your suffering brethren, and **with me** in particular; **and received joyfully** the loss of your own goods"—WESLEY.

"In the spirit of Matt. 5. 12 (Acts 5. 41; 2. Cor. 12. 10), they accepted persecution not with 'patience and longsuffering' only, but 'with joy' (Col. 1. 11)."—MOULTON. By **the spoiling of** their **goods**, we are to understand what we find still at this day taking place in the sphere of the Jewish mission; when a Jew shows himself determined to become a Christian, he is disinherited by his relations, his share in the property is withheld from him, his credit and every source of gain is withdrawn; he falls into a state of destitution. But there is not wanting that state of mind which is expressed in the words, **knowing that ye have in heaven a better property and an abiding.**

35. **Cast not away therefore** this **your confidence**—"your faith and hope; which none can deprive you of but yourselves"—WESLEY.

"**To cast away boldness** is the opposite of 'holding fast the boldness of the hope' (ch. 3. 6.; the one belongs to the endurance of the faithful servant (vers. 32, 36), the other to the cowardice of the man who draws back (ver. 38). This verse and the next are closely connected. Hold fast your boldness, seeing that to it belongs great reward; hold it fast, for 'he that endureth to the end shall be saved'"—MOULTON.

36. **The promise**—"perfect love; eternal life"—WESLEY.

In these words we have an echo of Matt. 7. 21, where our Lord sums up His requirements from those who call themselves His in words which express the purpose of His own life (vers. 7, 9; John 4. 34). "**Ye have need of patience**—the continued exercise of patience; to perform difficult duties, to resist strong temptations, to wait for an answer to prayer. After we **have done the will of God**, we need patience to enable us to wait for the receiving of the promised good"—BURKITT.

37. **He that cometh**—"to reward every man according to his works"—WESLEY.

A little while—"rather, 'a very little while.' The expression is remarkable and unusual; it is evidently taken from Isa. 26. 20—"Come My people . . . hide thyself . . . for *a little moment*, until the indignation be overpast.' The subject of this passage, from which the one expressive phrase is taken, is the coming of Jehovah 'to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity'; in 'a little moment' shall the indignation consume His foes, then will He give deliverance to His people. Even this passing reference would serve to call up before the mind of the Hebrew readers the solemn associations of the prophecy—the promised salvation, the awful judgment"—MOULTON.

38. **Now the just**—"the justified person—**shall live**—in God's favour, a spiritual and holy life—**by faith**—as long as he retains that gift of God. **But if he draw back**—if he make shipwreck of his faith—**My soul hath no pleasure in him**—that is, I abhor him; I cast him off"—WESLEY.

"Here the apostle further enforces the lesson which he had inculcated in vers. 35, 36—the necessity of maintaining faith in full vigour, in order to the continued possession of spiritual life, and the ultimate attainment of the glory held forth to us"—WILLIAMS. "**My righteous one** will naturally mean 'my righteous servant'—the man who will not be seduced into wickedness; he shall live by his faithful trust, for salvation and life shall be given him by God Himself. In this context the word righteous recalls ver. 36, 'having done the will of God'"—MOULTON. **But if any man draw back.** "The introduction of the words 'any *man*' by the A.V. is wholly unwarrantable, and at first sight looks as if it were due to dogmatic bias and a desire to insinuate the Calvinistic doctrine of the 'indefectibility of grace.' But throughout this Epistle there is not a word which countenances

the dogma of 'final perseverance.' The true rendering is 'And "if *he draw back* My soul approveth him not,"' *i.e.* 'if My just man draw back' (comp. Ezek. 18. 24, 'when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness'). The verb implies that shrinking from a course once begun which is used of S. Peter in Gal. 2. 12. It means, primarily, 'to strike or shorten sail,' and then to withdraw or hold back. (Comp. Acts 20. 20, 27)"—C. B.

39. **We are not of them who draw back to perdition**—"like him mentioned, ver. 38. **But of them that believe**—"to the end, so as to attain eternal life"—WESLEY.

"*Lit.* **But we are not of drawing** (or 'shrinking') **back unto perdition, but of faith unto the gaining of the soul.** On the last words (which are nearly identical with those of Luke 17. 33, though deeper in meaning), see the note on ver. 34. The exhortation thus closes with words of encouragement and hope"—MOULTON.

CHAPTER XI.

THIS chapter is very closely connected with the last verses of ch. 10. Those verses have taught the necessity of faith for the attainment of the promise. Here we read of men to whom, through their faith, the promise has been made sure.

1. "The definition of faith given in this verse, and exemplified in the various instances following, undoubtedly includes justifying faith, but not directly as justifying. For faith justifies only as it refers to, and depends on, Christ. But here is no mention of Him as the object of faith; and in several of the instances that follow, no notice is taken of Him or His salvation, but only of temporal blessings obtained by faith. And yet they may all be considered as evidences of the power of justifying faith in Christ, and of its extensive exercise in a course of steady obedience amidst difficulties and dangers of every kind. **Now faith is the subsistence of things hoped for, the evidence** or conviction **of things not seen**—things hoped for are not so extensive as things not seen. The former are only things future and joyful to us; the latter are either future, past, or present, and those either good or evil, whether to us or others. 'The subsistence of things hoped for'—giving a kind of present subsistence to the good things which God has promised: the Divine supernatural 'evidence' exhibited to, the conviction hereby produced in, a believer of 'things not seen,' whether past, future, or spiritual; particularly of God and the things of God"—WESLEY.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen (R.V.). "It has been debated whether that which follows is a definition of what faith is, or in reality a description of what faith does. It is not a complete definition, in the sense of including all the moments of thought which are present in the word as used in the last chapter (ver. 38) or in this. The **things hoped for** are not mere figments of the imagination; their basis is **the word of God.** If we keep this in mind, the words, still remaining general in their form, agree with all that has led up to them and with all that follows; and whether they be called definition or description will be of little consequence. The exact meaning of the special terms here used it is not easy to ascertain. The word rendered **substance** has already occurred twice in the Epistle. In ch. 1. 3 this was its true meaning—the essence which, so to speak, underlies, 'stands under,' the qualities possessed. In ch. 3. 14 the same metaphor of *standing under* is applied to steadfastness, confidence. To adopt Dr. Vaughan's clear explanation, 'Faith is that principle, that exercise of mind and soul, which has for its object things not seen, but hoped for, and which, instead of sinking under them as too ponderous, whether from their difficulty or from their uncertainty, stands firm under them—supports and sustains their pressure—in other words, is assured of, confides in and relies on them.' This interpretation yields an excellent sense, and has the advantage of assigning to the Greek word a meaning which it certainly bears in an earlier chapter, and in two places of S. Paul's Epistles. The whole verse, then, may be rendered, **Now faith is the giving substance to what is hoped for, the testing of things not seen.** And now passing away from the general aspect of the words to that in which they are presented by the context, we have as the meaning: Faith, holding to God's word, gives substance to what that word promises, investing the future blessings with a present existence, treating them as if already objects of sight rather than of hope. Through faith, guided by the same word, the things unseen are brought to the proof; what that word teaches, though future, or though belonging to a world beyond human sight, is received with full conviction. Thus 'every genuine act of faith is the act of the whole man, not of his understanding alone, not of his affections alone, not of his will alone, but of all three in their central, aboriginal unity.' And thus faith becomes 'the faculty in man through which the spiritual world exercises its sway over him, and thereby enables him to overcome the world of sin and death' (Hare's *Victory of Faith*)"—MOULTON.

2. **By it the elders**—"our forefathers. This chapter is a kind of summary of the Old Testament, in which the apostle comprises the designs, labours, sojournings, expectations, temptations, martyrdoms of the ancients. The former of them had a long exercise of their patience; the latter suffered shorter but sharper trials. **Obtained a good testimony**—a most comprehensive word. God gave a 'testimony,' not only *of* them but *to* them: and they received His testimony as if it had been the things themselves of which He testified (vers. 4,

5, 39). Hence they also gave testimony to others, and others testified of them"—WESLEY.

For by it the elders obtained a good report—*lit.* "For therein the elders had witness borne to them." Their "good report" was won in the sphere of faith. The elders—a technical Jewish term—means the ancient fathers of the Church of Israel (ch. 1. 1). WILLIAMS adds: "Faith was the all-pervading principle of their character; and this principle God stamped with His marked approval."

3. **By faith we understand that the worlds**—"Heaven and earth and all things in them, visible and invisible—**were made**—formed, fashioned, and finished—**by the word**—the sole command **of God**, without any instrument or preceding matter. And as creation is the foundation and specimen of the whole Divine economy, so faith in the creation is the foundation and specimen of all faith. **So that things which are seen**—as the sun, earth, stars—**were made of things which do not appear**—out of the dark, unapparent chaos (Gen. 1. 2). And this very chaos was created by the Divine power; for before it was thus created it had no existence in nature"—WESLEY.

Through faith. "In this chapter we find fifteen special instances of the work of faith, besides the summary enumeration in ver. 32 and following verses. **We understand.** 'We apprehend the reason.' (See Rom. 1. 20.) **That the worlds were framed.** The word for 'worlds' means literally ages (ch. 1. 2), *i.e.* the world regarded from the standpoint of human history. The 'time-world' necessarily presumes the existence of the space-world also. **Were framed**—'have been established' (ch. 13. 21; Ps. 74. 16; LXX.). **By the word of God**—rather, 'by the utterance of God,' namely by His fiat, as in Gen. 1.; Ps. 33. 6, 9; 2 Pet. 3. 5. There is no question here as to creation of the world by the Logos. **So that things which are seen.** The true reading and literal translation are 'so that not from things which appear hath that which is seen come into being,' a somewhat harsh way of expressing that 'the visible world did not derive its existence from anything phenomenal.' In other words, the clause denies the pre-existence of matter. It says that the world was made out of nothing, not out of the primeval chaos"—C. B.

4. **By faith**—"in the future Redeemer—**Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice**—the firstlings of his flock, implying both a confession of what his own sins deserved, and a desire of sharing in the great atonement—**than Cain**—whose offering testified no such faith, but a bare acknowledgment of God the Creator. **By which** faith **he obtained** both righteousness and **a testimony** of it; **God testifying**—visibly that his gifts were accepted; probably by sending fire from heaven to consume his sacrifice, a token that justice seized on the sacrifice instead of the sinner who offered it. **And by it**—by this faith—**being dead, he yet speaketh**—that a sinner is accepted only through faith in the great sacrifice"—WESLEY.

"Apart from the first words, **by faith**, there is nothing here said to explain the superiority of Abel's offering; though one who believes sacrifice to have been of Divine institution, and who notes the close connection between God's word and the actions of the men whose faith is here recorded, may hold it probable that Abel's obedience was manifested in his mode of approaching God. **By which he obtained witness**—probably, 'through which faith,' but the Greek may also mean 'through which sacrifice.' The witness is that borne by God in His acceptance of the offering (shown by some visible sign); we might also add that such a testimony to Abel is implied in the reproof of Cain (Gen. 4. 7), but the following words, **God bearing witness over** (or 'in regard to') **his gifts** show what was chiefly in the writer's thought. Such acceptance implied Abel's righteousness, and thus testified to his **faith**. It is remarkable that in three out of four places in which Abel is mentioned in the New Testament this epithet is used (Matt. 23. 35; 1 John 3. 12)"—MOULTON.

5. "**Enoch was not** any longer **found** among men, though perhaps they sought for him as they did for Elijah. (2 Kings 2. 17.) **He had this testimony**—from God in his own conscience"—WESLEY.

By reason of his faith Enoch was caught away—*i.e.* even during his lifetime was, like Elijah (2 Kings 2.), caught up to God in heaven. **He hath had witness borne to him that he had been well-pleasing unto God** (R.V.). (See Gen. 5. 21-24.)

6. **But without faith**—"even some Divine faith in God, **it is impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God**—in prayer, or any other act of worship, **must believe that He is**"—WESLEY.

And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him (R.V.). "The very statement that Enoch pleased God is an assertion that in Him faith was found. No one can be the habitual worshipper of God (this is what the phrase implies) if his faith does not grasp these two truths. **Is a rewarder**—*lit.* 'becometh a recompenser' (ch. 2. 2; 10. 35); the future recompense is present to the eye of faith"—MOULTON.

7. **Noah being warned of things not seen as yet**—"of the future deluge. **Moved with fear, prepared an ark, by which** open testimony **he condemned the world**—who neither believed nor feared"—WESLEY.

"Noah, believing the Divine warning and promise, and fulfilling the Divine command, strange and unexampled as it might appear, amid the ridicule and mockery of a careless world, he became heir of the righteousness which is determined by and conditioned through faith."

—DELITZSCH. "**In devout precaution**, in that he reposed unconditional belief in the word of God, and on that very account took the enjoined measure of preparation in order to remain in safety under the impending destruction"—LUNEMANN.

9. **By faith he sojourned in the land of promise**—"the promise was made before (Gen. 12. 7). **Dwelling in tents**—as a sojourner—**with Isaac and Jacob**—who by the same manner of living showed the same faith. Jacob was born fifteen years before the death of Abraham—**the joint-heirs of the same promise**—having all the same interest therein. Isaac did not receive this inheritance from Abraham, nor Jacob from Isaac, but all of them from God"—WESLEY.

The land of promise—"more correctly, according to the true reading, 'a land of the promise': into a land which the promise (Gen. 12. 7) made his own, he came as a sojourner, and sojourned in it as in a land belonging to others, making his settled abode there in tents. The words of which this is a paraphrase are very expressive, especially those of the last clause. Abraham there 'made his home once for all, well aware that it was to be his home—expecting no change in this respect all his life long—in tents,' movable, shifting abodes—here to-day, there to-morrow—with (as did also in their turn) **Isaac and Jacob**, the **heirs with him of the same promise**"—DR. VAUGHAN.

10. **He looked for a city which hath foundations**—"whereas a tent has none—**whose builder and former is God**—of which God is the sole contriver, former, and finisher"—WESLEY.

A city which hath foundations—"rather, 'the city which hath the foundations.' The general thought is that which we find expressed in vers. 14–16. There, the strangers and pilgrims are seeking for a **country** of their own; here, the dweller in tents is waiting for the 'city.' that hath the foundations. All these verses clearly teach that the promise as apprehended by the patriarchs was not bounded by the gift of Canaan. Of what nature their expectations of the future life may have been we cannot tell; but this they knew, that their fellowship with God and their interest in His promises would not cease with this transient life. What they saw of earthly blessing was but the earnest of some greater gift still future, and yet present through the power of their faith. The shifting tent might be Abraham's home now, but he waited for that city which should never know change—of which alone it could be said that it hath 'the foundations,' and whose Architect and Maker is God. (Comp. Ps. 87. 1; Rev. 21)"—MOULTON. The idea of a heavenly Jerusalem was already current among the Jews; its descent to earth was expected on the arising of the Messiah.

11. **Sarah also herself**—"though at first she laughed at the promise (Gen. 18. 12)"—WESLEY.

"By faith she drew strength out of the Divine fulness, inasmuch as she accounted the God of the promise (comp. Rom. 4. 21) faithful to the promise (comp. ch. 10. 23). This faith of Sarah's, answering and supporting the faith of Abraham, was now gloriously rewarded; the promise was fulfilled in over-measure"—DELITZSCH.

12. **As it were dead**—"till his strength was supernaturally restored, which continued for many years after"—WESLEY.

The **one** is Abraham. (Comp. Rom. 4. 19; Isa. 51. 2; see Gen. 15. 5; 22. 17.) The comparison of the multitude of descendants to the stars of heaven, and the countless upon the seashore, is based upon the use of the same figures in the words of the promise given to Abraham. (Comp. Gen. 13. 16; 15. 5; 22. 17; 26. 4; 35. 12; Ex. 32. 13; Deut. 1. 10.)

13. **All these**—"mentioned vers. 7–11—**died in faith**—in death faith acts most vigorously. **Not having received the promises**—the promised blessings. **Embraced**—as one does a dear friend when he meets him"—WESLEY.

"**These all died in faith**—or, 'according to faith.' The reference is to Abraham and Sarah and their immediate descendants, not to Noah and those further back. The statement seems not to be the negative one, that they all died without having received the promises, still only in the region of faith, not in that of enjoyment; but the positive one, that their death, like their life, was according to faith; the emphasis falling on 'died'—all their life through, even up to death, was according to faith; in this state of mind as persons not having received the promises, but having, etc. (comp. vers. 14, 16), they died"—DAVIDSON.

14. **They who speak thus show plainly that they seek their own country**—"that they keep in view, and long for, their native home"—WESLEY.

That they seek a country—rather, "that they are seeking further after a native land." Hence comes the argument of the next verse, that it was not their old home in Chaldea for which they were yearning, but a heavenly native land.

15. **If they had been mindful of**—"their earthly country, Ur of the Chaldeans, they might have easily returned"—WESLEY.

They never attempted to return to Mesopotamia, because they were home-sick not for that land but for heaven.

16. **But they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.** "This is a full convincing proof that the patriarchs had a revelation and a promise of eternal glory in heaven. **Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God**: seeing **He hath prepared for them a city**—worthy of God to give"—WESLEY.

But now—that is, "as the case in truth is"—**the country they desire**—and which they

show that they desire when they call themselves strangers in the land where they dwell —**is a heavenly one. Wherefore . . . ashamed to be**—or, "ashamed of them to be called." Seeing they desire a heavenly country, the abode of God, He is not ashamed to be called their God. (Comp. Gen. 28. 13; Ex. 3. 6; Matt. 22. 32; Luke 20. 37.) The phrase, "to be called their God," interprets, "not ashamed of them." Their desire for fellowship with Him He meets with a public avowal of His relation to them. **For He hath prepared,** etc.; proof or illustration that He is not ashamed—that is, that He is their God. He is their God, as is seen in His having prepared a city for them—His own city. Whether the writer means by "prepared," made ready merely in design as yet, or actually bestowed upon them, may be uncertain. (See ch. 12. 22, etc.)

17. **By faith Abraham**—"when God made that glorious trial of him—**offered up Isaac**—the will being accepted as if he had actually done it. **Yea, he that had received the promises** —particularly that grand promise, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.' **Offered up**—this very son; the only one he had by Sarah"—WESLEY.

"Yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only-begotten son (R.V.). As in former cases (ch. 4. 9; 7. 11; 10. 9), the reference is to the permanent record of Scripture, in which the fact related is ever present. Abraham stands before us there as having offered his son. It will be seen that the offering is spoken of as if consummated. As regards faith the sacrifice was indeed complete; the perfect surrender of will had been made, and the hand was stretched out for the deed"—MOULTON. "Abraham, in the obedience of faith, had entered the promised land, in the patience of faith, had spent many a long decade of his earthly pilgrimage therein; in the joy of faith, he had witnessed the fulfilment of the promise by which his long fruitless marriage had at last been crowned; and now the same faith must undergo its severest trial, in order that the victory of faith may be his also. The father of the faithful endured this trial, and came triumphant out of it"—DELITZSCH.

18. **In Isaac shall thy seed be called** —"from him shall the blessed seed spring"—WESLEY.

The phrase, **In Isaac shall thy seed be called,** means, "Through Isaac shall they come who shall be called (and *be*, in the sense of the promise) thy seed." Abraham had other descendants; his seed, in the pregnant sense of the promise, was to be through Isaac. Yet this his only son, the child of promise, Abraham is to sacrifice! "God appeared in all this," says S. CHRYSOSTOM, "to contradict God, faith to be opposed to faith, and commandment to commandment." But fearful as the paradox might seem, Abraham was obedient.

19. **Accounting that God was able even to raise him from the dead**—"though there had not been any instance of this in the world —**from whence also**—to speak in a figurative way — **he did receive him** — afterwards, snatched from the jaws of death"—WESLEY.

"This verse interprets and analyses 'by faith' of ver. 17, laying bare to us the mental process and operations which were 'faith.' Abraham realised the omnipotence of God, and trusted to it, believing that it could raise even from the dead. The original promise he firmly believed in also, and looked to the realising of it through God's power. This was a complicated and brilliant act of faith. Confusion might have been introduced into his mind through what seemed contradictory leading on the part of God. But his faith was able to realise the reconciliation. Faith in God's first promise and faith in God's power, made faith in the new command and obedience to it possible" —DAVIDSON.

20. **Blessed.** "Gen. 27. 27–39, prophetically foretold the particular blessings they should partake of. **Jacob and Esau**—preferring the elder before the younger"—WESLEY.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. "It is true that the blessing of Esau when rightly translated, 'Behold, thy dwelling shall be *away from* the fatness of the earth and *away from* the dew of blessing' (Gen. 27. 39), reads more like a curse; but the next verse (40) involves a promise of ultimate freedom, and Esau obtained the blessings of that lower and less spiritual life for which he was alone fitted by his character and tastes. **Concerning things to come.** The true reading seems to be '*even* concerning,' though it is not easy to grasp the exact force of the 'even'"—C. B.

21. **Jacob when dying** — "that is, when near death — **bowing down on the top of his staff**—as he sat on the side of his bed"—WESLEY.

Both the son—rather, "each of the sons." He made a marked difference between them. (Gen. 48. 17–19). **Worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.** In this verse there is an allusion to two separate events. The first is the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48. 1–20); the other an earlier occasion (Gen. 47. 29–31). In our version it is rendered "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." "Probably all that is meant is that, being too feeble to rise and kneel or stand, Jacob 'bowed himself upon the head of his couch,' in an attitude of prayer, just as the aged David did on his deathbed (1 Kings 1. 47)"—C. B.

22. **Concerning his bones**—"to be carried into the land of promise"—WESLEY.

Joseph. (Gen. 50. 24, etc.) Joseph's mind was also directed to the future and invisible, and the trustful state of his mind was shown by his mentioning the departure of Israel from

Egypt; and in full faith that it would come about according to the promise, he gave commandment concerning his bones. (Comp. Josh. 24. 32.)

23. **They saw**—"doubtless with a Divine presage of things to come"—WESLEY.

Because they saw he was a proper child. "'Proper' has its now obsolete sense of 'handsome, comely,' a meaning not uncommon in Shakespeare. The word used in the Greek translation of Ex. 2. 2 is preserved both in Acts 7. 20 and in this place. It would seem that the remarkable beauty of the infant was understood by his parents as a Divine sign given for the guidance of their conduct. The next clause should probably be closely connected with this—'because they saw . . . and were not afraid of the king's commandment' (Ex. 1. 16). Their reliance on the protection of God enabled them to brave the anger of the king"—MOULTON.

24. **Refuse to be called**—"any longer"—WESLEY.

Come to years—"*i.e.* grown up, 'when he was full forty years old' (Acts. 7. 23). The words here used are taken from the Greek translation of Ex. 2. 11, where we first read of Moses as openly associating himself with his oppressed people. When Moses slew the Egyptian who was 'smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren,' he in act 'refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter,' and chose 'to suffer affliction with the people of God.' (See Ex. 2. 15)"—MOULTON.

25. **Choosing**—"better, 'having chosen.' This act was an expression of his deliberate choice. He joined his people because it was 'the people of God.' To stand aloof for the sake of ease and pleasure would for him have been apostasy from God (**sin**, comp. ch. 10. 26). The faith of Moses had brought 'conviction of the things not seen,' which 'are eternal'; hence he looked not at 'the things seen,' which are 'for a season' (2 Cor. 4. 18, where the same word is used)"—MOULTON.

26. **The reproach of Christ**—"that which he bore for believing in the Messiah to come, and acting accordingly. **For he looked off**—from all those perishing treasures, and beyond all those temporal hardships—**unto the recompense of reward**—not to an inheritance in Canaan; he had no warrant from God to look for this, nor did he ever attain it; but what his believing ancestors looked for—a future state of happiness in heaven"—WESLEY.

The reproach of Christ—"better, 'The reproach of the Christ.' Many explanations have been proposed of this remarkable phrase, some of which—as 'reproach for Christ,' 'reproach similar to that which Christ endured'—cannot possibly give the true meaning. The first point to be noted is that the words are almost exactly a quotation from one of the chief of the messianic psalms. (Ps. 89. 50, 51.) Here the writer in effect speaks of himself as bearing 'the reproach of the Anointed' of the Lord; pleading in His name and identifying himself with His cause. 'The Anointed' is the king who (see the note on ch. 1. 5) was the type of the promised Christ. Throughout the whole of their history the people of Israel were the people of Christ. Their national existence originated in the promise to Abraham, which was a promise of the Christ; and till the fulness of time should come their mission was to prepare the way for Him. The reproach which Moses accepted by joining the people of the promise was, therefore, 'the reproach of the Christ,' the type of that 'reproach' which in later days His people will share with Him (ch. 13. 13)"—MOULTON.

27. **By faith he left Egypt**—"taking all the Israelites with him. **Not** then **fearing the wrath of the king**—as he did many years before (Ex. 2. 14)"—WESLEY.

"This verse does not refer to Moses' wandering to Midian (Ex. 2. 15), where he indeed **feared**, but to the departure from Egypt (Ex. 14. 13.) That the two *parts* of which this departure consisted, namely, the Passover and the passage through the Red Sea, are afterwards specially mentioned, is no reason why the event *as a whole* might not also be mentioned first. The resolution in general to undertake the dangerous work of delivering Israel from Egypt was a strong act of faith. (Comp. Ex. 3. 11.) Moses had steadfastly before his eyes God, the invisible, just as if he saw Him"—EBRARD. Delitzsch gives a different opinion as to the *time* alluded to in this verse, and says that it refers to the flight into Midian. LUNEMANN'S explanation is: "The fear attributed to Moses in the narrative of the Pentateuch is quite different from that from which the Epistle to the Hebrews pronounces him free. The former fear had a merely objective character: it was simply a dread lest the consequences of a particular act might be fatal to himself, when he found that act had become known. But this kind of objective fear was quite compatible with the *subjective* fearlessness of which the Epistle speaks, in virtue of which Moses retained his conviction that God had chosen him to be the deliverer of His people, and feared not to renounce, amid all temptations to the contrary, his allegiance to an earthly king."

28. **The pouring out of the blood**—"of the paschal lamb, which was sprinkled on the door-posts, lest the destroying angel should touch the Israelites"—WESLEY.

"The celebration of the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood were acts of obedience, having reference to a danger as yet unseen, but present in God's word. (Ex. 12. 12.) **Lest he that destroyed.** (See Ex. 12. 21, 22, 28, 29.) Had the Israelites not believed that God would really slay the first-born, or had they had no faith in the atoning power of the lambs, they would not have marked their door-

posts with the blood of the Passover lambs"—EBRARD.

29. "**They**—Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites—**passed the Red Sea**—it washed the borders of Edom, which signifies red. Thus far the examples are cited from Genesis and Exodus; those that follow are from the former and the latter prophets"—WESLEY.

Passage of the sea. The people's faith in the power of God and trust in their relation to Him led them to obey His command and commit themselves to the sea. (Ex. 14. 22; comp. Matt. 14. 25–33.) See also Isa. 51. 9, 10; and 43. 16, 17. "It was, on the one hand, the omnipotence of Jehovah which, by means of an east and north-east wind, swept a furrow through the waves of the Red Sea; and, on the other hand, it was the faith of Israel which, trusting in that omnipotence, passed through the twofold wall of waters, which at any moment might collapse upon them"—DELITZSCH.

30. "By the faith of Joshua"—WESLEY.

The fall of Jericho. (Josh. 6.) Here the faith of the whole people is again illustrated. They believe in the might of Jehovah, in His power to throw down the city without engines of war or other means, and in obedience to His word they went about its walls seven days. (Comp. Matt. 17. 20.)

31. **Rahab**—"though formerly one not of the fairest character"—WESLEY.

Rahab. (Josh. 2.) The term **harlot** is probably to be taken in its natural sense. **That believed not**—or, "obeyed not"; the inhabitants of Jericho, who, though the acts of God in behalf of Israel were not unknown to them (Josh. 2. 10), refused to submit to Him. "**The harlot Rahab.** So she is called in Josh. 2. 1; Jas. 2. 25, and it shows the faithfulness of the sacred narrative that her name is even introduced as well as that of Ruth, a Moabitess, in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. 1. 5.) The Targum softens it down into 'innkeeper,' and others render it 'idolatrous.' Her name was highly honoured by the Jews, who said that eight prophets—among them Baruch, Jeremiah, and Shallum — were descended from her, and the prophetess Huldah"—C. B.

32. "After Samuel, the prophets are properly mentioned. David also was a prophet; but he was a king too. **The prophets**—Elijah, Elisha, etc., including likewise the believers who lived with them"—WESLEY.

"**The time would fail me.** The phrase is also found in Philo, *De Somniis.* The names of 'the heroes of faith' here mentioned are drawn from the Books of Judges and Samuel, with a reference to the Books of Kings and Chronicles, and what is known of the history of the prophets. There does not seem to be any special design in the arrangement of the *pairs* of names, though it is a curious circumstance that, in each pair the hero who came earlier in time is placed after the other. In vers. 32–34 we have instances of active, and in 35–38 of passive faith"—C. B.

33, 34. "David in particular, **subdued kingdoms.** Samuel (not excluding the rest), **wrought righteousness.** The prophets, in general, **obtained promises**, both for themselves, and to deliver to others. Prophets also **stopped the mouths of lions**, as Daniel; and **quenched the violence of fire**, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. To these examples, whence the nature of faith clearly appears, those more ancient ones are subjoined (by a transposition, and in an inverted order) which receive light from these. Jephthah **escaped the edge of the sword**; Samson **out of weakness was made strong**; Barak **became valiant in fight**; Gideon **put to flight armies of the aliens.** Faith animates to the most heroic enterprises, both civil and military. Faith overcomes all impediments; effects the greatest things; attains to the very best; and inverts, by its miraculous power, the very course of nature"—WESLEY.

Subdued kingdoms. "The allusion is specially to the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, and to the victories of David. (2 Sam. 5. 17–25; 21. 15, etc.). **Wrought righteousness.** The allusion is somewhat vague, but seems to refer to the justice of Judges and Kings (1 Sam. 12. 3, 4; 2 Sam. 8. 15; 1 Chron. 18. 14, etc.), and perhaps especially to the judgment of Solomon. 'To execute judgment and justice' belonged especially to the princes of Israel (Ezek. 45. 9). **Obtained promises.** If we compare the expression with vers. 13–39, we see that the primary reference must be to temporal promises (see Josh. 21. 43–45, etc.); but they also obtained at least a partial fruition of spiritual promises also. **Stopped the mouths of lions.** Samson (Judg. 14. 5, 6), David (1 Sam. 17. 34, 35), Daniel (Dan. 6. 22), Benaiah (2 Sam. 23. 20). **Quenched the violence of fire.** (Dan. 3. 25; 1 Macc. 2. 59.) **Escaped the edge of the sword.** David (1 Sam. 18. 11; 19. 10, etc.), Elijah (1 Kings 19. 2, 3), Elisha (2 Kings 6. 12–17; Jer. 26. 24, etc.)"—C. B.

35. **Women**—"naturally weak—**received their dead**—children. **Others were tortured**—from those who acted great things the apostle rises higher, to those who showed the power of faith by suffering. **Not accepting deliverance**—on sinful terms. **That they might obtain a better resurrection**—an higher reward, seeing the greater their sufferings the greater would be their glory"—WESLEY.

The writer places over against each other two kinds of manifestations of faith—the faith of those women (1 Kings 17. 17 seq.; 2 Kings 4. 17 seq.), whose sons were restored to bodily life by the prophets, and the still greater faith of the martyrs, who sacrificed the bodily life in faith, and on account of faith, for the sake of the *future* resurrection to the *glorified* life. Hence he does not merely say, "Not accepting

deliverance that they might obtain a better **deliverance,**" but referring back to the first clause of the verse, he speaks of a "better resurrection."

36. **And others.** "The apostle seems here to pass on to recent examples"—WESLEY.

Here the apostle enumerates other forms of suffering to which some of the ancient saints were subjected.

37. **They were sawn asunder**—"as, according to the tradition of the Jews, Isaiah was by Manasseh. **Were tempted** — torments and death are mentioned alternately. Every way; by threatenings, reproaches, tortures, the variety of which cannot be expressed; and again by promises and allurements"—WESLEY.

"**Were stoned,** as Zechariah. (2 Chron. 24. 20–22; Matt. 23. 35.) There is also a tradition that Jeremiah was stoned to death in Egypt. Stoning was a common mode of capital punishment among the Jews. (Deut. 13. 10; Josh. 7. 25, etc.; Matt. 21. 35; Acts 7. 57–60.) **Were sawn asunder,** as tradition asserts of Isaiah under Manasseh. This tradition is frequently referred to in ancient times by writers both Jewish and Christian. See also the Apocryphal ascension of the prophet Isaiah, English translation by Lawrence. (Comp. 2 Sam. 12. 31; 1 Chron. 20. 3.) **Were tempted** occasions difficulty, because it refers to mere trials in the midst of three very cruel modes of putting to death. In sound the term is very like the preceding word, and some suppose that it is a repetition by mistake of this word, and would strike it out. Others would slightly alter the spelling so as to produce the meaning, 'they were burnt.' The MS. authority is in favour of 'were tempted,' and the reference must be to cruel tortures practised on men to procure apostasy. **Slain with the sword,** as Urijah, the prophet. (Jer. 26. 23; comp. 1 Kings 19. 10.) **In sheepskins.** (Comp. perhaps 2 Kings 1. 8)"—DAVIDSON.

38. **Of whom the world was not worthy**—"it did not deserve so great a blessing. **They wandered** — being driven out from men"—WESLEY.

The world despised them, and thought them not worthy of its regards or society; but the reverse was the truth; the world was not worthy of them, and therefore God withdrew them from it. The world, in persecuting and driving them into the desert, witnessed against and punished itself. DELITZSCH adds: "The author breaks off here his rapid summary of Old Testament history, which might be styled pre-eminently a history of faith, to take one last review of the whole."

39. **And all these**—"though they **obtained a good testimony** (ver. 2), yet did not receive the great promise, the heavenly inheritance"—WESLEY.

Having obtained a good report. "Now that the history is concluded the word of ver. 2 is resumed. That in such a faith as was described in ver. 1 'the elders' received their witness from God, the records themselves have shown; yet **these all having had witness borne to them through their faith received not the promise**—*i.e.* the promised blessing. There are three passages of the Epistle which must be kept together—Ch. 6. 15, 'And so having patiently waited, he (Abraham) obtained the promise'; Ch. 10. 36, 'Ye have need of endurance, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise'; and the present verse"—MOULTON.

40. **God having provided some better thing for us**—"namely, everlasting glory—**that they might not be perfected without us**—that is, that we might all be perfected together in heaven"—WESLEY.

"For **them** final salvation was simply a future good; for us it is at once present and future; *present*, in that the whole blessing has been procured for us by the self-sacrifice of Christ once for all; *future*, in that the full development and apprehension of this blessing is not yet realised. (Comp. ch. 9. 28 with 10. 14)"—DELITZSCH.

CHAPTER XII.

IN this chapter the writer takes up again the exhortation of ch. 10. 19–39, pointing to the example of Jesus, encouraging those who are in trial, warning against sin, and especially the sin of rejecting Him who speaks to us from heaven.

1. **Wherefore, being encompassed with a cloud**—"a great multitude, tending upward with a holy swiftness—**of witnesses**—of the power of faith—**let us lay aside every weight**—as all who run a race take care to do. Let us throw off whatever weighs us down, or damps the vigour of our soul. **And the sin which easily besetteth us**—as doth the sin of our constitution, the sin of our education, the sin of our profession"—WESLEY.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about—"rather, 'Therefore, let us also—since we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses—having put away all encumbrance and the sin . . . run with patient endurance the race that is set before us, looking,' etc. ('In so difficult a verse as this we need an exactness of translation which might otherwise not be desirable.') It is plain that the chief thought is, 'Let us run our race with patient endurance, looking unto Jesus the Author . . . of our faith'; so that here again we have the thought which the writer is never weary of enforcing, the need of faith and patience for all who would inherit the promises. The connection is chiefly with the last verses of ch. 11, which are, indeed, a summary of the whole chapter. The purpose of God has been that those who throughout the past ages obtained witness of Him through their faith should not reach their consummation apart from us. To that consummation, then, let us press forward,

Present to us in the view of Christ's accomplished sacrifice, it is all future in regard of personal attainment. As those who have preceded us reached the goal, each one for himself, by faith and patient endurance, so must we. The thought of persevering effort crowned by a recompense of regard (ch. 6. 12, 18; 10. 35-39) very naturally suggested the imagery of the public games (by this time familiar even to Jews), to which S. Paul in his Epistles so frequently alludes. (See 1 Cor. 4. 9; 9. 24-27; Phil. 3. 12-14; 1 Tim. 6. 12; 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8; comp. ch. 10. 32, 33)"—MOULTON.

2. **Looking**—"from all other things — **to Jesus**—as the wounded Israelites to the brazen serpent. Our crucified Lord was prefigured by the lifting up of this; our guilt, by the stings of the fiery serpents; and our faith, by their looking up to the miraculous remedy. **The author and finisher of our faith**—who begins it in us, carries it on, and perfects it. **Who for the joy that was set before Him**—patiently and willingly **endured the cross**, with all the pains annexed thereto. **And is set down**—where there is fulness of joy"—WESLEY.

"The author has exhorted his Hebrew readers to run the course of Christian duty set before them with steadfast endurance, as under the eyes of so many invisible witnesses that have accomplished the like course in days gone by, and, in order to do this, to cast off manfully every encumbrance, and break through the trammels and hindrances of sin. He now proceeds, in the second part of his admonition, to commend to them as the main condition of all success, as the chief source of inspiration for the true athlete temper, and as the mightiest stimulant to steadfastness of faith, an upward glance to Jesus and His glorious example—**looking up to faith's Captain and Completer, Jesus**"—DELITZSCH.

3. **Consider**—"draw the comparison and think. The Lord bore all this; and shall His servants bear nothing? **Him that endured such contradiction from sinners**—such enmity and opposition of every kind. **Lest ye be weary**—dull and languid, **and** so actually **faint** in your course"—WESLEY.

That ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls (R.V.). "The figure of the race is still continued, 'For unless ye thus look unto Jesus ye will grow weary.' **Consider**—*lit.* 'compare'; place your sufferings by the side of His. **Contradiction** (R.V. 'Gainsaying of sinners against themselves'). The sin or the opposition manifested against Him was really against themselves, since it was for their salvation that He came upon earth. To all His other sorrows were added the pain of their ingratitude and His grief over their aggravated guilt"—MOULTON.

4. **Unto blood**—"unto wounds and death"—WESLEY.

"Unlike Him who endureth a cross, their resistance to sin has not yet gone the length of bloodshed. **Ye have not yet . . . blood.** Many think that the author passes here from the figure of the race to that of the pugilistic arena, and says that in their encounter with sin no blood has yet flowed, meaning that the struggle has not hitherto been very severe. Even if such a figure be supposed, there must lie under the figure the meaning that the persecutions to which the Hebrews had been subjected had not yet resulted in martyrdom. **Striving against sin**—*i.e.* in their strife against sin. 'Sin' is not here put for sinners, nor is it sin in their persecutors; it is sin in themselves, the sin of unbelief, which is here regarded as their true antagonist, though of course the excesses of their persecutors gave it its power against them"—DAVIDSON.

5. "**And yet ye** seem already to **have forgotten the exhortation**—wherein God speaketh to you with the utmost tenderness. **Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord**—do not slight or make little of it; do not impute any affliction to chance or second causes; but see and revere the hand of God in it. **Neither faint when thou art rebuked of Him**—but endure it patiently and fruitfully"—WESLEY.

"The expression is not merely figurative; that they have not yet resisted sin (without and within) to the utmost of their power. Their Christian profession has not yet cost them their lives. They are refusing or fleeing from the cross, and seem quite to have forgotten that the afflictions which God sends to His people are a discipline of love"—DELITZSCH.

6. **For**—"all springs from love; therefore neither despise nor faint"—WESLEY.

"Here is the *reason* why we should neither neglect correction, nor faint under it: it is a proof of the fatherly love of God, and shows His most gracious designs toward us, from which we may be convinced that the affliction will prove the means of good to our souls, if we make a proper use of it"—CLARKE.

7. **Whom his father chasteneth not**—"when he offends"—WESLEY.

As usual with the scripture which he quotes, the author first seizes the idea of the quotation, and then founds his exhortation upon it. He exhibits the idea in vers. 7, 8, "Ye are sons, your afflictions are chastisement, the chastening is evidence of your true sonship." Then follows, in vers. 9, 10, the exhortation to exhibit the right bearing of children under the discipline of God.

8. "**Of which all** sons **are partakers**—more or less"—WESLEY.

He speaks of God's blessed and disciplinary chastisement as a gift in which all His sons have their share.

9. **And we reverenced them**—"we neither despised nor fainted under their correction. **Shall we not much rather**—submit with reverence and meekness. **To the Father of**

spirits—that we may *live* with Him for ever. Perhaps these expressions, 'fathers of our flesh' and 'Father of spirits,' intimate that our earthly fathers are only the parents of our bodies, our souls not being originally derived from them, but all created by the immediate power of God; perhaps, at the beginning of the world"—WESLEY.

"**Unto the Father of spirits**—God might be called 'the Father of the spirits,' as having created angels and spirits; but more probably the meaning is 'the Father of our spirits,' as in Num. 16. 22, 'the God of the spirits of all flesh.' God made our bodies and our souls, but our spirits are in a yet closer relation to Him. (Job 12. 10; Eccles. 12. 7; Zech. 12. 1; Isa. 42. 5, etc.) If it meant 'the author of spiritual gifts,' the expression would be far-fetched, and would be no contrast to 'the father of our flesh'"—C. B.

10. **For they verily for a few days**—"how few are even all our days on earth! **Chastened us as they thought good**—though frequently they erred therein, by too much either of indulgence or severity. **But He** always, unquestionably, **for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness**—that is, of Himself and His glorious image"—WESLEY.

"**For a few days . . . their own pleasure.** The chastisement of natural parents is after their own pleasure, or as seems good to them. Even when most conscientious and affectionate and wise, there may be an element of passion, and certainly of misjudgment, in it; for what parent can perfectly estimate the offence and the circumstances, or, above all, with true insight gauge the temper and the nature of the child he chastens? Further, the chastening of natural parents is but for a few days; our relations to them are such that as life advances it ceases. Yet though our subjection to them is only for a time, by the very law of life and though their chastening may often be capricious and always marked by error of excess or defect, or misdirection, we gave them reverence. **But He for our profit . . . holiness.** Unlike that of earthly parents, the chastening of the Father of our spirits is without fail for our profit, in His infinite wisdom and skill as framer of the spirit, and love as Father. The words, **that we might be partakers of His holiness**, explain 'for our profit'; this is the profit He intends and which He brings about. 'Holiness' or sanctity in God is properly separation or distance from the world and elevation above it: holiness in men is separation from the world and dedication unto God. In both cases the word expresses in the first instance a relation. God's design in chastening men is to remove them more and more from community with the world, and make them more dedicated unto Himself, and like Him. What the author means to bring out by saying that the chastisement of earthly parents is for a few days, is the brevity and comparative unimportance of our connection with our natural parents; their chastisement is for a short time as the duration of our relation to them is short, and indeed their chastisement, if wise, has in view to make us able to be independent of them. God's chastening has another view, to make us partakers of His holiness, to unite us to Him in character and likeness more and more. It is not the duration of the chastisement that is the point of the passage; it is the duration of our relation in each case to Him who chastens"—DAVIDSON.

"God delights not in the rod, judgment is His strange work"—CLARKE.

11. **Now all chastening**—"whether from our earthly or heavenly Father—**is for the present grievous, yet it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness**—holiness and happiness—**to them that are exercised thereby**—that receive this exercise as from God, and improve it according to His will"—WESLEY.

Now no chastening, etc. — "better (the reading being slightly changed), 'All chastening seemeth for the present time to be not joyous, but grievous.' The language, so far, would seem to be perfectly general, relating to all chastening, whether human or Divine. The following clause may seem to confine our thought to the latter; but, with a lower sense of 'righteousness,' the maxim is true of the wise discipline of earthly parents. **The peaceable fruit of righteousness**—better, 'peaceful fruit, (fruit) of righteousness,' to them that have been trained thereby.' The 'peaceful' fruit stands in contrast with the unrest and trouble which have preceded during the time of 'chastening.' But there is more than rest after conflict, for the object of the conflict is attained; the fruit consists in righteousness. (Comp. Isa. 32. 17; Prov. 11. 30; Jas. 3. 17; Phil. 1. 11.) It has been sometimes supposed that in the word 'trained' the writer returns to the figure of ver. 4; but this is not probable"—MOULTON.

12. **Wherefore lift up the hands**—"whether your own or your brethren's—**that hang down**—unable to continue the combat—**and the feeble knees**—unable to continue the race"—WESLEY.

"The apostle refers to Isa. 35. 3. The words are an address to persons almost worn out with sickness and fatigue, whose hands hang down, whose knees shake, and who are totally discouraged. These are exhorted to exert themselves, and take courage, with the assurance that they shall infallibly conquer if they persevere"—CLARKE.

13. **And make straight paths** both **for your** own and for their **feet**—remove every hindrance, every offence—**that the lame**—they who are weak, scarce able to walk—**be not turned out of the way**—of faith and holiness"—WESLEY.

Turned out of the way . . . healed. If the path taken and made by the community

was straight and even, those members who were lame might the more easily follow it, and by use their lameness (which had probably arisen from the inequalities of the way) would disappear and be healed. The words "turned out of the way" mean in medical writers "dislocated," and this gives a more vigorous sense and forms a better opposition to "be healed." Inconsistency and vacillation in the general body of the Church would create a way so difficult for the lame, that their lameness would become dislocation, and they would perish from the way; on the other hand, the habit of going in a plain path would restore them to soundness.

14. **Follow peace with all men** — "this second branch of the exhortation concerns our neighbours; the third, God. **And holiness**—the not following after *all* holiness is the direct way to fall into sin of every kind"—WESLEY.

"Individual believers are exhorted to cherish peaceful relations with all members of the community, even with the lame, the sickly, and weak. The improvement of such is to be aimed at, not by carnal contention, harsh acts of judgments, or uncharitable avoidance of their society, nor yet by merely setting them a good example in the purity and decision of our own conduct, while coldly waiting for the first advance on their side towards mutual explanation or agreement; but on our own part, by earnest, active endeavours after a good understanding, a pursuing or hunting after peace as a noble prey or object of search, the Church must endeavour all she can to reproduce in herself the image of that Divine calm in particular, and of the Divine holiness in general, which is itself the absolute unclouded light, and the absolute all-embracing, all-reconciling love"—DELITZSCH.

15. **Looking diligently, lest anyone**—"if he do not lift up the hands that hang down—**fall from the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness**—of envy, anger, suspicion—**springing up**—destroy the sweet peace; lest any, not following after holiness, fall into fornication or profaneness. In general, any corruption, either in doctrine or practice, is a 'root of bitterness,' and may pollute many"—WESLEY.

"**Lest any man fail of the grace of God**—*lit.* 'whether there be any man who is falling short of,' or possibly 'falling back from the grace of God.' It is not improbable that the writer has in view some one individual instance of a tendency towards apostasy, which might have a fatal influence upon other weary or wavering brethren. (Comp. ch. 3. 12.) **Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you.** The words 'root of bitterness' are a reference to Deut. 29. 18, 'a root that beareth gall and wormwood,' or, as in the margin, 'a poisonful herb'"—C. B. "**Lest any man fail**—rather, 'whether anyone be falling back from the grace of God.' The defection of one member of the community brings loss and danger to the whole body. The last words of ch. 10. 26 will show what is implied in this 'falling back from the grace of God'"—MOULTON.

16. **Esau** "was **profane** for so slighting the **blessing** which went along with the **birthright**"—WESLEY.

"**Esau** is here mentioned as a type of **the profane**, who care not for Divine things, but only for the gains and pleasures of this world. **Who for one morsel of meat**—better, 'who for one meal sold his own birthright' (Gen. 25. 29–34). We cannot suppose that the writer has in thought the material rights of the firstborn, such as his claim on pre-eminence, and, possibly (see Deut. 21. 17), on a larger share of his father's possessions. Tradition relates that, up to the time of Aaron, priestly functions were discharged by each firstborn son (comp. Num. 3. 5–13); and to the line of the firstborn would seem to belong that 'blessing of Abraham' (Gen. 28. 4), which everyone who shared Abraham's faith would earnestly desire to possess"—MOULTON. "The Lord's Church must be on her guard, lest any bitter root springing up in the spiritual garden disturb her sacred peace, and lest any faithless member, by indulging lusts of the flesh, have forfeited his own salvation, and so become like Esau, who was so profane, so low-minded, so utterly lost to a sense of higher things, that for one poor dish he gave up or sold the rights of the firstborn to a double portion of the inheritance of his father (Deut. 21. 17), and what to the mind of faith was the most precious privilege of all—the continuation of that patriarchal line in which were enshrined the promises"—DELITZSCH.

17. **He was rejected**—"he could not obtain it—**for [he found no place for repentance**—there was no room for any such repentance as would regain what he had lost. **Though he sought it**—the blessing of the 'birthright'—**diligently with tears.** He sought too late. Let us use the present time"—WESLEY.

For ye know how that afterward, etc.—"The meaning of the verse will be seen more clearly if one clause be placed in a parenthesis, 'For ye know that even when he afterwards desired to inherit the blessing he was rejected (**for he found no place of repentance**), though he sought it earnestly with tears.' The blessing of Jacob related in Gen. 27 is here viewed (apart from all attendant circumstances) as a necessary consequence of Esau's 'profane' scorn of his birthright. Notwithstanding Esau's piteous entreaty, Isaac cannot but ratify (Gen. 27. 33) the blessing which he has pronounced; **though his son sought the blessing earnestly with tears** (Gen. 27. 38), he was rejected. He **found no place of repentance**: the first act (Gen. 25. 33) could not be recalled, but brought with it a loss which nothing could retrieve"—MOULTON.

18. **For**—"a strong reason this why they ought the more to regard the whole exhort-

ation drawn from the priesthood of Christ; because both salvation and vengeance are now nearer at hand—**ye are not come to the mountain that could be touched**—that was of an earthy, material nature"—WESLEY.

"**For ye are not come.** At the close of his argument and exhortation the writer condenses the results of his Epistle into a climax of magnificent eloquence and force, in which he shows the transcendent beauty and supremacy of the new covenant as compared with the terrors and imperfections of the old. **Unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire.** Unless we allow the textual evidence to be overruled by the other considerations, which are technically called 'paradiplomatic evidence,' the verse should be rendered 'For ye have not come near to a palpable and enkindled fire.' In any case the allusion is to Ex. 19. 16–19; Deut. 4. 11, and generally to 'the fiery law.' **Blackness and darkness, and tempest.** (Deut 4. 11; 5. 22)"—C. B.

19. **The sound of a trumpet**—"formed, without doubt, by the ministry of angels, and preparatory to **the words**, that is, the ten commandments, which were uttered with a loud **voice** (Deut. 5. 22)"—WESLEY.

(See Ex. 19. 19, "the voice of the trumpet," Deut. 4. 12, "the voice of the words.")

Intreated. "'If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die.' (Deut. 5. 25; Ex. 20. 19.) Though God drew near to Israel, to reveal Himself, so terrible was His voice to them, so awful the penalties which fenced round their approach to Him, that they shrank back from hearing His words"—MOULTON.

20. **For they could not bear**—"the terror which seized them, when they heard those words proclaimed. **If even a beast.** etc."—WESLEY.

It was not so much the thing commanded, as the manner in which it uttered itself, that Israel shrank from. The ordinance that even a beast approaching the mount was to be stoned, as guilty of an act of sacrilege, made the whole prohibition, which was principally aimed at human presumption (Ex. 19. 12), the more terrible, and is, therefore, the only point mentioned here.

21. "Even **Moses**—though admitted to so near an intercourse with God, who 'spake to him as a man speaketh to his friend.' At other times he acted as a mediator between God and the people. But while the ten words were pronounced, he stood as one of the hearers. (Ex. 19. 25; 20. 19)"—WESLEY.

Moses is nowhere represented in the Old Testament as uttering these precise words; though comp. Deut. 9. 19. Possibly the author was in possession of other traditions. On the giving of the Law, see Ex., chaps. 19 and 20.

22. **But ye**—"who believe in Christ—**are come**—the apostle does not here speak of their coming to the Church militant, but of that glorious privilege of New Testament believers, their communion with the Church triumphant. But this is far more apparent to the eyes of celestial spirits than to ours, which are yet veiled. S. Paul here shows an excellent knowledge of the heavenly economy, worthy of him who had been caught up into the third heaven. **To Mount Sion**—a spiritual mountain. **To the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem**—all these glorious titles belong to the New Testament Church—**and to an innumerable company**—including all that are afterwards mentioned"—WESLEY.

"**Unto Mount Sion.** The true Sion is the antitype of all the promises with which the name had been connected. (Ps. 2. 6; 48. 2; 78. 68; 125. 1; Joel 2. 32; Micah 4. 7.) Hence the names of Sion and **the heavenly Jerusalem** are given to **the city of the living God.** (Gal. 4. 26; Rev. 21. 2.) Sinai and Mount Sion are contrasted with each other in six particulars. **To an innumerable company of angels.** This punctuation is suggested by the word 'myriads,' which is often applied to angels. (Deut. 33. 2; Ps. 68. 17; Dan. 7. 10.) But under the new covenant the angels are surrounded with attributes, not of terror, but of beauty and goodness. (Ch. 1. 14; Rev. 5. 11, 12)"—C. B.

33. **To the general assembly**—"the word properly signifies a stated convention on some festival occasion—**and Church**—the whole body of true believers, whether on earth or in paradise—**of the firstborn**—'the firstborn' of Israel were enrolled by Moses; but these are **enrolled in heaven**, as citizens there. It is observable, that in this beautiful gradation, these firstborn are placed nearer to God than the angels. (See Jas. 1. 18.) **And to God the Judge of all**—propitious to you—adverse to your enemies. **And to the spirits**—the separate souls—**of just men**—it seems to mean, of New Testament believers. The number of these, being not yet large, is mentioned distinct from the **innumerable company of just men** whom their judge hath acquitted. These are now **made perfect** in a higher sense than any who are still alive. Accordingly, S. Paul, while yet on earth, denies that he was thus 'made perfect' (Phil. 3. 12)."

And to God the Judge of all. "The order of the Greek seems to require the rendering, 'and to a Judge (who is) God of all.' Up to this point our thought has rested on the heavenly world and those who from the time of their creation have been its inhabitants. Men who have passed through this earthly life have no essential right to citizenship in the 'heavenly Jerusalem.' They come before a Judge. (Comp. ch. 9. 27.) 'The Lord shall judge His people' (ch. 10. 30), severing between His servants and His foes (Mal. 3. 18; 4. 1), condemning the wicked, and receiving

the righteous to His own dwelling-place. This Judge is 'God of all'—of angels and of righteous souls (Wisdom 3. 1), and of Christian men who 'draw nigh' to the celestial city. How characteristic of the writer and his theme is the introduction of these solemn words into the midst of this description of Christian privilege and blessing. **And to the spirits of just men made perfect.** The last verses of ch. 11 are at once called before the mind by these words. The 'righteous' men have 'by faith' run their course (chaps. 10. 38; 11. 4. 7; Phil. 3. 12); they have obtained the promises (chaps. 6. 15; 11. 1). The analogy of Scripture forbids us to consider their present state as the full consummation; for that these 'spirits,' and we who are yet 'in the body,' await the day of the resurrection. What was received by those 'spirits of the righteous' when they saw the day of Christ, we cannot tell; but the teaching of Scripture seems to be that they were raised to some higher state of blessedness. These are the new inhabitants of the world above; they have come into the presence of God by means of the blood of sprinkling, through Jesus"—MOULTON.

24. **To Jesus, the Mediator**—"through whom they had been perfected. **And to the blood of sprinkling**—to all the virtue of His precious blood shed for you, whereby ye are sprinkled from an evil conscience. This blood of sprinkling was the foundation of our Lord's mediatorial office. Here the gradation is at the highest point. **Which speaketh better things than that of Abel**—which cried for vengeance"—WESLEY.

Rather, "**And to the Mediator of a new covenant, Jesus.** The covenant is called 'new' as of recent formation, and also as of ever fresh and vigorous youth, in contrast to the old, which was now antiquated and about to disappear. The Mediator of this covenant is called 'Jesus.' The sacred writer loves that name, and by it designates the Lord both as the Perfected One (ch. 2. 9, 10) and the Perfecter (ch. 12. 2), and again (ch. 7. 22) as the Surety of the better covenant. The name 'Jesus' is in itself more significant than that of 'Christ,' containing as it does the Divine name Jehovah, and designating the Divine work accomplished by the incarnate Son as the work of salvation. The writer, therefore, expressly calls the Mediator of the new covenant to which we belong by this His saving name, and lays especial emphasis upon it, as the highest pledge of the grace and glory of the covenant at the head of which He stands"—DELITZSCH.

25. **Refuse not**—"by unbelief—**Him that speaketh**—and whose speaking even now is a prelude to the final scene. The same voice which spake both by the Law and in the gospel, when heard from heaven, will shake heaven and earth. **For if they escaped not**—His vengeance—**much more shall not we**—those of us who **turn from Him that speaketh from heaven**—that is, who came from heaven to speak to us"—WESLEY.

"Abel's blood cries for vengeance; Christ's blood cries for grace. With this is connected the exhortation not to refuse this Jesus who, by His blood, cries for grace for us. When the Israelites at Sinai (ver. 19) refused to hear God's voice, and to fulfil His commands, they were punished. He, moreover, who refuses to hear the voice of grace is lost. It is Christ, who in heaven cries for grace to us, and thus offers us grace from heaven"—EBRARD.

26. **Whose voice then shook the earth**—"when He spoke from Mount Sinai. **But now**—with regard to His next speaking—**He hath promised**—it is a joyful promise to the saints, though dreadful to the wicked—**yet once more I will shake, not only the earth, but also the heaven.** These words may refer in a lower sense to the dissolution of the Jewish Church and state; but in their full sense they undoubtedly look much further, even to the end of all things. This universal shaking began at the first coming of Christ. It will be consummated at His second coming"—WESLEY.

"This warning is made more impressive by reference to the accompaniments of the Divine speaking in the two revelations respectively. A shaking accompanied God's speaking from Sinai; but it was only of the earth; and it was temporary, and subsided, leaving the frame of things as it was; a shaking shall follow God's speaking from heaven, more pervasive and with more imposing effects; this shaking shall grasp both heaven and earth, and amidst it the things that are made and of this material creation, and which can be shaken, shall pass away, leaving behind the world of true essential existence that cannot be shaken, the inheritance of the saints (ver. 28). The author finds an emphasis to lie in the words **yet once more**, or 'yet once,' of the prophecy (Hagg. 2. 6), implying the finality of the shaking, and the removing through it of the sensible material world, the things that are made. And this removing is in order to the manifesting and the abiding of the true ideal world which cannot be shaken but remains and becomes the heritage of men redeemed. (Ch. 2. 5, etc.)"—DAVIDSON.

27. **The things which are shaken**—"namely, heaven and earth. **As being made**—and consequently liable to change. **That the things which are not shaken may remain**—even 'the new heavens and the new earth' (Rev. 21. 1)"—WESLEY.

"When God yet once more shakes not the earth only, but also heaven,—yet once more, and consequently not again, so that this shaking, as a conclusive event, makes a separation between the things which can, and the things which cannot, be shaken,—this will be the final change of the world, the unavoidable, certain, and now impending change of the

variable into the invariable, which was aimed at in the creation"—HOFMANN.

28. **Therefore let us, receiving**—"by willing and joyful faith — **a kingdom** — more glorious than the present heaven and earth— **hold fast the grace, whereby we may serve God**—in every thought, word, and work. **With reverence**—*lit.* 'with shame'—arising from a deep consciousness of our own unworthiness—**and godly fear**—a tender, jealous fear of offending, arising from a sense of the gracious majesty of God"—WESLEY.

"When amidst this shaking the material creation passes away, there remains the kingdom that cannot be shaken, the world to come, the destined heritage of men (ch. 2. 5; Dan. 7. 18); and that this inheritance may be ours, **let us have grace** (comp. ver. 15). So another apostle says: 'Let us have peace with God' (Rom. 5. 1); and yet another: 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1. 10), that is, not to make yourselves assured of it, but to make it secure and stable (Heb. 2. 2, 3) in itself. **Serve God with reverence and godly fear**, or, 'with godly fear' (ch. 5. 7) 'and awe.' (Comp. ch. 9. 14)"—DAVIDSON.

29. **For our God is a consuming fire**—"in the strictness of His justice, and purity of His holiness"—WESLEY.

For our God is a consuming fire. "The reference is to Deut. 4. 24, and the special application of the description to one set of circumstances shows that this is not — like 'God is light' and 'God is love'—a description of the whole character of God, but an anthropomorphic way of expressing His hatred of apostasy and idolatry. Here the reference is made to show why we ought to serve God with holy reverence and fear"—C. B.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS concluding chapter is chiefly occupied with special exhortations relating to Christian conduct; with these, however, are intermingled some important and characteristic references to the leading themes of the Epistle.

1. "**Brotherly love** is explained in the following verses"—WESLEY.

Let the love of the brethren continue (R.V.). (See Rom. 12. 10; 1 Thess. 4. 9; 1 Pet. 1. 22.) "The love as when you first believed, and when many of you sold your possessions to raise a fund for the widows who were cut off from the alms of the synagogue"—SUTCLIFFE. "Love is the fountain and foundation of all moral and religious duties which Christians owe to each other and to all men, and therefore it is here placed at the head of them all"—BENSON.

2. **Some**—"Abraham and Lot—**have entertained angels unawares**—so may an unknown guest, even now, be of more worth than he appears, and may have angels attending him, though unseen"—WESLEY.

Forget not to show love unto strangers (R.V.) "Hospitality to Christian brethren at a distance from their homes is specially intended (1 Pet. 4. 9); this was one manifestation of the 'love of the brethren' (ver. 1). The prominence assigned to this duty in the exhortations of the Epistles of the New Testament was faithfully reflected in the practice of the early Church"—MOULTON. **To kindness to strangers.** "'The 'strangers' referred to are Christian brethren from other places. To these, whether pursuing the means of living or perhaps fleeing from hardships falling on them in their own homes, the Hebrews are to extend hospitality. This was a sacred duty. It was also a privilege, for such guests brought many times more than they received. **Angels unawares.** (Comp. Gen. chaps. 18. and 19.) The angels are the immediate ministers of God and His providence. Through such hospitality men sometimes brought themselves into currents of thought and life new to them, currents flowing directly from God Himself"—DAVIDSON.

3. **Remember**—"in your prayers, and by your help—**them that are in bonds, as being bound with them**—seeing ye are members one of another. **And them that suffer as being yourselves in the body**—and consequently liable to the same"—WESLEY.

"**As bound with them**, *i.e.* probably, 'as if bound with them'; have the same feeling for them as if ye shared their bonds. Or, the meaning may be that being all members of one body they did share their bonds, and the exhortation may be one to call this to remembrance and act in the spirit of this profound idea. (1 Cor. 12. 25.) **Also in the body**, *i.e.* as men still living on the earth in the body, and liable to the same sufferings as they endure"—DAVIDSON.

4. "**Marriage is honourable in**, or for **all** sorts of **men**, clergy as well as laity: though the Romanists teach otherwise. **And the bed undefiled**—consistent with the highest purity. **But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge**—though they frequently escape the sentence of men"—WESLEY.

Let marriage be had in honour among all (R.V.). "This affirmation of the apostle is intended to counteract the pernicious notion of some ascetics, who at this early period denounced marriage as incompatible with the pure spirit of Christianity"—SUTCLIFFE. The author desires to lift up marriage to its true place and give men true views of it as a fundamental relation in society and the law of God. From the connection, **in all** seems rather to mean "among all," than, in all respects. (Comp. 1 Thess. 4. 6.)

5. "**He**—God—**hath said**—to all believers, in saying it to Jacob, Joshua, and Solomon"—WESLEY.

Be ye free from the love of money (R.V.). **Your conversation**—*lit.* "manner" (of mind), *i.e.* turn or disposition. **For He hath said**, *i.e.*

God. The exact words quoted are not found in the Old Testament, but see Deut. 31. 6.

7. **Remember them**—"who are now with God, **considering the** happy **end of their conversation** on earth"—WESLEY.

And considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith (R.V.). **Imitate their faith**—"their Christian life and course (James 3. 13; 1 Pet. 1. 15), had been known by the Church; they, too, have obtained a good report 'by faith' (ch. 11. 2), and all who contemplate the blessed issue of such a life will be strengthened to imitate their faith"—MOULTON. "Though all your intercourse with them is for the present cut off, do not forget their instructions and examples"—BENSON.

8. "Men may die; but **Jesus Christ**, yea, and His gospel, **is the same** from everlasting to everlasting"—WESLEY.

Jesus Christ the same—"rather, 'Jesus Christ is yesterday and to-day the same; yea, also for ever.' Their earlier guides have passed away (ver. 7); their Lord and Saviour abides the same for ever. He who is the subject of all Christian teaching is the same, therefore (ver. 9) be not 'carried away by divers teachings.' Thus, this verse stands connected both with what precedes and with what follows. 'Yesterday' carries the thought back to the lifetime of the teachers now no more; what the Saviour was to them, that will He be to their survivors. The whole period since He 'sat down on the right hand of God' (ch. 10. 12, 13) is covered by this word. What He was 'yesterday and to-day' He will be for ever. (See ch. 1. 11, 12.)"—MOULTON. "From everlasting to everlasting; the same in His person and offices, in His love and power, in His truth and grace; the same object of faith; and the same in all respects, to all believers, in all ages"—BENSON.

9. **Be not carried about with various doctrines**—"which differ from that one faith in our one unchangeable Lord. **Strange**—to the ears and hearts of all that abide in Him. **For it is good**—it is both honourable before God, and pleasant and profitable—**that the heart be stablished with grace**—springing from faith in Christ—**not with meats**—Jewish ceremonies, which indeed can never stablish the heart"—WESLEY.

With grace not with meats—"better, 'by grace; not by meats.' Instead of being 'carried away by strange teachings' let your hearts be made firm and sure by grace. As the whole system of ceremonial observance is alluded to under the one term 'meats,' so the blessings of the faith are comprised under 'grace,' a word used throughout this Epistle with peculiar significance. (See especially chaps. 10. 29; 12. 15, 28.) One human system of teaching will but lead on to another; grace will keep the heart firm in its loyal love to Jesus Christ, who is ever 'the same' (ver. 8). **Which have not profited**—*lit.* 'in which they that walked were not profited.' To the English reader the mode of expression must appear peculiar; in the Greek, however, there is little or no incongruity, for the word which we render 'walk' is used most freely to denote a course or manner of life. Comp. Eph. 2. 10, 'unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Here the meaning is, that those who have made these external observances the rule of their life have failed of the profit which they sought. (Comp. ch. 7. 18, 19)"—MOULTON.

10. "On the former part of this verse, the fifteenth and sixteenth depend; on the latter, the intermediate verses. **We have an altar**—the cross of Christ—**whereof they have no right to eat**—to partake of the benefits which we receive therefrom. **Who serve the tabernacle**—who adhere to the Mosaic Law"—WESLEY.

"The altar is here put for the sacrifice on the altar; the Christian altar is the Christian sacrifice, which is Christ Jesus, with all the benefits of His passion and death. To these privileges they had no right who continued to offer the Levitical sacrifices, and to trust in them for remission of sins"—CLARKE.

11. "**For**—according to their own Law, the sin-offerings were wholly consumed, and no Jew ever ate thereof. But Christ was a sin-offering. Therefore they cannot feed upon Him, as we do, who are freed from the Mosaic Law"—WESLEY.

Are burnt without the camp. "Of the sin-offerings the priests could not, as in the case of other offerings, eat the entire flesh, or the breast and shoulder, or all except the fat. (Num. 6. 20; Lev. 6. 26. etc.) The word for 'burn' (*saraph*) means 'entirely to get rid of and is not the word used for burning upon the altar. The rule that these sin-offerings should be burned, not eaten, was stringent. (Lev. 6. 30; 16. 27)"—C. B.

12. **Wherefore Jesus also**—"exactly answering those typical sin-offerings—**suffered without the gate**—of Jerusalem, which answered to the old camp of Israel—**that He might sanctify**—reconcile and consecrate to God—**the people**—who believe in Him—**by His own blood**—not those shadowy sacrifices, which are now of no further use"—WESLEY.

"**That He might sanctify the people with His own blood**—*lit.* 'through' or 'by means of His own blood.' The thought is the same as that of Tit. 2. 14, 'Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people.' This sanctification or purifying consecration of His people by the blood of His own voluntary sacrifice, corresponds to the sprinkling of the atoning blood on the Propitiatory by the high priest. (For 'the people,' see ch. 2. 16)"—C. B.

13. **Let us then go forth without the camp**—"out of the Jewish dispensation—

bearing His reproach—all manner of shame, obloquy, and contempt for His sake"—WESLEY.

"The suffering **without the gate** was a symbol of His rejection by the Jews. All who would be His must share the reproach which came upon Him, who was cast out by His people and crucified (ch. 11. 26); they also must go forth 'without the camp,' forsaking the company of His foes. Each one must for himself make choice either of the synagogue or of the Church of Christ; between the two there can be no fellowship"—MOULTON.

14. **For we have here**—"on earth—**no continuing city**—all things here are but for a moment; and Jerusalem itself was just then on the point of being destroyed"—WESLEY.

"In this verse there seems to be a union of two thoughts—(1) We are free to go forth from the city so long held sacred, for our hopes are bound up with no abiding earthly sanctuary; (2) we may not shrink from the approach of Christ, because it will sever us from kindred and friends; for by the very profession of our faith we are 'strangers and sojourners' (ch. 11. 13), seeking after the heavenly Jerusalem (chaps. 11. 10; 12. 22). How impressive are these words when read in the light of the events then unlooked for, yet so near at hand, issuing in the destruction of both Temple and city. **We seek one to come**—rather, 'we seek after that (city) which is to come'"—MOULTON.

15. **The sacrifice**—"the altar is mentioned (ver. 10); now the sacrifices—(1) praise; (2) beneficence; with both of which **God is well pleased**"—WESLEY.

By Him—"better, 'through Him,' through His sacrifice, which has made atonement, we are hallowed (ver. 12), and fitted for our priestly service (1 Pet. 2. 5). **Let us offer the sacrifice**—rather, 'let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually unto God, that is, fruit of lips making confession to His name.' The sacrifice we may bring is that symbolised by the thank-offering of Lev. 7. 12, where the same word is used. (See Ps. 50. 14, 23.) 'We will render the fruit of our lips' is the Greek version of Hos. 14. 2; the Hebrew text (as we have it) differs in expression but not in meaning, 'We will render our lips as bullocks,' *i.e.* as sacrifices. (Comp. Ps. 119. 108; Isa. 57. 19.) The fruit is borne by lips which offer thankful acknowledgment to the name of God. (Ps. 113. 1)"—MOULTON.

16. **But to do good and to communicate forget not**—"a most important and influential principle, to be found in no mere system of ethics, is also contained in the revelation of a particular relation in which we all stand to God, and on which we must be judged at the last day. We are stewards, servants, to whom the great Master has committed His goods, to be used according to His directions. We have nothing, therefore, of our own; no right in property, except under the conditions on which it is committed to us; and we must give an account for our use of it according to the rule"—WATSON.

17. **Obey them that have the rule over you.** "The word implies also, that lead or guide you—namely, in truth and holiness. **And submit yourselves**—give up (not your conscience or judgment, but) your own will in all things purely indifferent. **For they watch over your souls**—with all zeal and diligence, they guard and caution you against all danger, —as **they that must give account**—to the great Shepherd, for every part of their behaviour toward you. How vigilant then ought every pastor to be! How careful of every soul committed to his charge! **That they may do this**—watch over you. **With joy and not with groans.** He is not a good shepherd who does not either rejoice over them, or groan for them. The groans of other creatures are heard; how much more shall these come up in the ears of God! Whoever answers this character of a Christian pastor, may undoubtedly demand this obedience"—WESLEY.

The present section of the chapter begins (ver. 7) and ends (ver. 17) with a reference to the rulers of the Church, **Remember your former leaders, and imitate their faith; obey them that lead you now.** In ver. 7 the apostle exhorts them to obey those who had been their leaders, and to imitate their faith; in this he exhorts them to obey the leaders they now had, and to submit to their authority in all matters of doctrine and discipline, on the ground that they **watched for** their souls, and should have to give an account of their conduct to God. By his exhortation to the members of the Church, in the first place he warns also the rulers of the same, although only indirectly and in the most delicate manner, of the responsibility resting on them.

20. **The everlasting covenant**—"the Christian covenant, which is not temporary, like the Jewish, but designed to remain for ever. By the application of that **blood** by which this covenant was established, may He make you, in every respect, inwardly and outwardly holy"—WESLEY.

"**The God of peace**—the phrase is frequent in S. Paul (1 Thess. 5. 23; 2 Thess. 3. 16; Rom. 15. 33; 16. 20; Phil 4. 9). **That brought again from the dead.** Among many allusions to the ascension and glorification of Christ this is the only direct allusion in the Epistle to His resurrection (but comp. chaps. 6. 2; 11. 35). **Through the blood of the everlasting covenant**—rather, 'by virtue of (*lit.* "in") the blood of an eternal covenant.' The expression finds its full explanation in ch. 9. 15–18. Others connect it with 'the great Shepherd. He became the great Shepherd by means of His blood. So in Acts 20. 28 we have 'to shepherd the Church of God, which He purchased for Himself by means of His own blood.'

A similar phrase occurs in Zech. 9. 11"—C. B.

21. **Make you perfect in every good work to do His will.** "The standard of our attainable Christian perfection, as to the affections, is a love of God so perfect as to 'rule the heart,' and exclude all rivalry, and a meekness so perfect as to cast out all sinful anger, and prevent its return; and that as to good works, the rule is, that we shall be so 'perfect in every good work' as to 'do the will of God' habitually, fully, and constantly"—WATSON.

22. **Suffer the word of exhortation**—"addressed to you in this letter, which, though longer than my usual letters, is yet contained **in few words**, considering the copiousness of the subject"—WESLEY.

"The apostle, having spoken at large, closes with a few short requests, enforcing charity, the purest bond of the Church, and the perfection of faith and hope"—SUTCLIFFE.

The apostle, in conclusion, begs his readers to bear with his **word of exhortation**, *i.e.* his letter, which he so names. **For . . . in few words.** Another reason, besides others, for bearing with it is its brevity. This is said comparatively, in consideration of the gravity of the circumstances, and the weight of the subjects handled. The letter, it is said (Moulton), might be read aloud in less than an hour.

23. **If he come**—"to me"—WESLEY.

"**Know ye**, etc. Others render 'ye know, but it is more probable that the author is communicating a piece of intelligence. **Set at liberty** probably refers to an imprisonment of Timothy, of which no other historical notice occurs. **Shortly**, *i.e.* apparently, before the author is compelled or finds it convenient to leave. In that case he would bring Timothy with him. The reference to Timothy indicates that the author was on a footing of friendship with Pauline circles."

24. "Salutation to the heads of the Hebrew community. Some have found in the word **all** an intimation that there were various classes of leaders, *e.g.* some Jewish and some Gentile; but such an inference seems too large to found on such a word. **They of Italy**—those belonging to Italy. Whether the apostle was **in** Italy and sent the salutation of the Italian brethren, or was in some locality where Italians were present, whose salutations he joined with his own, cannot be decided from the words. On the last supposition the probability would be that the letter was written *to* Italy"—DAVIDSON.

25. **Grace be with you all**—"S. Paul's usual benediction. God apply it to our hearts!"—WESLEY.

This brief closing benediction is also found in Titus 3. 15, and, with the omission of **all**, in Col. 4. 18; 1 Tim. 6. 21; 2 Tim. 4. 22.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

THE writer of this Epistle, according to the well-nigh unanimous opinion of ancient and modern commentators, was James the Less, known also as James the Just, who was the first Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, and who is generally identified with James, the Lord's brother. Whether he was the same person with James the son of Alphæus, whether "James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas" (Matt. 13. 55) were really only the cousins of the Lord Jesus, or in some truer and more natural sense His "brothers," and, on the latter supposition, whether they were the sons of Joseph by a former marriage, or the younger children of Mary, whom she bore to Joseph after she had brought forth her first-born Son, are questions which it is impossible to discuss fairly within the brief limits assigned to us, At all events, James the Less, or more properly speaking the Little, to whom this Epistle is ascribed, is one of the most interesting persons in the history of primitive Christianity, one of the three who may well appear to us, as they did to S. Paul, to have been "pillars" in the rising Church; and the allusions to him and to his great influence, both in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Pauline Epistles, must be familiar to every reader of the New Testament.

The Epistle is addressed to "the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion." It will be readily understood that the numerous Jewish communities scattered throughout all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean were known as the "Dispersion." That which is

peculiar is, that this Christian teacher does not address his readers as Christians, but simply as Jews, that he alludes slightly, if at all, to the most important Christian doctrines; and while, from the position of the writer, and from a few expressions in the Epistle, it may be inferred that it was intended for those who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, at the same time other expressions suggest that it cannot have been intended for them only. Perhaps the explanation would be found in the very peculiar position of S. James, and in the respect his character had gained among all classes of his countrymen. The Christians of Jerusalem continued to frequent the Temple services, and were "all zealous of the Law." The distinction between Jews and Christians was not fundamental; they all claimed to belong to the same Church; and in fact S. James and his friends considered themselves not worse Jews but better in having become Christians. And when S. James desired to write to his fellow-Christians a letter of admonition and encouragement and exhortation, especially in reference to the practical duties of life, he thought it best to address it to all classes of his countrymen, and to write in terms which all of them would understand.

The idea was formerly entertained that one object of the Epistle was to guard the Church against those Antinomian errors which had arisen through the misinterpretation of S. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. Modern criticism, however, appears to render it not improbable that S. James was the prior writer, and that the two Epistles, written to Churches in widely different conditions and surroundings, were entirely independent of each other.

In the continual allusions throughout the Epistle to the moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, the reader will be reminded that "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," was also "the Lord's brother."

"I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1.
II. The Exhortation—
1. To patience, enduring outward, conquering inward, temptations, ... ,, ,, 2–15.
2. Considering the goodness of God, to be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;
And those three are first proposed, then treated of at large, ... ,, ,, 16–21.
(*a*) Let Hearing be joined with Practice, . ,, ,, 22–27.
And Faith universally with Works, . ,, ii. 14–26.
(*b*) Let the speech be modest, . . . ,, iii. 1–11.
(*c*) Let Anger and all other Passions be restrained, ... ,, iv. 1–17.
3. To Patience again—
Confirmed by the Coming of the Judge, . . ,, v. 1–12.
Nourished by Prayer, ... ,, ,, 13–19.
III. The Conclusion, ... ,, ,, 19, 20."
—Wesley.

Abbreviations.—E. (*The Expositors' Bible*, S. James, Dr. Plummer), C. B. (*The Cambridge Bible*, S. James, Dr. Plumptre), M. H. (Matthew Henry), W. W. (*Greek Testament*, edited by Drs. Webster and Wilkinson), B. (Benson), C. (Clarke), H. (Howe), M'K. (Macknight).

CHAPTER I.

1. The Inscription.—**A servant of Jesus Christ**—"whose name the apostle mentions but once more in the whole Epistle. (Ch. 2. 1.) And not at all in his whole discourse (Acts 15. 14, etc.; or 21. 20–25). It might have seemed, if he mentioned him often, that he did it out of vanity, as being the brother of the Lord. **To the twelve tribes**—of Israel; that is, those of them that believe. **Which are scattered abroad**—in various countries. Ten

of the tribes were scattered ever since the reign of Hosea; and great part of the rest were now dispersed through the Roman empire: as was foretold. (Deut. 28. 25, etc.; 30. 4.) **Greeting**—that is, all blessings, temporal and eternal"—WESLEY.

To the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion (R.V.). "Josephus tells us that in his time one region could not contain the Jews, but that they dwelt in very large numbers in most of the flourishing cities of Asia and Europe. His statement is corroborated by S. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles. The Jews of the Dispersion, as they were called, must have been more numerous than even the Jews in Judea"—B. "I see no reason for restricting it (the Epistle) to Jewish believers only; it was sent to all whom it might concern, but particularly to those who had received the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ"—C. "The persons addressed were the Jews at a distance from Palestine, who had admitted into their Jewish creed a recognition of Jesus as the true Messiah. They were probably in very different stages of religious development. The best of them were perhaps, like Apollos, knowing only the baptism of John"—W. W. (Acts 2. 5; 8. 1; 12. 17; 15. 13; 26. 7; Gal. 1. 19; 2. 9; Jude 1; Titus 1. 1; Deut. 32. 26; John 7. 35; 1 Pet. 1. 1.)

Vers. 2-15. THE EXHORTATION TO PATIENCE.

—2. **My brethren, count it all joy**—"which is the highest degree of patience, and contains all the rest—**when ye fall into divers temptations**—that is, trials"—WESLEY.

"The word denotes trials by afflictions and persecutions. Our Lord declares those to be blessed, who are 'persecuted for righteousness' sake' (Matt. 5. 10), and exhorted such to 'rejoice and be exceeding glad' (ver. 12), sentiments which doubtless the Apostle James had in his eye"—B. "These trials may be referred to the public troubles and commotions which preceded the outbreak of the Jewish war; or it may be still better to refer them to the persecutions which instigated and which followed the martyrdom of S. Stephen, the effect of which extended as far as the missives of the Sanhedrim had influence"—W. W. (Matt. 5. 12; Acts 5. 41; Heb. 10. 34; 1 Pet. 4. 13, 16; 1. 6.)

3. **The trial** (R.V. "The proof"). **Worketh patience.** "S. Paul uses the same words in the same connection (Rom. 5. 3). There is quite as much reason to assert that S. Paul copied these and similar expressions from S. James as that S. James borrowed them from S. Paul. Neither apostle originated a new phraseology; both adopted terms already in use, but gave them a wider range of meaning"—W. W.

4. **Let patience have its perfect work**—"give it full scope, under whatever trials befall you. **That ye may be perfect and entire**—adorned with every Christian grace—**and wanting nothing**—which God requires in you"—WESLEY.

Perfect and entire. "I think the expressions are borrowed from the sacrifices under the Law. A victim was 'perfect' that was perfectly sound, having no disease; it was entire, if it had all its members, having nothing redundant, nothing deficient"—C.

5. **If any want.** "The connection between the first and following verses, both here and in the fourth chapter, will be easily discerned by him who reads them, while he is suffering wrongfully. He will then readily perceive why the apostle mentions all those various affections of the mind. **Wisdom**—to understand whence and why temptations come, and how they are to be improved. Patience is in every pious man already. Let him exercise this, and ask for wisdom. The sum of wisdom, both in the temptation of poverty and of riches, is described in the ninth and tenth verses. **Who giveth to all**—that ask aright—**and upbraideth not**—either with their past wickedness, or present unworthiness"—WESLEY.

"Wisdom, in the common acceptation of the word, denotes a sound practical judgment concerning things to be done or avoided; but here the expression seems to mean wisdom to know how to conduct ourselves under afflictions, or how to make a right use of them"—B. (1 Kings 3. 9, 11, 12; Prov. 2. 3; Matt. 7. 7; 21. 22; Mark 11. 24; Luke 11. 9; John 14. 13; 15. 7; 16. 23; Jer. 29. 12; 1 John 5. 14, 15.)

6. **But let him ask in faith**—"a firm confidence in God. S. James also both begins and ends with faith (ch. 5. 15); the hindrances of which he removes in the middle part of his Epistle. **He that doubteth** (R.V.) **is like a wave of the sea.** Yea, such are all who have not asked and obtained wisdom. **Driven with the wind**—from without—**and tossed**—from within, by his own unstableness"—WESLEY.

"To be sometimes lifted up by faith, and then thrown down again by distrust; to mount sometimes towards the heavens, with an intention to secure glory and honour and immortality, and then to sink again, in seeking the ease of the body, or the enjoyments of this world—this is very fitly and elegantly compared to a wave of the sea, that rises and falls, swells and sinks, just as the wind tosses it higher or lower, that way or this"—M. H. (Mark 16. 14; 1 Tim. 2. 8.)

7. **Let not that man think.** "Such unreasonable doubts and suspicions, as they wrong the Divine goodness, so they may prevent the communication of those favours which might otherwise be obtained"—B.

8. **A double-minded man**—"who has, as it were, two souls; whose heart is not simply given up to God—**is unstable**—being without the true wisdom; perpetually disagrees both

with himself and others. (Ch. 3. 16)"—WESLEY.

"The man of two souls, one for earth, and another for heaven; who wishes to secure both worlds; he will not give up earth, and he is loth to let heaven go"—C. "When our faith and spirits rise and fall with second causes, there will be great unsteadiness in all our conversation and actions. He that is unstable as water shall not excel"—M. H. (Ch. 4. 8.)

9. **Let the brother**—"S. James does not give this appellation to the rich—**of low degree**—poor and tempted—**rejoice**—the most effectual remedy against double-mindedness—**in that he is exalted**—to be a child of God, and an heir of glory"—WESLEY.

10. **But the rich, in that he is made low**—"is humbled by a deep sense of his true condition. **Because as the flower**—beautiful, but transient—**he shall pass away**—into eternity"—WESLEY.

"The poor destitute Christian may glory in the cross of Christ, and the blessed hope laid up for him in heaven; and the rich in his humiliation, in his being brought to the foot of the cross, to receive, as a poor sinner, redemption through the blood of the cross"—C. "It is taken for granted that the poor will rejoice; but the principal design is to show what is not so obvious, that the rich hath a truer cause and a greater reason to rejoice, because he was otherwise apt to please himself or be mocked with a shadow"—H. "The apostle advises the rich to glory when they lose the uncertain riches of this life, and are exposed to other sufferings, for the sake of truth and a good conscience"—B. (Job 14. 2; Ps. 37. 2; 90. 5, 6; 102. 11; 103. 15; Isa. 40. 6; 1 Cor. 7. 31; ch. 4. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 24; 1 John 2. 17.)

11. **For the sun arose and withered the grass.** "There is an unspeakable beauty and elegance, both in the comparison itself, and in the very manner of expressing it, intimating both the certainty and the suddenness of the event. **So shall the rich man fade away in his ways**—in the midst of his various pleasures and enjoyments"—WESLEY.

"In his goings, or journeyings, perhaps with special reference to the restlessness in trading which showed itself in the money-making Jews of Palestine"—C. B.

12. **Happy is the man that endureth temptation**—"trials of various kinds. **He shall receive the crown**—that fadeth not away—**which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him**—and his enduring proves his love. For it is love only that 'endureth all things'"—WESLEY.

"The mode of teaching by beatitudes reminds us at once of the Sermon on the Mount, with which the Epistle has many points of contact. Stress is laid on **enduring** as distinct from simply 'suffering.' The image of the **crown**, or wreath, of the conqueror for the reward of the righteous is common both to S. Peter who speaks of the 'crown of glory' (1 Pet. 5. 4), and to S. Paul who speaks of the 'crown of righteousness' (2 Tim. 4. 8). The **crown of life**, *i.e.* of eternal life, which *is* the crown, is, however, peculiar to S. James"—C. B. (Job 5. 17; Prov. 3. 11, 12; Heb. 12. 5; Rev. 3. 19; 1 Cor. 9. 25; 2 Tim. 4. 8; ch. 2. 5; 1 Pet. 5. 4; Rev. 2. 10; Matt. 10. 22; 19. 28, 29.)

13. **Let no man who is tempted**—"to sin—**say, I am tempted of God**—God thus **tempteth no man**"—WESLEY.

"The thought of trial coming from without, and forming part of man's spiritual education, leads to a deeper inquiry as to its nature, and so passes on to the wider notion of temptation, which includes the allurements of desire as well as the trials of adversity. In both cases men found refuge from the reproof of conscience in a kind of fatalism. God had placed them in such and such circumstances; therefore, He was the author of the sin to which those circumstances had led. **Cannot be tempted to evil.** The latent premiss of the reasoning seems to be, that no one tempts to evil, who has not been first himself tempted by it"—C. B.

14. **Every man is tempted when**—"in the beginning of the temptation—**he is drawn away**—drawn out of God, his strong refuge. **By his own desire.** We are therefore to look for the cause of every sin, *in*, not *out of*, ourselves. Even the injections of the devil cannot hurt us before we make them our own. And every one has desires arising from his own constitution, tempers, habits, and way of life. **And enticed**—in the progress of temptation, catching at the bait; so the original word signifies"—WESLEY.

"Both participles are primarily used of the way in which animals are taken, the first of capture by the hook or noose, as with fish or the crocodile, the second of beasts or birds which are attracted by food set for them as a bait. Both words had come to be used figuratively of sensual passion"—C. B.

15. **Then desire having conceived**—"by our own will joining therewith—**bringeth forth** actual **sin.** It does not follow that the desire itself is not sin. He that begets a man is himself a man. **And sin being perfected** (R.V. 'Full grown')—grown up to maturity, which it quickly does. **Bringeth forth death**—sin is born big with death"—WESLEY.

"S. James represents men's lust as a harlot, which entices their understanding and will into its impure embraces, and from that conjunction conceives sin. And sin, being brought forth and nourished, by frequent repetitions, in its turn begets death, which destroys the sinner. This is the true genealogy of sin and death"—M'K. "**Death**—the loss of the true life of the soul, which consists in its capacity

for knowing God. In looking at the allegory as a whole, we note (1) its agreement as to the relation of sin and death with the teaching of S. Paul (Rom. 5. 12); (2) its resemblance to like allegories in the literature of other nations, as in the well-known choice of Hercules, where pleasure appears with the garb and allurements of a harlot; (3) its expansion in the marvellous allegory of sin and death in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Book ii.)"—C. B. (Job 15. 35; Ps. 7. 14; Rom. 6. 21, 23.)

Vers. 16–27. GOD'S GOODNESS THE MOTIVE OF TRUE OBEDIENCE.—16. **Do not err.** "It is a grievous error to ascribe the evil and not the good which we receive to God"—WESLEY.

17. "No evil, but **every good gift**—whatever tends to holiness—**descendeth from the Father of lights.** The appellation of Father is here used with peculiar propriety. It follows, 'He begat us.' He is the Father of all light, material or spiritual, in the kingdom of grace and of glory. **With whom is no variableness**—no change in His understanding—**or shadow of turning**—in His will. He infallibly discerns all good and evil; and invariably loves one, and hates the other. There is, in both the Greek words, a metaphor taken from the stars, particularly proper where the 'Father of lights' is mentioned. Both are applicable to any celestial body, which has a daily vicissitude of day and night, and sometimes longer days, sometimes longer nights. In God is nothing of this kind. He is mere light. If there is any such vicissitude, it is in ourselves, not in Him"—WESLEY.

No variableness, neither shadow of turning (R.V. "No variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning"). The terms are scientific terms, describing the changes in the apparent position of the heavenly bodies, and the interception of the light of the sun itself. "With Him is nothing analogous to those optical delusions, those periodical obscurations, those vicissitudes of seasons which attend the annual and diurnal course of the sun. He sends forth His light without mixture of shade, His gifts without niggardliness"—W. W. "Will He give us holy desires at one time, and evil inclinations at another? No; He always gives us what is good, and nothing but good. It is blasphemous, therefore, as well as absurd, to suppose that God either tempts or constrains men to sin"—M'K. (John 3. 29; 1 Cor. 4. 7; Num. 23. 19; 1 Sam. 15. 29; Mal. 3. 6; Rom. 11. 29.)

18. **Of His own will**—"most loving, most free, most pure, just opposite to our evil desire (ver. 15). **Begat He us**—who believe—**by the word of truth**—the true word, emphatically so termed; the gospel. **That we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.** Christians are the chief and most excellent of His visible creatures; and sanctify the rest. Yet He says, **a kind of**—for Christ alone is absolutely 'the first-fruits'"—WESLEY.

"Notice (1) A true Christian is a creature begotten anew; he becomes as different a person from what he was before the renewing influences of Divine grace, as if he were formed over again, and born afresh. (2) The origin of this good work is here declared. It is of God's own will; not by our skill or power, but purely from the goodwill and grace of God. (3) The means whereby this is effected are pointed out. **The word of truth**—that is, the gospel, as S. Paul expresses it more plainly (1 Cor. 4. 15), 'I have begotten you in Jesus Christ through the gospel.' (4) The end and design of God's giving renewing grace is here laid down. **That we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures**—that we should be God's portion and treasure, and a more peculiar property to Him, as the first-fruits were; and that we should become holy to the Lord, as the first-fruits were consecrated to Him. Christ is the first-fruits of Christians, Christians are the first-fruits of creatures"—M. H. (John 1. 13; 3. 3; 1 Cor. 4. 15; 1 Pet. 1. 23; Eph. 1. 12; Jer. 2. 3; Rev. 14. 4.)

19. **Let every man be swift to hear.** "This is treated of from ver. 21 to the end of the next chapter. **Slow to speak**—which is treated of in the third chapter. **Slow to wrath**—neither murmuring at God, nor angry at his neighbour. This is treated of in the third and throughout the fourth and fifth chapters"—WESLEY.

Wherefore—"since you are regenerated, and that by the word of God, therefore—**let every man be swift to hear** that word, let him be willing and desirous to receive instruction from it. **Slow to speak**—to deliver his opinion in matters of faith, that he does not yet well understand. Persons half instructed frequently have a high opinion of their own knowledge in religious matters, are very fond of teaching others, and zealous to bring them over to their opinions. **Slow to wrath**—against those that differ from him. Intemperate religious zeal is often accompanied by a train of bad passions, and particularly with anger against those who differ from us in opinion. The Jews, even the Jewish Christians to whom this letter was chiefly written, were very faulty in this respect. The apostle, however, may be understood as cautioning his readers against easily yielding to provocation in any respect whatever, and especially when injuriously treated by their persecutors"—B. (Eccles. 5. 1; Prov. 10. 19; 17. 27; Eccles. 5. 2; Prov. 14. 47; 16. 32; Eccles. 7. 9.)

20. **The righteousness of God**—"here includes all duties prescribed by Him and pleasing to Him"—WESLEY.

The wrath of man—"even when it appears in the garb of religious zeal—**worketh not**—but on the contrary greatly obstructs—**the**

righteousness of God. Instead of promoting the cause of true religion in the world, it is a reproach to it, and a means of exciting the prejudices of mankind against it"—B.

21. **Therefore laying aside**—"as a dirty garment—**all the filthiness and superfluity of wickedness**—for however specious or necessary it may appear to worldly wisdom, all wickedness is both vile, hateful, and contemptible, and really superfluous. Every reasonable end may be effectually answered without any kind or degree of it. Lay this, every known sin aside, or all your hearing is vain. **With meekness**—constant evenness and serenity of mind. **Receive**—into your ears, your heart, your life—**the word**—of the gospel. **Ingrafted**—in believers, by regeneration (ver. 18); and by habit (Heb. 5. 14). **Which is able to save your souls**—the hope of salvation nourishes meekness"—WESLEY.

Overflowing of wickedness . . . the implanted word (R.V.). "We are taught, as Christians, to watch against and lay aside, not only those more gross and fleshly dispositions which may denominate a person filthy, but all the disorders of a corrupt and naughty heart, which would prejudice it against the word and ways of God"—M'K. "We note the agreement of S. James' teaching with the parable of the sower, where 'the seed is the word,' and the conditions of its fertility are found in the 'honest and good heart,' free from prejudice and bitterness. Moral discipline, the putting away of that which defiles, is the right preparation for the highest spiritual life"—C. B. **Able to save your souls.** "The apostle does not add, 'through faith which is in Christ Jesus,' as S. Paul (2 Tim. 3. 15); for the word here is the truth of the gospel, not the Old Testament Scriptures"—W. W. (Col. 3. 8; 1 Pet. 2. 1; Acts 13. 26; Rom. 1. 16; 1 Cor. 15. 2; Eph. 1. 13; Titus 2. 11; Heb. 2. 13; 1. Pet. 1. 9.)

22. **Doers of the word, and not hearers only.** There is an evident allusion to the close of the Sermon on the Mount, which appears to have been in the apostle's mind in writing the whole Epistle. (Matt. 7. 21; Luke 6. 46; 11. 48; Rom. 2. 13; 1 John 3. 7.)

23. **Beholding his face in a glass.** "How exactly does the Scripture glass show a man the face of his soul!"—WESLEY.

24. **He beheld himself, and went away**—"to other business—**and forgot**—but such forgetting does not excuse"—WESLEY.

In a mirror (R.V.). "The mirrors in use among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans were of polished metal, and presented a less perfect image than our modern mirrors. Here, however, stress is laid on the fact that the mirror does supply, in some degree, the self-knowledge which the man could not attain without it"—C. B. "As the looking-glass shows us the spots and defilements upon our faces, that they may be remedied and washed off, so the word of God shows us our sins, that we may repent of them and get them pardoned; and shows us what is amiss, that it may be amended. But in vain do we hear God's word, and look into the gospel glass, if we go away, and forget our spots, instead of washing them off"—M'K. (Luke 6. 47; ch. 2. 14.)

25. **But he that looketh diligently**—"not with a transient glance, but 'bending down,' fixing his eyes, and searching all to the bottom. **Into the perfect law**—of love, as established by faith. S. James here guards us against misunderstanding what S. Paul says concerning the 'yoke and bondage of the Law.' He who keeps the law of love is free (John 8. 31, etc.). He that does not, is not free, but a slave to sin, and a criminal before God (ch. 2. 10). **And continueth therein**—not like him who forgot it, and went away. **This man**—there is a peculiar force in the repetition of the words—**shall be happy**—not barely in hearing, but **doing** the will of God"—WESLEY.

The perfect law, the law of liberty (R.V.). "Called the perfect law, because of its superiority to the Law of Moses, which made no man perfect, either in respect of justification or sanctification (Heb. 7. 19), whereas the gospel is calculated to make men perfect in both respects. And it is the law of liberty, because those who receive it render a free, loving obedience, from an inward vital principle"—W. W. **Blessed in his deed.** "S. James returns to the form of a beatitude, and brings together the beginning and the end of the Sermon on the Mount"—C. B. (2 Cor. 3. 18; 2. 12; John 13. 17.)

26. **If anyone be ever so religious**—"exact in the outward offices of religion—**and bridleth not his tongue**—from backbiting, tale-bearing, evil-speaking, he **only deceiveth his own heart**, if he fancies he has any true religion at all"—WESLEY.

Thinketh himself to be religious (R.V.). Sins of the tongue were the prevailing sins of the age in which S. James wrote, as other parts of the Epistle fully show. (Ps. 34. 13; 39. 1; 1 Pet. 3. 10.)

27. "The only true **religion** in the sight of God **is this, to visit**—with counsel, comfort, and relief—**the fatherless and widows**—those who need it most—**in their affliction**—in their most helpless and hopeless state. **And to keep himself unspotted from the world**—from the maxims, customs, and tempers of it. But this cannot be done till we have given our hearts to God, and love our neighbour as ourselves"—WESLEY.

"In the epithets **pure and undefiled**, Archbishop Tillotson thinks there is an allusion to the excellence of a precious stone, which consists much in its being clear and without a flaw or cloud. Perhaps, however, the terms are chosen with reference to the Pharisees' scrupulous care to avoid ceremonial defilement. S.

James reproduces our Lord's teaching, that real defilement comes from within, and that true purity is found in 'giving alms of such things as we have'"—C. B. "What is this religion? It consists not in speculations and notions, however just and orthodox; not in forms or modes of worship, however scriptural and necessary to be observed; not in the warmth of affection, or ardour of zeal, during worship. But in consequence of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, of justification by faith, and regeneration by the influence of the Divine Spirit, it consists in the possession and exercise of that love to God and all mankind, which is the source of the various branches of practical religion, of mercy as well as justice towards men, and of holiness towards God"—B. (Isa. 1. 16, 17; 58. 6, 7; Matt. 25. 36; Rom. 12. 2; ch. 4. 4; 1 John 5. 18.)

CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1–13. RESPECT OF PERSONS.—1. **My brethren**—"the equality of Christians, intimated by this name, is the ground of admonition—**hold not the faith of our** common **Lord, the Lord of glory**—of which glory all who believe in Him partake—**with respect of persons**—that is, honour none merely for being rich; despise none merely for being poor"—WESLEY.

"The name of **our Lord Jesus Christ** is used obviously with a special force. He had shown Himself, through His whole life on earth, to be no respecter of persons (Matt. 22. 16), to have preferred the poor to the rich. The motive of the addition is clear. In believing in Him who was emphatically a sharer in the eternal glory (John 17. 5), who had now returned to that glory, men ought to feel the infinite littleness of the accidents of wealth and rank that separate man from man"—C. B. (1 Cor. 2. 8; Lev. 19. 5; Deut. 1. 17; 16. 19; Prov. 24. 23; 28. 21; Matt. 22. 16; ver. 9; Jude 16.)

2. **With gold rings**—"which were not then so common as now"—WESLEY.

Lit. **a gold-ringed man.** The wearing of rings was carried by the ancients and by Orientals to an excess and pitch of ostentation which are now unknown. Martial tells of a man who wore six rings on every finger, day and night, and even in the bath.

3. **Ye look upon him**—"with respect"—WESLEY.

Stand thou here. "The Christian, probably the elder or the deacon, is supposed to point the poor man to his place at the other end of the synagogue, far from sight and hearing, giving him the alternative of a seat on the ground, just below what we should call the 'stall,' in which the rich man was invited to take his place, with a stool for his feet to rest on"—C. B.

4. **Ye distinguish not**—"to which the most respect is due, to the poor or to the rich. **But are become evil-reasoning judges.** You reason ill, and so judge wrong; for fine apparel is no proof of worth in him who wears it"—WESLEY.

Are ye not partial in yourselves? (R.V. "divided in your own mind"). The verb is the same as that translated "waver" in ch. 1. 6, and elsewhere, as in Matt. 21. 21, by "doubt." Nor is any other meaning necessary or admissible here. "When you acted in this way, did you not *doubt*, as others doubt, in your own hearts?" Faith in Christ's words as to the deceitfulness of riches, and the little honour due to them, would have kept men from such servility. They showed by their action that they were half-hearted, or, in S. James' sense of the word, "double-minded."

5. **Hearken**—"as if he had said, Stay, consider, ye that judge thus. Does not the presumption lie rather in favour of the poor man? **Hath not God chosen the poor**—that is, are not they whom God hath chosen, generally speaking, **poor in this world?** who yet are **rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom**—consequently, the most honourable of men; and those whom God so highly honours, ought not ye to honour likewise?"—WESLEY.

"It is scarcely possible to exclude a direct reference to the words of Christ, as in Luke 6. 20; 12. 31, 32; and so we get indirect proof of a current knowledge, at the early period at which S. James wrote, of teaching that was afterwards recorded in the written Gospels"—C. B. **To them that love Him.** Men are not to suppose that poverty itself is a sufficient title to the inheritance. There must be the faith that worketh by love. What S. James presses is, that poverty should be respected rather than wealth, as having been singled out by Christ for special blessings. (John 7. 48; 1 Cor. 1. 26, 28; Luke 12. 21; 1 Tim. 6. 18; Rev. 2. 9; Ex. 20. 6; 1 Sam. 2. 30; Prov. 8. 17; Matt. 5. 3; Luke 6. 20; 12. 32; 1 Cor. 2. 9; 2 Tim. 4. 8; ch. 1. 12.)

6. **Do not the rich** often **oppress you**—"by open violence; often **drag you**—under colour of law"—WESLEY.

7. **Do not they blaspheme that worthy name**—"of God and Christ. The apostle speaks chiefly of rich heathens; but are Christians, so-called, a whit behind them?"—WESLEY.

"You have little reason to show so much respect to them, if you consider what their carriage towards you has been. Are not most of the rich men your persecutors rather than your friends?"—B. **By which ye are called.** It would appear as if the name "Christians" had come into general use when this Epistle was written. (1 Cor. 11. 22; Acts 13. 50; 17. 6; 18. 12; ch. 5. 6.)

8. **If ye fulfil the royal law**—"the supreme law of the great King, which is love; and that to every man, poor as well as rich, **ye do well**"—WESLEY.

"The phrase, **royal law**, admits of three interpretations—(1) as the Greeks called a thing 'royal,' which was excellent in itself, it may mean an excellent law; (2) as the same Greeks called the laws of the kings of Persia 'royal laws,' the expression here may signify 'the law of Christ our King'; (3) this law, enjoining us to love our neighbour, may be called the royal law, because it inspires us with a greatness of mind fit for kings"—B. (Lev. 19. 18; Matt. 22. 39; Rom. 13. 8, 9; Gal. 5. 14; 6. 2.) Evangelical love is a *master principle*, containing in itself a law, well called the royal law, being one which comprehends all duties, and embraces all objects"—W. W.

9. **Being convicted**—"by that very law"—WESLEY.

10. **Whosoever keepeth the whole Law, except in one point, he is guilty of all**—"is as liable to condemnation as if he had offended in every point"—WESLEY.

"There is scarcely any form of speech more common among the Rabbins than this, for they consider that any one sin has the seeds of all others in it"—C. "The meaning is, that all the commandments being equally enjoined by God, the man who despises the authority of God, so far as to break any one of them habitually, would, in the like circumstances of temptation and opportunity, certainly break any other of them; consequently, in the eye of God, he is guilty of breaking the whole; that is, he hath *no real principle of piety* or virtue in him"—B. (Deut. 27. 26; Matt. 5. 19; Gal. 3. 10.)

11. "For it is the same authority which establishes every commandment"—WESLEY.

"Some of the Jewish doctors affirmed, that by observing any one precept of the Law with care, men secured to themselves the favour of God, notwithstanding they neglected all the rest. Wherefore they recommended it to their disciples to make choice of a particular precept, in the keeping of which they were to exercise themselves. This corrupt Jewish doctrine S. James here expressly condemns"—B. (Ex. 20. 13, 14.)

12. **So speak and act**—"in all things—**as they that shall be judged**—without respect of persons. **By the law of liberty**—the gospel; the law of universal love, which alone is perfect freedom. For their trangressions of this, both in word and deed, the wicked shall be condemned; and according to their works, done in obedience to this, the righteous will be rewarded"—WESLEY.

"The thoughts of the teacher dwell, as in other passages, on sins of speech as no less tests of character than sins of acts. In so doing he was echoing the words of a greater Teacher (Matt. 12. 37). **The law of liberty.** The recurrence of the phrase indicates a certain fondness for the thought. The phrase is peculiar to S. James, but the idea is found in John 8. 32"—C. B. (Ch. 1. 25.)

13. **Judgment without mercy shall be to him**—"in that day—**who hath showed no mercy**—to his poor brethren. But the mercy of God to believers, answering to that which they have shown will then **glory over judgment**"—WESLEY.

Judgment without mercy. "The sentiment is the same as our Lord's (Matt. 18. 31), and in the oft-quoted Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 7. 1, 2.) Everyone who remembers that he has to stand before the Divine tribunal will be convinced how much he needs the Divine mercy. **Mercy rejoiceth against judgment**—not only rejoices, but awaits the judgment with confidence"—W. W. (Job 22. 6; Prov. 21. 13; Matt. 6. 15; 18. 35; 25. 41, 42; 1 John 4. 17, 18.)

Vers. 14–26. TRUE FAITH ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED BY WORKS.—14. "From ch. 1. 22, the apostle has been enforcing Christian practice. He now applies to those who neglect this, under the pretence of faith. S. Paul had taught that 'a man is justified by faith without the works of the Law.' This some began already to wrest to their own destruction. Wherefore S. James, purposely repeating (vers. 21, 23, 25) the same phrases, testimonies, and examples which S. Paul had used (Rom. 4. 3; Heb. 11. 17, 31), refutes not the doctrine of S. Paul, but the error of those who abused it. There is, therefore, no contradiction between the apostles; they both delivered the truth of God, but in a different manner, as having to do with different kinds of men. On another occasion S. James himself pleaded the cause of faith (Acts 15. 13–21); and S. Paul himself strenuously pleads for works, particularly in his later Epistles. This verse is a summary of what follows. **What profiteth it?** is enlarged on (vers. 15–17); **though a man say** (vers. 18, 19); **can that faith save him?** (ver. 20). It is not, **though he have faith**; but, **though he say he have faith.** Here, therefore, true, living faith is meant; but in other parts of the argument the apostle speaks of a dead, imaginary faith. He does not, therefore, teach that true faith *can*, but that it *cannot*, subsist without works; nor does he oppose faith to works; but that empty name of faith, to real faith working by love. **Can that faith** 'which is without works' **save him?** No more than it can profit his neighbour"—WESLEY.

Mr. Wesley's Note takes it for granted that the Epistle before us was written subsequently to S. Paul's Epistles, and that it was intended to guard against the abuse of his doctrine. More recent commentators consider that S. James does not refer to S. Paul at all, and indeed that most probably his Epistle was written first. The fact that each writer speaks of the justification of Abraham is not regarded as proving anything. It would scarcely be possible for a Jewish writer to avoid such a reference. "The teaching of S. James was not meant to be antagonistic to that of S. Paul, or even to correct mistaken inferences from it, but was

altogether *independent, and probably prior in time,* moving in its own groove, and taking its own line of thought. He writes primarily to the Jews of the Dispersion. The faults which he reproves are pre-eminently the faults of the race. Men dwelling, as these Jews dwell, in the midst of a heathen population, were tempted to trust for their salvation to their descent from Abraham, and to their maintaining the unity of the Godhead against the polytheism and idolatry of the nations. They repeated their creed (known from its first Hebrew word as the *Shema*), 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,' at the morning and evening services in the synagogue. It was uttered by the dying, as the passport to the gates of Paradise. It was to this that they referred the words of Habakkuk, that the 'just shall live by faith' (Hab. 2. 4). S. James saw, as the Baptist had seen, how destructive all this was of the reality of the spiritual life"—C. B. "The persons addressed, in their Jewish state, relied for salvation on their descent from Abraham. In place of this they now substituted the mere acknowledgment of abstract truth, and historical matters of fact, regarding God and Christ"—W. W. **Can faith save him?** (R.V. "Can that faith save him?"). (Matt. 7. 26; ch. 1. 23.)

15. **If a brother or sister.** "We are taught that, as love is an operative principle, so is faith, or that neither of them is good for anything; and by trying how it looks for a person to pretend to be very charitable, who yet never does any work of charity, you may judge what sense there is in pretending to have faith without the proper and necessary fruits of it"—M. H. (Job 31. 19, 20; Luke 3. 11; 1 John 3. 18.)

17. "**So likewise** that **faith** which **hath not works is** a mere **dead,** empty notion; of no more profit to him that hath it than the bidding the naked be clothed is to him"—WESLEY.

Dead, being alone (R.V. "Dead in itself"). "The principle severed from the act is an unreality, a principle of life and action without life or action"—W. W.

18. **But one**—"who judges better—**will say**—to such a vain talker—**show me,** if thou canst, thy faith without thy works"—WESLEY.

The man that relied on faith is challenged to exhibit it, if he can, as a distinct entity, apart from works. It is assumed that no such exhibition is possible. (Ch. 3. 13.)

19. **Thou believest there is one God.** "I allow this; but this proves only that thou hast the same faith with the devils. Nay, they not only believe, but **tremble**—at the dreadful expectation of eternal torment. So far is that faith from either justifying or saving them that have it"—WESLEY.

It may be observed that S. James alludes to a Jewish rather than a Christian profession of faith, which strengthens the opinion that he does not refer to S. Paul's teaching. **Tremble** (R.V. "Shudder"). The devils spoken of are the "demons," or unclean spirits, of the Gospels and the Acts. The apostle refers to the acknowledgments so often made in his hearing by evil spirits. Here was an instance in which belief in a dogma, as distinguished from trust in a Person, brought with it no consciousness of peace or pardon. (Matt. 8. 29; Mark 1. 24; 5. 7; Luke 4. 34; Acts 16. 17; 19. 15.)

20. **But art thou willing to know?** "Indeed thou art not; thou wouldst fain be ignorant of it. **O empty man**—empty of all goodness—**that** the **faith** which is **without works is dead**—and so is not properly faith, as a dead carcase is not a man"—WESLEY.

Dead (R.V. "Barren"). "Art thou willing to be instructed in the nature of true saving faith? Then attend to the following examples:—

21. **Was not Abraham justified by works?** "S. Paul says he was justified by faith (Rom. 4. 2, etc.); yet S. James does not contradict him; for he does not speak of the same justification. S. Paul speaks of that which Abraham received many years before Isaac was born (Gen. 15. 6); S. James, of that which he did not receive till **he had offered up Isaac on the altar.** He was justified, therefore, in S. Paul's sense (that is, accounted righteous), by faith, antecedent to his works. He was justified in S. James' sense (that is, made righteous) by works, consequent to his faith. So that S. James' justification by works is the fruit of S. Paul's justification by faith"—WESLEY.

"Did not his works manifest the truth and liveliness of his faith, **when,** in consequence of the full persuasion he had of a Divine command to do it, **he offered Isaac his son upon the altar**—intending, in obedience to what he apprehended to be the will of God, actually to have slain him, and to have trusted in God to accomplish the promise of a numerous seed to descend from him, by raising him from the dead"—B. (Gen. 22. 9, 12; Heb. 1. 17-19.)

22. **Thou seest that faith**—"for by faith Abraham offered him. (Heb. 11. 17.) **Wrought together with his works**—therefore faith has one energy and operation; works, another; and the energy and operation of faith are before works, and 'together with' them. Works do not give life to faith, but faith begets works, and then is perfected by them. **And by works was faith made perfect.** Here S. James fixes the sense wherein he uses the word 'justified'; so that no shadow of contradiction remains between his assertion and S. Paul's. Abraham returned from that sacrifice perfected in faith, and far higher in the favour of God. Faith hath not its being from works (for it is before them), but its perfection. That vigour of faith which begets works is then excited and increased thereby, as the natural heat of the body begets motion, whereby itself is then excited and increased. (See 1 John 3. 22)"—WESLEY.

"Here is a proof that faith cannot exist

without being active in works of righteousness. His faith in God would have been of no avail to him, had it not been manifested by works; for **by works**, by his obedience to the command of God, **his faith was made perfect.** It dictated obedience, he obeyed, and thus faith *had its consummation.* Even true faith will soon die, if its possessor do not live in the spirit of obedience"—C. "It may be added, as pointing to the true reconciliation of S. Paul and S. James, that the very form of the statement implies that the faith existed prior to the works by which it was made perfect"—C. B.

23. **And the Scripture**—"which was afterwards written—**was** hereby eminently **fulfilled, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.** This was twice fulfilled,—when Abraham first believed, and when he offered up Isaac. S. Paul speaks of the former fulfilling; S. James, of the latter. **And he was called the friend of God**—both by his posterity (2 Chron. 20. 7), and by God Himself (Isa. 41. 8), so pleasing to God were the works he wrought in faith"—WESLEY.

Was fulfilled—"was true when Abraham first believed the promise as to his seed (Gen. 15. 6); but its truth was shown more fully when he offered up Isaac"—W. W. (Gen. 15. 6; Rom. 4. 3; Gal. 3. 6; 2 Chron. 20. 7; Isa. 41. 8.) **The friend of God.** "Abraham was so called in Jewish tradition; and to this day this is his name among his descendants, the Arabs, who much more commonly speak of him as 'the friend' (*El Khalil*), or 'the friend of God' (*El Khalil Allah*), than by the name Abraham. Nowhere in the Old Testament does he receive this name, although both our versions would lead us to suppose that he is so called. In 2 Chron. 20. 7, 'Abraham Thy friend' should be 'Abraham Thy beloved,' and in Isa. 41. 8, 'Abraham My friend' should be 'Abraham whom I loved'"—E.

24. **Ye see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.** "S. Paul, on the other hand, declares, 'A man is justified by faith,' and not by works (Rom. 3. 28). And yet there is no contradiction between the apostles—because (1) they do not speak of the same faith: S. Paul speaking of *living* faith; S. James here, of *dead* faith. (2) They do not speak of the same works: S. Paul speaking of works antecedent to faith; S. James, of works subsequent to it"—WESLEY.

"S. Paul assumes that faith will work by love, and be productive of good acts, while the works which he excludes from the office of justifying are 'works of the Law,' works which, whether ceremonial or moral, are done by constrained obedience to an external commandment, and are not the spontaneous outcome of love, and therefore of faith. It will be felt that S. James presents the more practical, S. Paul the deeper and more mystical aspect of the truth"—C. B.

25. "After Abraham, the father of the Jews, the apostle cites Rahab, a woman, and a sinner of the Gentiles; to show that in every nation and sex true faith produces works, and is perfected by them; that is, by the grace of God working in the believer, while he is showing his faith by his works"—WESLEY.

"In her case also faith led to action, and the action had its result in the salvation of the agent. If there had been faith without action, if she had merely believed the spies without doing anything in consequence of her belief, she would have perished. But the contrast between Abraham and Rahab is almost as marked as the similarity. He is the friend of God, and she is of a vile heathen nation, and a harlot. His is the crowning act of his spiritual development; hers is the first sign of a faith just beginning. But according to her light, which was that of a very faulty moral standard, she did what she could, and she was accepted. These contrasts have their place in the argument. The readers of the Epistle might say, Heroic acts are all very suitable for Abraham, but we are not Abrahams; we must be content with sharing his faith in the true God, we cannot imitate his acts. But, S. James replies, there is Rahab the heathen, Rahab the harlot; at least you can imitate her. And for the Jewish Christians of that day her example was very much in point. She welcomed and believed the messengers, whom her countrymen persecuted and would have slain. She separated herself from her unbelieving and hostile people, and went over to an unpopular and despised cause. She saved the preachers of an unwelcome message for the fulfilment of their Divine mission. Substitute the apostles for the spies, and all this is true of the believing Jews of that age. And as if to suggest this lesson, S. James speaks not of young men, as Josh. 6. 23, nor of spies (Heb. 11. 31), but of 'messengers'"—E. (Josh. 2. 1.)

26. **Faith without works is dead.** "(1) The best outward works, without faith, are dead; they want their root and vital principle. (2) The most plausible profession of faith without works is dead, as the root is dead when it does not vegetate, when it produces no fruit. Faith is the root, good works are the fruits, and we must see to it that we have both"—B.

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1–12. CAUTIONS AGAINST SINS OF SPEECH.—1. **Be not many teachers**—"let no more of you take this upon you than God thrusts out; seeing it is so hard not to offend in speaking much. **Knowing that we**—that all who thrust themselves into the office—**shall receive greater condemnation**—for more offences. S. James here, as in several of the following verses, by a common figure of speech, includes himself: **we shall receive—we offend—we put bits—we curse**—none of which, as common sense shows, are to be interpreted either of him or of the other apostles"—WESLEY.

Greater condemnation (R.V. "Heavier judgment"). The great desire which the Jewish Christians had to become teachers in the Church after their conversion, and to inculcate the Law of Moses, is noticed by S. Paul. (1 Tim. 1. 6.) **We shall receive greater condemnation**—"through taking upon us an office, in the exercise of which more is required of us, in many respects, than of others in a more private station of life"—B. (Matt. 23. 8, 14; Rom. 2. 20, 21; 1 Pet. 5. 3; Luke 6. 37.)

2. **We offend all** (R.V. "We all stumble"). "As in Scripture, 'walking' denotes the course of a man's conduct, 'stumbling,' in this passage, signifies those lesser failings in duty, to which common Christians are liable"—B. "Some have produced these words as an argument that no man can live without sinning against God. Were that doctrine as true as it is dangerous and false, it is foolish to ground it upon such a text; because S. James, as in the previous verse, includes himself in his address to his readers"—C. **The same is able to bridle the whole body**—"that is, the whole man. And doubtless some are able to do this, and so are in this sense perfect"—WESLEY.

A perfect man—"one who has attained the fulness of moral growth, as in 1 Cor. 14. 20; Heb. 5. 14 (the same word), denotes that of physical growth. Control of speech is mentioned, not as constituting perfection, but as a crucial test indicating whether the man has or has not attained to it"—C. B. (1 Kings 8. 46; 2 Chron. 6. 36; Prov. 20. 9; Eccles. 7. 20; 1 John 1. 8; Ps. 34. 13; ch. 1. 26; 1 Pet. 3. 10; Matt. 12. 37.)

3. **We**—"that is, men"—WESLEY.

If we put the horses' bridles into their mouths, that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also (R.V.). "A man who can govern his tongue can govern his whole nature, just as a bridle controls, not merely the horse's mouth, but his whole body"—E. (Ps. 32. 9.)

4. **Behold also the ships . . . the governor** (R.V. "the impulse of the steersman"). "The point is the same, viz. the smallness of the part to be controlled in order to have control over the whole"—E.

5. **Boasteth great things**—"hath great influence"—WESLEY.

"The smallness of the instrument is the link of association. The antithesis between diminutive size and mighty power suggests the notion of a spark of fire, the smallest of visible agents, yet productive of the most widely wasting and terrific effects"—W. W. "The argument now takes a somewhat different turn, and the necessity of curbing the tongue is shown, not only from its great power, but from its *inherent malignity*—if left unchecked it is certain to do incalculable mischief"—E. (Prov. 12. 18; 15. 2; Ps. 12. 3; 73. 8, 9.)

6. **A world of iniquity**—"containing an immense quantity of all manner of wickedness. **It defileth**—as fire by its smoke—**the whole body**—the whole man. **And setteth on fire the course of nature**—all the passions, every wheel of his soul"—WESLEY.

The wheel of nature (R.V.). "The tongue defiles us in three ways—by suggesting sin to ourselves and others; by committing sin, as in cases of lying and blasphemy; and by excusing or defending sin"—T. **The wheel of nature.** "The best interpretation seems to be that which sees in the phrase a figure of 'the whole life from birth,' the wheel which then begins to roll on its course, and continues rolling until death. What is meant, if we adopt this view, is that from the beginning of life to its close, the tongue is an ever-present, inflammatory element of evil"—C. B. "The conjectural interpretations are numerous, of which one must suffice. The tongue is a centre from which mischief radiates; that is the main thought. A wheel that has caught fire at the axle is at last wholly consumed, as the fire spreads through the spokes to the circumference. So also in society. Passions kindled by unscrupulous language spread through various channels and classes, till the whole cycle of human life is in flames"—E. **And it is set on fire of hell.** "S. James does not shrink from tracing sins of speech to their source. Bearing in our minds the wonder of the day of Pentecost, it is hardly too bold to say that we have to choose whether our tongue shall be purified by the fire of the Holy Ghost, or defiled by that of Gehenna. The latter word is that employed in the Gospels, as here, for 'Hell,' wherever that word means, not simply a place for the dead, which is expressed in the Greek by 'Hades,' the unseen world, but the place of torment. (Comp. Matt. 5. 22; Mark 9. 43)"—C. B. (Prov. 16. 27; Matt. 5. 11, 18–20; Mark 7. 15, 20, 23.)

7. **Every kind.** "The expression perhaps is not to be taken strictly. **Reptiles**—that is, creeping things"—WESLEY.

8. **But no man can tame the tongue**—"of another; no, nor his own, without peculiar help from God"—WESLEY.

An unruly evil (R.V. "A restless evil")—"an untamable, venomous beast. It can be checked, can be disciplined, but it can never be tamed, and must never be trusted"—E. But, as Mr. Wesley's Note suggests, "With God all things are possible." (Ps. 140. 3.)

9. **Men made after the likeness of God.** "Indeed we have now lost this likeness; yet there remains from thence an indelible nobleness, which we ought to reverence both in ourselves and others"—WESLEY.

Which are made—"not which were once made, but which were and are made after the likeness of God, as exercising dominion over this lower world, and as capable of being reconstituted in the moral qualities of the Creator"—W. W. (Gen. 1. 26; 5. 1; 9. 6.)

10. **Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.** "General as the words are, they pointed, we may believe, especially to the feeling of Jews towards Christians, or of the more bigoted section of Jewish Christians towards the Gentiles. Such men were loud in their benedictions of the Eternal, the Blessed One, yet they had not learned to reverence humanity as such, as made after the likeness of God. They cursed those who worshipped or believed after a different manner from their own. The annals of Christendom show that the necessity for the warning has not passed away"—C. B.

11, 12. "The illustrations of the fountain and the fig tree are among the touches which, if they do not indicate one who is familiar with Palestine, at any rate agree well with the fact that the writer of the Epistle was such. Springs tainted with salt or sulphur are not rare, and it is stated that most of those on the eastern slope of the hill-country of Judea are brackish. The fig tree, the vine, and the olive were abundant throughout the whole country"—E. "We ought to maintain a consistency in our words or discourses; and if we profess religion and devotion, we should speak at all times as persons who are endeavouring to employ our tongues to the noble purposes for which the use of speech was given"—B.

Vers. 13–18. False and True Wisdom.—13. "**Let him show** his wisdom as well as his faith **by his works**; not by words only"—Wesley.

Good conversation (R.V. "Good life"). **Meekness of wisdom.** "This beautiful expression insinuates that true wisdom is always accompanied with meekness, or the government of the passions"—B. "The Christian grace of meekness is a good deal more than the due regulation of one's angry feelings. It includes submissiveness towards God, as well as gentleness towards men; and it exhibits itself in a special way in giving and receiving instruction, and in administering and accepting rebuke. It was, therefore, just the grace which the many would-be teachers, with their loud professions of correct faith and superior knowledge, specially needed to acquire"—E. (Gal. 6. 4; ch. 2. 18; 1. 21.)

14. **If ye have bitter zeal**—"true Christian zeal is only the flame of love—even **in your hearts**—though it went no further. **Do not lie against the truth**—as if such zeal could consist with heavenly wisdom"—Wesley.

Bitter jealousy and faction in your heart. Glory not (R.V.). "The word expresses a relative, not an absolute, glorying, a *glorying over* some one, on the ground of superior privileges"—C. B. "If ye be under the influence of an unkind, fierce, and contemptuous spirit, even while attempting, or pretending, to defend true religion, do not boast either of your exertions or your success in silencing an adversary. You have no religion, and no true wisdom; and to profess either is to lie against the truth"—C. (Rom. 13. 13; 2. 17, 23.)

15. **This wisdom** — "which is consistent with such zeal—**is earthly**—not heavenly; not from the Father of lights. **Animal** — not spiritual; not from the Spirit of God. **Devilish** —not the gift of Christ, but such as Satan breathes into the soul"—Wesley.

Earthly—"having this life only in view. **Sensual** — animal, having for its object the gratification of the passions and animal propensities; **devilish** — demoniacal, inspired by demons, and maintained in the soul by their indwelling influence"—C. **Sensual.** "The psychology of the New Testament generally assumes the threefold division of body, soul, and spirit, the second element answering to the emotional, animal life, and the third being that which includes reason and will, the capacity for immortality and for knowing God. Hence the adjective used here, formed by the word signifying soul, expresses man's state as left to lower impulses without the control of the Spirit"—C. B. (Ch. 1. 17; Phil. 3. 19.)

16. **Confusion and every evil work.** "About this time the Jews, from their intemperate zeal for the Law of Moses, raised seditions in Judea and elsewhere, which were the occasion of many crimes and much bloodshed"—B. (1 Cor. 3. 3; Gal. 5. 20.)

17. **But the wisdom from above is first pure** — "from all that is earthly, natural, and devilish. **Then peaceable**—true peace attending purity, it is quiet, inoffensive. **Gentle**—soft, mild, yielding, not rigid. **Easy to be entreated** — to be persuaded or convinced; not stubborn, sour, or morose. **Full of good fruits**—both in the heart and in the life, two of which are immediately specified. **Without partiality** — loving all, without respect of persons; embracing all good things, rejecting all evil. **And without dissimulation**—frank, open"—Wesley.

"The sequence is that of thought, not of time"—C. B. "The purity of the heavenly wisdom does not consist merely in victory over temptations of the flesh, but in freedom from worldly and low motives. Its aim is that truth should become known and prevail, and it condescends to no ignoble acts in prosecuting this aim. Contradiction does not ruffle it, and hostility does not provoke it to retaliate, because its motives are thoroughly disinterested and pure. Thus its peaceable and placable qualities flow out of its purity. It is **first pure, then peaceable**"—E. **Without partiality** (R.V. "Without variance"). "The word is cognate with a word used by S. James (ch. 1. 6; 2. 4); of the various possible meanings we may prefer 'without doubtfulness'"—E. (1 Cor. 2. 6, 7; Rom. 12. 9; 1 Pet. 1. 22; 2. 1; 1 John 3. 18.)

18. "**And the** principle productive of this **righteousness is sown,** like good seed, **in** the

peace of a believer's mind, and brings forth a plentiful harvest of happiness (which is the proper 'fruit of righteousness') **for them that make peace**—that labour to promote this pure and holy peace among all men"—WESLEY.

For them that make peace (R.V.). "The meaning may be, they that endeavour to make peace among men (which is a fruit or work of righteousness) do thereby sow to themselves in peace; that is, they take that course which will produce to them happiness in the end"—B. "Let others reap the fruits of contentions, and all the advantages they can propose to themselves by them; but let us go on peaceably to sow the seeds of righteousness, and we may depend upon it our labour shall not be lost"—M. H. (Prov. 11. 18; Hosea 10. 12; Matt. 5. 9; Phil. 1. 11; Heb. 12. 11.)

CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1–10. THE CAUSE AND THE CURE OF STRIFE.—1. **From whence come wars and fightings**—"quarrels and jars **among you**, quite opposite to this peace. **it not from your pleasures**—your desires of earthly pleasures—**which war**—against your souls—**in your members**—here is the first seat of the war. Hence proceeds the war of man with man, king with king, nation with nation"—WESLEY.

"There are places in this Epistle in which S. James seems to go beyond the precise circle of readers addressed in the opening words, and to glance at the whole Jewish nation, whether outside Palestine or not, and whether Christian or not. In any case we see that the Jews who had entered the Christian Church had brought with them that contentious spirit which was one of their national characteristics"—E. "The crimes condemned in this and the following chapter were so atrocious, and of so public a nature, that we can hardly suppose them to have been committed by any who bore the name of Christians. Wherefore, as this letter was directed to 'the twelve tribes,' it is reasonable to think that the apostle, in writing these chapters, had the unbelieving Jews, not only in the provinces, but in Judea, chiefly in his eye"—B. (Rom. 7. 23; Gal. 5. 17; 1 Pet. 2. 11.)

2. **Ye kill**—"in your heart, for 'he that hateth his brother is a murderer.' **Ye fight and war**—that is, furiously strive and contend. **Ye ask not**—and no marvel; for a man full of evil desire, of envy and hatred, cannot pray"—WESLEY.

"He may speak of the actual murders, which the carnal Jews, called Zealots, committed of the heathens, and even of those of their own nation who were opposed to them"—B. **Ye have not because ye ask not.** "This shows, says Macknight, that some of their purposes, at least, were laudable, and might have been accomplished with the blessing of God. This will not apply to the Judaising teachers in the Church, or to those who coveted riches. The declaration applies only to such of the unconverted Jews as endeavoured to bring the heathens to the knowledge and worship of the true God. If for this they had asked the blessing of God sincerely, they might have been successful in their purpose"—B.

3. "But **if ye do ask, ye receive not, because ye ask amiss**—that is, from a wrong motive"—WESLEY.

"His meaning is, that they prayed for success in converting the heathen, not from any regard to the glory of God or the salvation of the heathen, but from a desire to draw money from them whom they converted, to spend upon their own lusts"—M'K. "S. James plainly implies that when one has temporal needs one *ought* to bring them before God in prayer, only with a right purpose, and in a right spirit. Asking amiss consists not in asking for temporal things, but in seeking them for a wrong purpose, viz. that they may be squandered in self-indulgence"—E. (Job 27. 9; 35. 12; Ps. 18. 41; Prov. 1. 28; Isa. 1. 15; Jer. 11. 11; Micah 3. 4; Zech. 7. 13; Ps. 66. 18; 1 John 3. 22; 5. 14.)

4. **Ye adulterers and adulteresses**—"who have broken your faith with God, your rightful spouse. **Know ye not that the friendship** or love **of the world**—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life, or courting the favour of worldly men, **is enmity against God? Whosoever desireth to be a friend of the world**—whosoever seeks either the happiness or favour of it, does thereby constitute himself **an enemy of God**; and can he expect to obtain anything of Him?"—WESLEY.

R.V., following the better MSS., gives **ye adulteresses** only. "The use of the feminine alone in this connection is at first startling, considering that the persons primarily intended are men. It finds its best interpretation in the thought that the soul's unfaithfulness to God is like that of a wife towards her husband. It is as though he said, 'Ye adulterous souls.' There is, perhaps, a touch of indignant scorn in the use of such a term"—C. B. **Maketh himself an enemy of God** (R.V.). "Whoever makes it his business to comply with and gratify worldly men, thereby constitutes himself an enemy of God"—B. Once more a distinct echo from the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 6. 24; Luke 16. 13.) "Here also, as in ch. 1. 8, stress is laid upon the fact that divided allegiance is impossible"—C. B. (Ps. 72. 27; 1 John 2. 15; John 15. 19; 17. 14; Gal. 1. 10.)

5. **Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain**—"without good ground. S. James seems to refer to many, not any one particular scripture. **The spirit** of love **that dwelleth in** all believers **lusteth against envy** (Gal. 5.

17); is directly opposite to all those unloving tempers which necessarily flow from the friendship of the world"—WESLEY.

Or think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which He made to dwell in us long unto envying? (R.V.). This and the following verse form a passage of known difficulty, the most difficult in this Epistle. The Greek will not bear the version "**against** envy"; and the reading adopted by R.V., "which He made to dwell in us," is almost certainly correct. Two expositions have been suggested: (1) Think ye that the Scripture speaks empty words? Does it mean nothing when it condemns spiritual adultery? (Lev. 20. 2-7; 2 Chron. 19. 2; Ps. 139. 21, 22; Ezek. 14. 1-8.) Does the Holy Spirit given to believers manifest His presence by those covetous, envious, rapacious desires after earthly enjoyments and possessions? On the other hand, God increases grace. (John 1. 16.) He is not willing you should go on to sin; He imparts grace to resist it, "wherefore He saith," etc. Or (2) Think ye that in vain the Scripture saith, Vehemently even to envy doth the Spirit desire us, yea, He increases to us grace according to our need, wherefore the Scripture saith, etc. This introduces us into the same figurative realm of thought in which the bold apostrophe, "ye adulteresses," placed us before. The apostle speaks of the eager and jealous love of God towards those whom He has united, as it were, in the bond of marriage with Himself. Of the two expositions the former apparently commended itself to the Revisers, as they show by rendering the second clause of the verse as an interrogation; the latter is preferred by Alford, as well as by C. B., E., W. W., and others. (Gen. 6. 5; 8. 21; Num. 11. 29; Prov. 21. 10.)

6. **But He giveth greater grace**—"to all who shun those tempers. **Therefore it**—the Scripture—**saith, God resisteth the proud**—and pride is the great root of all unkind affections"—WESLEY.

"God loves us with a love analogous to the strongest form of jealousy, but that jealousy does not lead Him to be grudging in His gifts; the point of the quotation which follows lies in the last clause, as containing the proof that God gives His grace freely to those who feel themselves unworthy of it"—C. B. (Job 22. 29; Ps. 138. 6; Prov. 3. 34; 29. 23; Matt. 23. 12; Luke 1. 52; 14. 11; 18. 14; 1 Pet. 5. 5.)

7. "Therefore, by humbly **submitting yourselves to God, resist the devil**, the father of pride and envy"—WESLEY.

"Submission to God is the beginning, middle, and end of the prodigal's return from disastrous familiarity with the world to the security of the Father's home. 'I am no more worthy to be called Thy son; make me as one of Thy hired servants.' As soon as the resolve to make this first act of submission is formed, the turning-point between friendship with the world and fidelity to God has been passed. Those who unflinchingly take that homeward path are sure of a welcome at the end of it. But the return must be complete. S. James enters an earnest protest against the weak plea that temptations are irresistible. Every Christian is endowed with sufficient power to withstand Satan, if only the will to withstand is present, because he has the power to summon God to his assistance. **Resist the devil and he will flee from you**—that is one side of the blessed truth; and the other is its correlative, **draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you**"—E. (Eph. 4. 27; 6. 11; 1 Pet. 5. 9.)

8. "Then **draw nigh to God** in prayer, **and He will draw nigh unto you**, will hear you; which that nothing may hinder, **cleanse your hands**—cease from doing evil—**and purify your hearts**—from all spiritual adultery. Be no more **double-minded**, vainly endeavouring to serve both God and mammon"—WESLEY.

"The nearness to God, to which the promise is annexed, is primarily that of true and earnest prayer, but it must not be forgotten that it includes also the approximation of character and life"—C. B. "The converse of this is true also, and it is a fact of equal solemnity and great awfulness. Resist GOD, and He will depart from you; draw nigh to the devil, and he will draw nigh to you"—E. (2 Chron. 15. 2; Isa. 1. 16; 1 Pet. 1. 22; 1 John 3. 3; ch. 1. 8.)

9. **Be afflicted**—"for your past unfaithfulness to God"—WESLEY.

Mourn and weep. "The words are an emphatic call to repentance, and to the blessedness which follows. Here, as so often in the Epistle, we trace the direct influence of the Sermon on the Mount"—C. B. (Matt. 5, 4.)

10. **Humble yourselves.** "Again we recognise our Lord's words as recorded in Matt. 23. 12; Luke 14. 12; 18. 14. We have also a striking parallel with S. Peter's language (1 Pet. 5. 6). There is, however, a difference. While the other passages speak mainly of humility in its relation to man, this dwells emphatically on its being manifested in relation to God"—C. B. (Job 22. 29.)

Vers. 11-17. FURTHER CAUTIONS AGAINST SINS OF SPEECH.—11. **Speak not evil one of another.** "This is a grand hindrance of peace. Oh, who is sufficiently aware of it! **He that speaketh evil of another** does in effect **speak evil of the Law**, which so strongly prohibits it. **Thou art not a doer of the Law, but a judge**—of it; thou settest thyself above, and as it were condemnest, it"—WESLEY.

"The Law condemns all evil-speaking and detraction. He who is guilty of these, and allows himself in these vices, in effect judges and condemns the Law, considers it unworthy to be kept, and that it is no sin to break it"—C.

(Eph. 4. 31 ; 1 Pet. 2. 1 ; Matt. 7. 1 ; Luke 6. 37 ; Rom. 2. 1 ; 1 Cor. 4. 5.)

12. **There is one Lawgiver that is able**—"to execute the sentence He denounces. **But who art thou**—a poor, weak, dying worm"—WESLEY.

One only is the Lawgiver and Judge, even He that is able, etc. (R.V.)—"who has power to execute His behests, whose might proves His right"—W. W. **Who art thou ?** "To be constantly speculating, to be frequently deciding, as to whether this man is 'awakened' or not, whether he is 'converted' or not, whether he is a 'Catholic' or not, whether he is a 'sound churchman' or not,—what is this but to climb up into the White Throne, and with human ignorance and prejudice anticipate the judgments of Divine omniscience and justice"—E. (Matt. 10. 28 ; Rom. 14. 4, 13.)

13. **Come now, ye that say** — "as peremptorily as if your life were in your own hands"—WESLEY.

"The warnings pass on to another form of the worldliness of the double-minded : the far-reaching plans for the future, such as our Lord condemned in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12. 16)"—C. B.

14. **What is your life ? It is even as a vapour.** Similar comparisons are found in all literature. (See Job 7. 7 ; Ps. 102. 3.) "It was not strange that those who thought only of this littleness should deem that their wisdom lay in making the most of that little, in and by itself, and take 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die' (1. Cor. 15. 32) as their law of life. S. James had been taught to connect man's life with a Will higher than his own, and so to take the measure of its greatness as well as its littleness"—C. B. (Prov. 27. 1 ; ch. 1. 10 ; 1 Pet. 1. 24 ; 1 John 2. 17.)

15. **Instead of your saying**—"that is, whereas ye ought to say"—WESLEY.

If the Lord will. Of course it is not meant that the words should be always used, but that the sentiment expressed in them should be always present. At the same time it is interesting to note that S. Paul uses the words in 1 Cor. 4. 19. (Acts 18. 21 ; 1 Cor. 16. 7 ; Heb. 6. 3.)

16. **Ye rejoice in your boastings.** The carnal self-confidence with which people serenely announce their purposes in the distant future is another indication of worldliness, and is, therefore, morally evil. (1 Cor. 5. 6.)

17. **Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not**—"that knows what is right and does not practise it—**to him it is sin**—his knowledge does not prevent, but increase, his condemnation"—WESLEY.

"In the Annual Covenant Service of the Methodist Church I engage, by the Divine help, (1) 'Not to allow myself in any known sin,' (2) 'Not to allow myself in the neglect of anything that I know to be my duty.'" "Many persons imagine that an opportunity of doing good is a thing about which they have full right of choice. S. James teaches us that we are bound to make use of the opportunity"—E. (Luke 12. 47 ; John 9. 41 ; 15. 22 ; Rom. 1. 20, 21, 32 ; 2. 17, 18, 23.)

CHAPTER V.

Vers. 1–6. WARNINGS FOR THE RICH OPPRESSORS.—1. **Come now, ye rich.** "The apostle does not speak this so much for the sake of the rich themselves, as of the poor children of God, who were then groaning under their cruel oppression. **Weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you**—quickly and unexpectedly. This was written not long before the siege of Jerusalem ; during which, as well as after it, huge calamities came on the Jewish nation, not only in Judea, but through distant countries. And as these were an awful prelude of that wrath which was to fall upon them in the world to come, so this may likewise refer to the final vengeance which will then be executed on the impenitent"—WESLEY.

"The unbelieving Jews, being exceedingly addicted to sensual pleasure, and very covetous, were of course grievous oppressors of the poor. To alarm these wicked men, and if possible to bring them to repentance, S. James sets before them, in lively colours, the miseries which the Romans, the instruments of Divine vengeance, were about to bring upon the Jewish people. So that, being soon to lose their possessions and goods, it was not only criminal, but foolish, by injustice and oppression, to amass wealth, of which they were soon to be stripped"—B. The words are nearly the same as in ch. 4. 9, but there is in them less of the call to repentance, and more of the ring of prophetic denunciation. (Prov. 11. 28 ; Luke 6. 24 ; 1 Tim. 6. 9.)

2. "The riches of the ancients consisted much in large stores of corn, and of costly apparel"—WESLEY.

The union of the two chief forms of Eastern wealth, in this and the following verse, reminds us of the like combination in Matt. 6. 19, "Where moth and rust doth corrupt." Comp. S. Paul's, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." (Acts 20. 33 ; Job 13. 28 ; ch. 2. 2.)

3. **The canker of them**—"your perishing stores and moth eaten garments—**will be a testimony against you** — of your having buried those talents in the earth, instead of improving them according to your Lord's will. **And will eat your flesh as fire**—will occasion you as great torment as if fire were consuming your flesh. **Ye have laid up treasure in the last days**—when it is too late ; when you have no time to enjoy them"—WESLEY.

"This was punctually fulfilled in the destruction of that nation by their own seditions, and their wars with the Romans. For, amongst

the Sicarii and the Zealots, the ringleaders of their seditions, it was crime enough to be rich. Their insatiable avarice led them continually to search into the houses of the rich, and by false accusation to slay them as deserters, for the sake of their property. Afterwards, both their substance and their bodies were devoured by the flames which consumed the city and Temple, and if anything remained it became the spoil of the Roman soldiers"—B. **For the last days** (R.V.). "In the last days," as WESLEY. (Rom. 2. 5.)

4. **The hire of your labourers crieth.** "Those sins chiefly cry to God, concerning which human laws are silent. Such are luxury, unchastity, and various forms of injustice. 'The labourers' themselves also cry to God, who is just coming to avenge their cause. **Of Sabaoth**—of hosts, or armies"—WESLEY.

"The evil was one of old standing in Judea. The law condemned those who kept back the wages of the hired labourer for a single night. (Lev. 19. 13; see also Jer. 22. 13, and Mal. 3. 5.) The grasping avarice which characterised the latter days of Juadism showed itself in this form of oppression among others"—C. B. **Sabaoth.** S. James uses the Hebrew form of the title, as being familiar to the Jews. (Job 24. 10, 11; Deut. 24. 15.)

5. **Ye have cherished your hearts**—"have indulged yourselves to the uttermost—**as in a day of sacrifice**—which were solemn feast days among the Jews"—WESLEY.

"**In a day of slaughter,** omitting **as** (R.V.). It is possible that 'in a day of slaughter' here balances 'in the last days' just above"—E. (Job 21. 13; Amos 6. 1; Luke 16. 19, 25; 1 Tim. 5. 6.)

6. **Ye have killed the just.** "Many just men; in particular, that 'Just One' (Acts 3. 14). They afterwards killed S. James, surnamed the Just, the writer of this Epistle. **He doth not resist you**—and therefore you are secure. But the Lord cometh quickly"—WESLEY.

Mr. Wesley uses "secure" in its original meaning, "free from care." "Secure, insensible." **The just** (R.V. "The Righteous One"). The words have been very generally understood as referring to the death of Christ; and it is not impossible that such an allusion may have been in the mind of the writer. But he speaks in general terms, and describes the conduct of the rich and powerful Jews towards good, probably Christian, men. Such men do not resist, but submit patiently, knowing that in the end they will be more than conquerors. C. B. points out the change of tense, **He doth not**, intimating a general principle of conduct. (Ch. 2. 6.)

Vers. 7-20. COMFORT AND COUNSELS FOR THE FAITHFUL.—7. **Be patient, therefore, brethren.** He now addresses the pious, oppressed, and persecuted disciples of Christ; as if he had said, Since the Lord will soon come to punish them, and to relieve you, patiently bear the injuries which rich men offer you, and quietly wait till He come. **The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit**—"which will recompense his labour and patience—**till he receives the former rain**—immediately after sowing. **And the latter**—before the harvest"—WESLEY.

In Judea the rains usually came in a regular manner, the early rain about the beginning of November, after the seed was sown; and the latter in the middle, or towards the end of April, when the ears were filling. The employment of such an allusion shows that the writer was resident in Palestine. (Deut. 11. 14; Jer. 5. 24; Hosea 6. 3; Joel 2. 23; Zech. 10. 1.)

8. **Stablish your hearts**—"in faith and patience—**for the coming of the Lord**—to destroy Jerusalem—**is nigh**—and so is His last coming to the eye of a believer"—WESLEY.

"S. James evidently shared the belief, which prevailed in the apostolic age, that Jesus Christ would very speedily return in glory to punish the wicked and reward the righteous"—E. "Here we note a hope that was not fulfilled as men expected its fulfilment, and yet was not frustrated"—C. B. (Phil. 4. 5; Heb. 10. 25, 37; 1 Pet. 4. 7.)

9. **Murmur not one against another**—"have patience also with each other—**the Judge standeth before the door**—hearing every word, marking every thought"—WESLEY.

One against another. "It is the common experience that men who are exasperated by trying persons or circumstances are liable to vent their vexation on those who are in no way responsible for what tries them. S. James says, 'Do not let the smart of your troubles betray you into impatience one towards another. He who is to judge your oppressors will judge you also, and He is close at hand'"—E. (Ch. 4. 11; Matt. 24. 33; 1 Cor. 4. 5.)

10. **Take the prophets for an example**—"once persecuted like you, even for **speaking in the name of the Lord.** The very men that gloried in having prophets yet could not bear their message; nor did either their holiness or their high commission screen them from suffering"—WESLEY.

By the prophets S. James, no doubt, means the prophets of the Old Testament—Elijah, Jeremiah, and others. Here again, and in the following verse, we have an echo of the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5. 12; Heb. 11. 35.)

11. **We count them happy that endured**—"that suffered patiently. The more they suffered, the greater is their present happiness. **Ye have seen the end of the Lord**—the end which the Lord gave him"—WESLEY.

The patience of Job—better, "endurance," as R.V. *margin*, to keep up the connection with the verb. Though the Book of Job is

quoted once (1 Cor. 3. 19), this is the only New Testament reference to the history. **That the Lord is very pitiful**—"that it is with the tenderness of an affectionate father that He corrects His children, 'not for His pleasure, but for our profit'"—B. (Ps. 94. 12; Matt. 5. 10, 11; 10. 22; Job 1. 21, 22; 2. 10; 42. 10; Num. 14. 18; Ps. 103. 8.)

12. **Swear not**—"however provoked. The Jews were notoriously guilty of common swearing, though not so much by God Himself as by some of His creatures. The apostle here particularly forbids these oaths, as well as all swearing in common conversation. It is very observable, how solemnly the apostle introduces this command—**above all things, swear not.** As if he had said, Whatever you forget, do not forget this. This abundantly demonstrates the horrible iniquity of the crime. But he does not forbid the taking a solemn oath before a magistrate. **Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay**—use no higher asseverations in common discourse; and let your word stand firm. Whatever ye say, take care to make it good"—WESLEY.

"The passage presents so close a parallel with Matt. 5. 33–37 that it is almost a necessary inference that S. James, if not a hearer of the Sermon on the Mount, had become acquainted with it as reported by others. That the condemnation does not extend to the solemn judicial use of oaths we see in the facts—(1) that our Lord answered when questioned as on oath by Caiaphas (Matt. 26. 63, 64), and (2) that S. Paul at times used modes of expression which are of the nature of an oath. (2 Cor. 1. 23; Rom. 1. 9; Gal. 1. 20; Phil. 1. 8)"—C. B.

13. **Is any among you afflicted?** "Let the expression of strongly excited feelings be an act of worship; then we shall have an outlet for them which is not likely to involve us in harmful results. This practice also secures a real connection between worship and life"—E. "It is characteristic of S. James that he contemplates the individual use of music as well as the congregational, as a help to the spiritual life. We are reminded of two memorable instances of this employment in the lives of George Herbert and Milton"—C. B. Among Methodist biographies, see *Memorials of W. M. Bunting* and *Memoir of John Fernley*. (Eph. 5. 19; Col. 3. 16.)

14. **Having anointed him with oil.** "This single conspicuous gift, which Christ committed to His apostles (Mark 6. 13), remained in the Church long after the other miraculous gifts were withdrawn. Indeed, it seems to have been designed to remain always; and S. James directs the elders, who were the most, if not the only, gifted men, to administer it. This was the whole process of physic in the Christian Church, till it was lost through unbelief. That novel invention among the Romanists, extreme unction, practised not for cure, but where life is despaired of, bears no manner of resemblance to this"—WESLEY.

"Anointing the sick with oil, in order to their recovery, was a constant practice among the Jews. And here I am satisfied that it has no other meaning than as a natural means of restoring health, and that S. James desires them to use natural means while looking to God for an especial blessing"—C. "The principle implied in the use of the oil was probably, in part, analogous to our Lord's employment of like *media* in the case of the blind and deaf. (Mark 7. 33; 8. 23; John 9. 6.) It served as a help to the faith of the person healed; perhaps also, in the case of the apostles, to that of the healer"—C. B. (Mark 6. 13; 16. 18.)

15. "**And the prayer** offered in **faith shall save the sick**—from his sickness; **and if** any sin be the occasion of his sickness, **it shall be forgiven him**"—WESLEY.

"That S. James makes the promise of recovery, without any restriction, may at first sight appear surprising; but he is only following the example of our Lord, who makes similar promises, and leaves it to the thought and experience of Christians to find out the limitations to them. He is applying to a particular case what Christ promised in general terms, 'All things, whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.' (Mark 11. 24.) The union of our will with the will of God is the very first condition of successful prayer. The apostles themselves had no indiscriminate power of healing. S. Paul did not heal Epaphroditus, much as he yearned for his recovery. (Phil. 2. 27.) He left Trophimus at Miletus sick. (2 Tim. 4. 20.) He did not cure his own thorn in the flesh. (2 Cor. 12. 7–9.) How then can we suppose that S. James credited the elders of every congregation with an unrestricted power of healing. He leaves it to the common sense and Christian submission of his readers to understand that the elders have no power to cancel the sentence of death passed upon the whole human race"—E. (Isa. 33. 24; Matt. 9. 2.)

16. **Confess your faults**—"whether ye are sick or in health—**to one another.** He does not say to the elders: this may, or may not, be done; for it is nowhere commanded. We may confess them to any who can pray in faith: he will then know how to pray for us, and be more stirred up so to do. **And pray one for another, that ye may be healed**—of all your spiritual diseases"—WESLEY.

"In details the precept is singularly wide. The confession is not to be made by the layman to the elder, more than by the elder to the layman. Whether it was to be public or private, spontaneous or carried on by questions, is left open. Examples such as those of Matt. 3. 6; Acts 19. 18, 19, suggest the thought of the public confession of individual sins, which was, indeed, the practice of the Church

of the third and fourth centuries"—C. B. Dr. Plumptre is misinformed when he adds, "A late revival of the custom (public confession of individual sins) is found in the 'class meetings' of the followers of John Wesley.' Such a practice was never known, either as a rule or an usage, in the Methodist Church. **The effectual fervent prayer** (R.V. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working"). "Macknight renders, 'the inward prayer'; Doddridge, 'the prayer wrought by the energy of the Spirit'; and Whitby, 'the inspired prayer,' observing, 'As they who were inwardly acted upon by an evil spirit were styled *energumeni*, persons inwardly wrought upon, so they that were acted upon by the Holy Spirit, and inwardly moved by His impulses, were also *energumeni*, in the good sense'"—B. "Great is the strength of a righteous man's supplication in its earnestness"—E. (Gen. 20. 17; Num. 11. 2; Deut. 9. 18-20; Josh. 10. 12; 1 Sam. 12. 18; 1 Kings 13. 6; 2 Kings 4. 33; 19. 15, 20; 20. 2, 4; Ps. 10. 17; 34. 15; 145. 18; Prov. 15. 29; 28. 9; John 9. 31; 1 John 3. 22.)

17. **Elijah was a man of like passions**—"naturally as weak and sinful as we are. **And he prayed**—when idolatry covered the land"—WESLEY. (Acts 14. 15; 1 Kings 17. 1; Luke 4. 25.)

18. **He prayed again**—"when idolatry was abolished"—WESLEY.

"This passage supplies us with biblical authority for prayers, for changes of weather, and the like. S. James guards against the objection that Elijah was a man gifted with miraculous powers, and therefore no guide for ordinary people, by asserting that he was a man of like nature with ourselves"—E. (1 Kings 18. 42, 45.)

19. "As if he had said, I have now warned you of those sins to which you are most liable; and in all these respects watch not only over yourselves, but everyone over his brother also. Labour, in particular, to recover those that are fallen. **If any one err from the truth**—practically by sin"—WESLEY.

"There is something fatally wrong about us if we have no strong desire to bring back sinners to God. The surest road to personal happiness is to devote oneself to promoting the happiness of others, and the best way to secure one's own salvation is to devote oneself to helping forward the salvation of others"—E. (Matt. 18. 15.)

20. **He shall save a soul**—"of how much more value than the body! (Ver. 14.) **And hide a multitude of sins**—which shall no more, how many soever they are, be remembered to his condemnation"—WESLEY.

"Namely, the sins of the person thus converted. The **covering of sin** is a phrase which often occurs in the Old Testament, and always signifies the pardon of sins. It cannot be the apostle's intention to tell us that the turning of a sinner from the error of his way will conceal from the eye of God's justice a multitude of sins committed by the person who does this charitable office, if he continueth in them. Such a person needs himself to be turned from the error of his way, that his own soul may be saved from death"—B. "The absence of any formal close to the Epistle is in many ways remarkable. A possible explanation is, that we have lost the conclusion. It is, however, more probable that the abruptness is that of emphasis. The writer had given utterance to a truth which he desired above all things to impress on the minds of his readers, and he could not do this more effectually than by making it the last word he wrote to them"—C. B. (Rom. 11. 14; 1 Cor. 9. 22; 1 Tim. 4. 16; Prov. 10. 12; 1 Pet. 4. 8.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

THE Apostle Peter, originally named Simon, was a native of Northern Palestine, and was employed, during the earlier portion of his life, as a fisherman upon the little Sea of Galilee. He was one of the first to accept the call of the Lord Jesus at the commencement of His public ministry, and for some reason, not very clearly indicated, he appears from the outset to have held the foremost place among the apostles. In force of character, and in enthusiastic attachment to his Master's person, he had no rival among his brethren. In the Gospel narratives it is to him that Jesus speaks as the representative of the rest, and on some very solemn occasions he addresses Jesus in their name. He was one of the three who were selected to attend the

Master when even the other apostles were excluded, at the raising of Jairus' daughter, at the Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane; and he is always mentioned first among the three.

From the Acts of the Apostles, and from the Epistles, it is clear that he retained for a time the ascendency among his brethren which he had enjoyed as a follower of Jesus. He had the honour of commencing the great task assigned to the apostles and to the witnessing Church. He preached the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the dispensation of the Spirit; he performed, in conjunction with S. John, the first Christian miracle, and was distinguished, with the same companion, as being the first to suffer imprisonment for Christ's sake. When the Gentiles began to receive the new faith, we learn from S. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians that S. Peter accepted the Gospel of the Circumcision as his peculiar charge, and that his ministry was addressed chiefly, though not exclusively, to the people of his own race. It must not be supposed, however, that such a ministry would be merely local, limited to the narrow bounds of Palestine. Then, as now, the Jewish race was widely scattered, and in every centre of commerce or civilisation large communities of them were to be found. S. Peter's First Epistle is dated from Babylon, beyond the eastern frontier of the empire; we read of him at Antioch and at Corinth, and a very ancient and uncontradicted tradition asserts that he suffered martyrdom at Rome. Probably S. Paul himself did not labour over a wider area.

It is perhaps owing to the lack of early culture, and of perfect mastery over the Greek language, which was then the common dialect of the civilised world, that we have so little from the pen of this distinguished leader of the primitive Church. The Gospel according to S. Mark is understood to have been written under his direction; and the tradition to that effect is corroborated by a fact to which the eloquent S. Chrysostom first drew attention, that S. Mark's Gospel brings out every defect and failing in S. Peter's character, while many noble acts and many marks of peculiar favour are either omitted, or stated with far less force than by any other Evangelist.

The Epistle before us, however, is evidently dictated, if not written, by the apostle himself. In purity of diction it may owe something to the influence of Silvanus, who was present when it was written, and who conveyed it to its destination. It was addressed to the Hebrew Christians of the churches of Asia Minor, which had been chiefly founded by S. Paul and his companions, among whom Silvanus, or Silas, had been conspicuous. Its objects were—(1) To comfort and strengthen them in a season of severe ial; (2) To enforce the practical and spiritual duties involved in their Christian profession; (3) To warn them against special temptations; (4) To remove all doubt as to the soundness and completeness of the religious system which they had already received. Such an attestation, on S. Peter's authority, was especially needed by the Hebrew Christians. The last, which is perhaps the principal object, is kept in view throughout the Epistle, and is distinctly stated. (Ch. 5. 12.)

The study of this Epistle, the genuineness of which is unquestioned, will lead the candid reader to the following conclusions:—(1) That S. Peter, at the time at which it was written, did not claim, or exercise, anything approaching primacy in the Christian Church; (2) That the idea of an antagonism between S. Peter and S. Paul, in which some historical critics have found the secret of the development of the Apostolic Church, is singularly at variance with facts.

"THE PARTS OF THIS EPISTLE ARE THREE—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1, 2.

II. The stirring up of those to whom he writes—

1. As born of God. Here he recites and interweaves alternately, both the benefits of God toward believers, and the duties of believers toward God, . . Chaps. i. 3—ii. 10.

2. As strangers in the world, abstain from fleshly desires, and show your faith by (*a*) a good conversation, (*b*) a good profession, ... ,, ii. 11—iv. 11.

3. As fellow-heirs of glory sustain adversity, . . Chaps. iv. 12—v. 11.
[The title *beloved* divides the second part from the first (ii. 11), and the third part from the second (iv. 12).]

III. The Conclusion, ... Chap. v. 12–14."
—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1, 2. THE SALUTATION.—1. **To the sojourners**—"upon earth, the Christians, chiefly those of Jewish extraction. **Scattered**—long ago driven out of their own land. Those scattered by the persecution, mentioned Acts 8. 1, were scattered only through Judea and Samaria, though afterwards some of them travelled to Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch. **Through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.** He names these five provinces in the order wherein they occurred to him, writing from the East. All these countries lie in the Lesser Asia. The Asia here distinguished from the other provinces is that which was usually called the proconsular Asia, being a Roman province"—WESLEY.

To the elect, who are sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, etc. (R.V.). The expression, **the dispersion,** was in general use to indicate the Jews who dwelt in foreign countries. Here it is evidently applied to the Hebrew Christians, to whom the Epistle is specially, though not exclusively, addressed. (John 7. 35; Acts 2. 5, 9, 10; Jas. 1. 1.)

2. **Elect**—"called out of the world, and from a state of ignorance and sin, guilt and depravity, weakness and wretchedness, by the Word, the Spirit, and the Providence of God; and in consequence of obeying that call, by turning to God in true repentance, living faith, and new obedience, **chosen,** or accepted of God. For all true believers, or genuine Christians, have continually the title of 'God's elect' in the New Testament"—B.

According to the foreknowledge of God—"speaking after the manner of men. Strictly speaking, there is no foreknowledge, no more than afterknowledge, with God; but all things are known to Him as present from eternity to eternity. This is, therefore, no other than an instance of the Divine condescension to our low capacities. **Elect**—by the free love and almighty power of God, taken out of, separated from, the world. Election, in the Scripture sense, is God's doing anything that our merit or power has no part in. The true predestination, or foreappointment of God is—(1) He that believeth shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin; (2) He that endureth to the end shall be saved eternally; (3) They who receive the precious gift of faith, thereby become the sons of God; and, being sons, they shall receive the Spirit of holiness to walk as Christ also walked. Throughout every part of this appointment of God, promise and duty go hand in hand. All is free gift; and yet such is the gift that the final issue depends on our future obedience to the heavenly call. But other predestination than this, either to life or death eternal, the Scripture knows not of. Moreover, it is—(1) Cruel respect of persons; an unjust regard of one, and an unjust disregard of another. It is mere creature partiality, and not infinite justice; (2) It is not plain Scripture doctrine, if true; but rather, inconsistent with the express written word, that speaks of God's universal offers of grace; His invitations, promises, threatenings, being all general; (3) We are bid to choose life, and reprehended for not doing it; (4) It is inconsistent with a state of probation in those that must be saved or must be lost; (5) It is of fatal consequence—all men being ready, on very slight grounds, to fancy themselves of the elect number. But the doctrine of predestination is entirely changed from what it formerly was. Now it implies neither faith, peace, nor purity. It is something that will do without them all. Faith is no longer, according to the modern predestinarian scheme, a Divine 'evidence of things not seen,' wrought in the soul by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost; not an evidence at all; but a mere notion. Neither is faith made any longer a means of holiness, but something that will do without it. Christ is no more a Saviour from sin, but a defence, a countenancer of it. He is no more a fountain of spiritual life in the soul of believers, but leaves His elect inwardly dry, and outwardly unfruitful, and is made little more than a refuge from the image of the heavenly; even from righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. **Through sanctification of the Spirit**—through the renewing and purifying influences of His Spirit on their souls—**unto obedience**—to engage and enable them to yield themselves up to all holy obedience, the foundation of all which is, the **sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**—the atoning blood of Christ, which was typified by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices under the Law; in allusion to which it is called 'the blood of sprinkling'"—WESLEY.

The painful controversy which gave rise to Mr. Wesley's long and able Note no longer disturbs the peace of the churches. It is evident that the words **elect according to foreknowledge** present no difficulty in themselves; but to reconcile the absolute foreknowledge of God with the absolute freedom and

responsibility of man is a problem perhaps insoluble to the human intellect. Both are true, according to the Scripture, and doubtless God can reconcile them, if we cannot. **Grace and peace.** "Solid peace cannot be enjoyed where there is no grace; first grace, then peace; peace without grace is mere stupidity; but grace may be true, where there is for a time no actual peace; as Heman was distracted with terror, and Christ was once in an agony"—M. H. (Eph. 1. 4; ch. 2. 9; Rom. 8. 29; 11. 2; 2 Thess. 2. 13; Heb. 10. 22; 12. 24; Rom. 1. 7; 2 Pet. 1. 2; Jude 2.)

Vers. 3–12. CONGRATULATION.—3. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** "His Father, with respect to His Divine nature; His God, with respect to His human. **Who hath regenerated us to a living hope**—a hope which implies true spiritual life, which revives the heart, and makes the soul lively and vigorous—**by the resurrection of Christ**—which is not only a pledge of ours, but a part of the purchase-price. It has also a close connection with our rising from spiritual death, that, as He liveth, so shall we live with Him. He was acknowledged to be the Christ, but usually called Jesus till His resurrection; then he was also called Christ"—WESLEY.

"They that are begotten to a new and spiritual life are begotten to a new and spiritual hope"—M. H. "It is noticeable that S. Peter, who elsewhere (ch. 3. 21) lays so much stress on baptism, does not here refer to it as the instrument of the new birth"—C. B. (2 Cor. 1. 3; Eph. 1. 3; Tit. 3. 5; John 3. 3-5; James 1. 18; 1 Cor. 15. 20; 1 Thess. 4. 14; ch. 3. 21.)

4. **To an inheritance**—"for if we are sons, then heirs—**incorruptible**—not like earthly treasures—**undefiled**—pure and holy, incapable of being itself defiled, or of being enjoyed by any polluted soul. **And that fadeth not away**—that never decays in its value, sweetness, or beauty, like all the enjoyments of this world, like the garlands of leaves or flowers, with which the ancient conquerors were wont to be crowned. **Reserved in heaven for you**—who 'by patient continuance in welldoing, seek for glory and honour and immortality'"—WESLEY.

The epithets distinguish this from any earthly inheritance, such as had been given to Israel (Acts 7. 5), and agree with the "everlasting inheritance" of Heb. 9. 15. (Ch. 5. 4; Col. 1. 5; 2 Tim. 4. 8.)

5. **Who are kept**—"the inheritance is reserved; the heirs are kept for it—**by the power of God**—which worketh all in all, which guards us against all our enemies—**through faith**—through which alone salvation is both received and retained—**ready to be revealed**—that revelation is made in the last day. It was more and more ready to be revealed, ever since Christ came"—WESLEY.

"In the word **kept** we have, as in 2 Cor. 11-32 in its literal, and Phil. 4. 7 in its figurative sense, the idea of being 'guarded,' as men are guarded in a camp or citadel"—C. B. "The preservation by God's power does not supersede man's care and endeavour for his own salvation; here is God's power, and man's faith, which implies an earnest desire of salvation, a reliance upon Christ, according to His invitations and promises, a vigilant care to do everything pleasing to God, and avoid whatever is offensive, an abhorrence of temptations, a respect to the recompense of reward, and persevering diligence in prayer; by such a patient, operating, conquering faith we are kept, under the assistance of Divine grace, unto salvation"—M. H. "The word **salvation** is used here in its highest sense, as including the full consummation of blessedness"—C. B. (John 10. 28, 29; 17. 11, 12-15; Jude 1.)

6. **Wherein**—"that is, in being so kept—**ye** even now **greatly rejoice, though now for a little while**—such is our whole life, compared to eternity. **If need be**—for it is not always needful. If God sees it to be the best means for your spiritual profit. **Ye are in heaviness**—or sorrow; but not in darkness; for they still retained both faith (ver. 5), hope, and love; yea, at this very time were rejoicing with joy unspeakable (ver. 8)"—WESLEY.

Greatly rejoice. "The two English words answer to one in the original, which expresses, as in Matt. 5. 12; Luke 1. 47; 10. 21, the act of an exulting joy. It may fairly be regarded as an echo of our Lord's teaching on the Mount"—C. B. **Manifold temptations.** "All kinds of adversities are temptations, or trials of faith, patience, and constancy; these seldom go single, but are manifold, and come from different quarters; the effect of all which is great heaviness"—M. H. (Matt. 5. 12; Rom. 12. 12; 2 Cor. 6. 10; ch. 4. 13; 2 Cor. 4. 17; ch. 5. 10; James 1. 2.)

7. **That the trial of your faith**—"that is, your faith which is tried—**which is much more precious than gold**—for gold, though it bear the fire, yet will perish with the world—**may be found**—though it doth not yet appear—**unto praise**—from God Himself—**and honour**—from men and angels—**and glory**—assigned by the great Judge"—WESLEY.

"The trial of faith is more precious than the trial of gold; in both there is a purification, a separation of the dross, and a discovery of the soundness and goodness of the things tried. Gold does not increase and multiply by trials in the fire; it rather grows less; but faith is established, improved, and multiplied by the opposition and afflictions that it meets with. Gold must perish at the last, but faith never will"—M. H. (James 1. 3-12; ch. 4. 12; Job 23. 10; Ps. 66. 10; Prov. 17. 3; Isa. 48. 10; Zech. 13. 9; 1 Cor. 3. 13; Rom. 2. 7-10; 1 Cor. 4. 5; 2 Thess. 1. 7-12.)

8. **Having not seen** — "in the flesh"—WESLEY.

S. Peter had seen, and believed; but now he commends the faith and love of those who had

never known Christ after the flesh. He seems to have in mind what the Lord said to Thomas, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." (1 John 4. 20; John 20. 29; 2 Cor. 5. 7; Heb. 11. 1-27.)

9. **Receiving**—"now already—**salvation**—from all sin into all holiness, which is the qualification for, the forerunner and pledge of, eternal salvation"—WESLEY.

The end of your faith, even the salvation. It is lawful for a man to make the salvation of his soul the end at which he aims; the glory of God, and the welfare of those around us are so connected with it, that if we earnestly seek the one object we shall certainly attain the others. (Rom. 6. 12.)

10. **Of which salvation**—"so far beyond all that was experienced under the Jewish dispensation. **The very prophets who prophesied** long ago **of the grace of God toward you**—of His abundant, overflowing grace to be bestowed on believers under the Christian dispensation. **Inquired**—were earnestly inquisitive—**and searched diligently**—like miners searching after precious ore, after the meaning of the prophecies which they delivered"—WESLEY. (Gen. 49. 10; Dan. 2. 44; Hagg. 2. 7; Zech. 6. 12; Matt. 13. 17; Luke 10. 24; 2 Pet. 1. 19-21.)

11. **Searching what time**—"what particular period—**and what manner of time**—by what marks to be distinguished—**the glories that were to follow**—His sufferings—namely, the glory of His resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and the effusion of His Spirit; the glory of the last judgment, and of His eternal kingdom; and also the glories of His grace in the hearts and lives of Christians"—WESLEY.

The Spirit of Christ—"the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of prophecy communicated to them by Christ. We learn that the inspiration of the Jewish prophets was derived from Christ"—B. **Searching.** "The prophets plainly saw that the grace which was to come under the Messiah's kingdom was vastly superior to anything that had ever been exhibited under the Law; and, in consequence, they made all possible inquiry, and searched as after grains of gold hidden in the sand, in order to ascertain the time, and the signs of the time, when this wondrous display of God's love and mercy to man would take place"—C. (Ch. 3. 19; 2 Pet. 1. 21; Ps. 22. 6; Isa. 53. 3, etc.; Dan. 9. 26; Luke 24. 25, 26, 44-46; John 12. 41; Acts 26. 22, 23.)

12. **To whom**—"so searching—**it was revealed, that not for themselves, but for us they ministered**—they did not so much by those predictions serve themselves, or that generation, as they did us, who now enjoy what they saw afar off. **With the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven**—confirmed by the inward, powerful testimony of the Holy Ghost, as well as the mighty effusion of His miraculous gifts. **Which things angels desire to look into**—a beautiful gradation; prophets, righteous men, kings, desired to see and hear what Christ did and taught. What the Holy Ghost taught concerning Christ the very angels long to know"—WESLEY.

There is a tacit contrast implied between the Old Testament privileges and those enjoyed under the Christian dispensation in the words **with the Holy Ghost**, etc. This is emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit. (Heb. 11. 13, 39, 40; Acts 2. 4; Ex. 25. 20; Dan. 8. 13; 12. 5, 6; Eph. 3. 10.)

Vers. 13-25. AN EXHORTATION.—13. **Wherefore**—"having such encouragement—**gird up the loins of your mind**—as persons in the eastern countries were wont, in travelling or running, to gird up their long garments, so gather ye up all your thoughts and affections, and keep your mind always disencumbered and prepared to run the race which is set before you. **Be watchful**—as servants that wait for their Lord—**and hope to the end**—maintain a full expectation of all **the grace**—the blessings flowing from the free favour of God. **Which shall be brought to you at the** final **revelation of Jesus Christ**—and which are now brought to you by the revelation of Christ in you"—WESLEY.

Be sober (A.V. and R.V.). **Hope to the end** (R.V. "Set your hope perfectly"). "Continue to expect all that God has promised; and especially that utmost salvation which you shall attain at the revelation of Jesus Christ, when He shall come to judge the world"—C. **Be sober**—"temperate and modest in eating, drinking, apparel, recreation, business, and in the whole of your behaviour; be sober-minded also in opinion as well as in practice, and humble in your judgment of yourselves"—M. H. (Luke 12. 35; Eph. 6. 14; Luke 21. 34; Rom. 13. 13; 1 Thess. 5. 6-8; ch. 4. 7; 5. 8; Luke 17. 30; 1 Cor. 1. 7; 2 Thess. 1. 7.)

14. **Your desires.** "Which ye had while ye were ignorant of God"—WESLEY. (Rom. 12. 2; ch. 4. 2; Acts 17. 30; 1 Thess. 4. 5.)

15. **In all manner of conversation** (R.V. "Of living"). "A noble rule, enforced by strong arguments. Complete holiness is the desire and duty of every Christian. Here is a twofold rule of holiness. It must, for the extent of it, be universal; in all manner of conversation, in all civil and religious affairs; in every condition, prosperous or adverse; towards all people, friends or enemies, in all our intercourse and business we must be holy. Secondly, for the pattern of it, we must be holy, as God is holy; we must imitate Him, though we cannot equal Him"—M. H. (Luke 1. 74, 75; 2 Cor. 7. 1; 1 Thess. 4. 3, 4-7; Heb. 12. 14; 2 Pet. 3. 11; Lev. 11. 44; 19. 2; 20. 7.)

17. **If ye call on Him as Father** (R.V.) **Who judgeth according to every man's work**—"according to the tenor of his life and conversation—**pass the time of your sojourning**—your short abode on earth—**in**

humble, loving **fear**—the proper companion and guard of hope"—WESLEY.

"The fear urged upon them is not the terror of slaves, but the reverential awe of sons, even that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom"—C. B. (Deut. 10. 17; Acts 10. 34; Rom. 2. 11; 2 Cor. 7. 1; Phil. 2. 12; Heb. 12. 28: 2 Cor. 5. 6; Heb. 11. 13; ch. 2. 11.)

18. **Your vain conversation**—"your foolish, sinful way of life"—WESLEY.

Received by tradition. "The Jews derived from their fathers that implicit regard for the traditions of the elders whereby they made the law of God of none effect. In like manner the Gentiles derived their idolatry and their abominable vices from the teaching and example of their fathers"—B. The design of Christ in shedding His blood was to redeem us, not only from eternal misery, but especially from the love and power of sin. Note also, that antiquity is no guarantee of correct opinions, and that we cannot safely argue that our conduct is morally right because it is sanctioned by custom and example. (1 Cor. 6. 20; 7. 23; Ezek. 20. 18; ch. 4. 3.)

19. **Without blemish**—"in Himself; **without spot**—from the world"—WESLEY. (Acts 20. 28; Eph. 1. 7; Heb. 9. 12–14; Rev. 5. 9; Ex. 12. 5; Isa. 53. 7; John 1. 29–36; 1 Cor. 5. 7.)

20. **Foreordained before the foundation of the world** (R.V. "Foreknown"). (Rom. 3. 25; 16. 25, 26; Eph. 3. 9, 11; Col. 1. 26; 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10; Tit. 1. 2, 3; Rev. 13. 8; Gal. 4. 4; Eph. 1. 10; Heb. 1. 2; 9. 26.)

21. **Who through Him believe**—"for all our faith and hope proceed from the power of His resurrection—**in God that raised** Jesus, **and gave Him glory**—at His ascension. Without Christ we should only dread God; whereas through Him we believe, hope, and love"—WESLEY.

That raised Him up from the dead—"thereby confirming His doctrine, showing the efficacy of His atonement, procuring for you the Holy Spirit, and assuring you of your resurrection"—B. **Who by Him believe in God.** "This indicates that S. Peter had Gentiles in his mind. They were brought to acknowledge the Father by the manifestation of the Son. To the Jews our Lord said, 'Ye believe in God; believe also in Me'"—W. W. (Acts 2. 24; Matt. 28. 18; Acts 2. 33; 3. 13; Eph. 1. 20; Phil. 2. 9; Heb. 2. 9; ch. 3. 22.)

22. "**Having purified your souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit**, who bestows upon you freely both obedience and purity of heart, and **unfeigned love of the brethren**, go on to still higher degrees of love. **Love one another fervently**—with the most strong and tender affection, and yet **with a pure heart**—pure from any spot of unholy desire or inordinate passion"—WESLEY.

"The word of God is the great instrument of a sinner's sanctification. The gospel is called the truth, in opposition to types and shadows, and to error and falsehood. This truth, if it be obeyed, is effectual to purify the soul. (John 17. 17.) And the souls of Christians must be purified before they can love one another unfeignedly. There is no charity but out of a pure heart"—M. H. (Acts 15. 9; Rom. 12. 9, 10; 1 Thess. 4. 9; 1 Tim. 1. 5; Heb. 13. 1; ch. 2. 17; 3. 8; 4. 8; 2 Pet. 1. 7; 1 John 3. 18; 4. 7, 21.)

23. **Born again**—"born of the Spirit, a consideration which lays you under obligation to love your brethren in Christ, who are born of the same Spirit"—B.

"**The word of God**—in the previous verse 'the truth'—**which liveth**—is full of Divine virtue—**and abideth** the same for ever"—WESLEY. (John 1. 13; 3. 5; James 1. 18; 1 John 3. 9.)

24. **All flesh**—"every human creature—**is** transient and withering **as grass—and all the glory of it**—his wisdom, strength, wealth, righteousness—**as the flower**—the most short-lived part of it. **The grass**—that is, man. **The flower**—that is, his glory. **Is fallen off**—as it were, while we are speaking"—WESLEY.

"The reader will recollect that this is a quotation from Isa. 40. 6–8, where the preaching of the gospel is foretold and recommended, from the consideration that everything that is merely human, and among the rest the noblest races of mankind, with all their glory and grandeur, their honour, riches, beauty, strength, and eloquence, all the arts which men have invented, and all the works they have executed, decay as the flowers of the field. But the incorruptible seed, the gospel, called by the prophet 'the word of the Lord,' shall be preached while the world stands; and the Divine nature, which it is the instrument of conveying to believers, will remain in them to all eternity"—B. (Ps. 103. 15; Isa. 40. 6; 51. 12; James 1. 10; Ps. 102. 12, 26; Isa. 40. 8; Luke 16. 17; John 1. 1, 14; 1 John 1. 1, 3.)

CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1–10. A NEW AND PURER LIFE.—1. **Wherefore laying aside**—"as inconsistent with that pure love—**all dissimulation**—which is the outward expression of guile in the heart" WESLEY. (Eph. 4. 22, 25, 31; Col. 3. 8; Heb. 12. 1; James 1. 21; 5. 9; ch. 4. 2.)

2. "**Desire**—always, as earnestly **as new-born babes** do (1 Pet. 1. 3)—**the milk of the word**—that word of God which nourishes the soul as milk does the body, and which is **sincere**, pure from all guile, so that none are deceived who cleave to it. **That you may grow thereby**—in faith, love, holiness, unto the full stature of Christ"—WESLEY.

Long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that you may grow thereby unto salvation (R.V.). The exhortation

refers to the fact that Christians are 'born again,' as described in the previous chapter. Entering the new life, they should lay aside the evil which belonged to the old, and long for the simple truth as it is in Jesus, to nourish and strengthen them." (Matt. 18. 3; Mark 10. 15; Rom. 6. 4; 1 Cor. 14. 20; ch. 1. 23; 1 Cor. 3. 2; Heb. 5. 12, 13.)

3. **Since ye have tasted**—"sweetly and experimentally known"—WESLEY.

"The apostle evidently alludes to Ps. 34. 8, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.' Not only think and believe, on his own testimony, or on the testimony of others, that He is good; but know it by your own experience, know that He is good to you in pardoning your sins, adopting and regenerating you by His grace, shedding his love abroad in your hearts, and giving you to enjoy communion with himself through the Eternal Spirit"—B. (Ps. 34. 8; Heb. 6. 5.)

4. **To whom coming**—"by faith—**as unto a living stone**—living from eternity; alive from the dead. There is a wonderful beauty and energy in these expressions, which describe Christ as a spiritual foundation, solid, firm, durable; and believers as a building erected upon it, in preference to that temple which the Jews accounted their highest glory. And S. Peter, speaking of Him thus, shows he did not judge himself, but Christ, to be the Rock on which the Church was built. **Rejected indeed by men**—even at this day, not only by Jews, Turks, heathens, infidels, but by all Christians, so called, who live in sin, or who hope to be saved by their own works. **But chosen of God**—from all eternity, to be the foundation of His Church—**and precious**—in Himself, in the sight of God, and in the eyes of all believers"—WESLEY.

The apostle alludes to Isa. 28. 16, where the formation of a Christian Church, for the spiritual worship of God, is foretold under the image of a temple, which God was to build upon the Messiah, as the foundation stone. **Disallowed** (R.V. "rejected")—first and primarily by the Jews and their rulers, as not answering their expectations, or suiting their way of building, that is, not to be made use of to promote their worldly projects and interests. By representing Christ as being rejected of men, the apostle intimates that He is the person spoken of in Ps. 118. 22, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner"; a passage which our Lord referred to in His conversation with the chief priests and elders as a prophecy concerning Himself. (Ps. 118. 22; Matt. 21. 42; Acts 4. 11.)

5. **Ye**—"believers—**as living stones**—alive to God through Him—**are built up**—in union with each other—**a spiritual house**—being spiritual yourselves, and an habitation of God through the Spirit—**an holy priesthood**, consecrated to God, and 'holy as He is holy.' **To offer up**—your souls and bodies, with all your thoughts, words, and actions, **as spiritual sacrifices to God**"—WESLEY.

"The apostle is commending the Christian Church and constitution to these dispersed Jews. It was natural for them to object that the Christian Church had no such glorious Temple, nor such a numerous priesthood, nor such costly services and sacrifices. To which the apostle answers, That the Christian Church is a much nobler fabric than the Jewish Temple; it is a living temple, consisting, not of dead materials, but of living parts; Christ, the foundation, is a living stone, and Christians also are living stones; and these make a spiritual house, and they are a holy priesthood; and though they have no bloody sacrifices to offer, yet they have much better and more acceptable; and they have an altar on which to present their offerings; for they offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"—M. H. (Eph. 2. 21, 22; Heb. 3. 6; Isa. 61. 6; 66. 21; ver. 9; Hosea 14. 2; Mal. 1. 11; Rom. 12. 1; Heb. 13. 15, 16; Phil. 4. 18; ch. 4. 11.)

6. **It is contained in the Scripture**—"namely, in Isa. 28. 16. As the quotation is not literally given, either from the Hebrew or the Greek, we may reasonably regard it as made from memory"—C. B.

He that believeth shall not be confounded—"in time or in eternity"—WESLEY.

"The meaning of the Hebrew is fairly expressed by the English version, **shall not make haste**, shall go on his way calmly, shall not be put to a hurried or hasty flight. Here S. Peter follows the LXX., which expresses substantially the same thought"—C. B. (Isa. 28. 16; Rom. 9. 33.)

7. **He is precious** (R.V. "There is the preciousness," *margin*, "the honour"). "The words stand in direct connection with 'shall not be confounded' in the previous verse, and are not a predicate asserting what Christ is, but declare that honour, not shame, is the portion of those who believe in Him"—C. B. **To them who believe He is become the head of the corner**—"the chief corner-stone, on which the whole building rests. Unbelievers, too, will at length find Him such to their sorrow. (Matt. 21. 44)"—WESLEY. (Ps. 118. 22; Matt. 21. 42; Acts 4. 11.)

8. **And a stone of stumbling.** The words are taken from Isa. 8. 13, 14, 15. "Thus also Simeon, 'This child is set for the fall as well as the rising again of many in Israel' (Luke 2. 34), a prediction awfully fulfilled"—B. The doctrine is that which meets us continually in Scripture, that the gospel of Christ must influence, for good or for evil, the character and the destiny of every man to whom it comes. **Who stumble: whereunto also they were appointed.** "They who believe not, 'stumble,' and fall, and perish for ever, God having appointed from all eternity, 'He that

believeth not shall be damned'"—WESLEY. (Isa. 8. 14; Luke 2. 34; Rom. 9. 33; 1 Cor. 1. 23; Ex. 9. 16; Rom. 9. 22; 1 Thess. 5. 9; Jude 4.)

9. **But ye**—"who believe in Christ **are**, in a higher sense than ever the Jews were—**a chosen or elect race, a royal priesthood**—'kings and priests unto God' (Rev. 1. 6). As princes, ye have power with God, and victory **over sin**, the world, and the devil; as priests, ye are consecrated to God, for offering spiritual sacrifices. Ye Christians are as one **holy nation**, under Christ your King. **A purchased people**—who are His peculiar property **—that ye may show forth**—by your whole behaviour, to all mankind—**the virtues**—the excellent glory, the mercy, wisdom, and power of **Him**, Christ, **who hath called you out of the darkness** of ignorance, error, sin, and misery"—WESLEY.

For **a peculiar people** (A.V.), or a "purchased people" (WESLEY), R.V. has "a people for *God's* own possession." "We have here 'a mosaic of Old Testament phrases,' all originally applied to the people of Israel, and now declared to apply equally to the Christian Church. The marginal references point out the passages which were in the writer's mind. They were called to this state of salvation **out of darkness**, idolatry, superstition, and ungodliness, **into His marvellous light**. And they had these privileges that they might show forth the praises of Him who had called them; literally the virtues, or, as R.V., 'the excellences,' the wisdom and truth and justice and goodness of God. These they were to show in a holy and useful life"—C. (Deut. 10. 15; ch. 1. 2; Ex. 19. 5, 6; Rev. 1. 6; ver. 10; John 17. 19; 1 Cor. 3. 17; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Deut. 4. 20; 7. 6; 14. 2; 26. 18, 19; Acts 20. 28; Eph. 1. 14; Tit. 2. 14; Acts 26. 18; Eph. 5. 8; Col. 1. 13; 1 Thess. 4. 5.)

10. **Who in time past were not a people**—"much less the people of God; but scattered individuals of many nations. The former part of the verse particularly respects the Gentiles, the latter the Jews"—WESLEY.

"This is a quotation from Hosea 2. 23, where the conversion of the Gentiles is foretold, as S. Paul informs us in Rom. 9. 25"—B. According to the connection in which the words stand in the prophecy, they evidently refer, in the first instance, to the restoration of the Jews to the Divine favour, after a period of apostasy and rejection. And it must not be forgotten that S. Peter wrote to the "sojourners of the Dispersion." Remark the freedom with which S. Peter, the apostle of the Circumcision, applies to all Christians, language formerly used to describe the privileges of Israel. He regards all believers, as S. Paul did, as Abraham's spiritual seed. (Hosea 1. 9, 10; 2. 23; Rom. 9. 25.)

Vers. 11-25. THE CONDUCT BECOMING PILGRIMS.—11. "Here begins the exhortation drawn from the second motive. **Sojourners: pilgrims.** The first word properly means, those who are in a strange house; the second, those who are in a strange country. You 'sojourn' in the body; you are 'pilgrims' in this world. **Abstain from desires** of anything in this house or in this country"—WESLEY.

"They are strangers and pilgrims, and should not impede their passage by giving in to the wickedness of the country through which they pass. **Which war against the soul.** Sin destroys the moral liberty of the soul; it debilitates it by impairing its faculties; it robs it of comfort and peace; debases and destroys its dignity; hinders its present prosperity, and plunges it into everlasting misery"—M. H. (1 Chron. 29. 15; Ps. 39. 12; 119. 19; Heb. 11. 13; ch. 1. 17; Rom. 13. 14; Gal. 5. 16; James 4. 1.)

12. **Honest**—"not barely unblamable, but virtuous in every respect. But our language sinks under the force, beauty, and copiousness of the original expressions. **That they by your good works which they shall behold**—see with their own eyes—**may glorify God**—by owning His grace in you, and following your example. **In the day of visitation**—the time when He shall give them fresh offers of His mercy"—WESLEY.

They speak against you as evildoers. "So in Acts 28. 22, 'a sect everywhere spoken against.' It is the common lot of Christians to be evil spoken of by wicked men; a clean, just, good conversation may not only stop their mouths, but may possibly be a means to bring them to God; they now call you evildoers; vindicate yourselves by good works, and this is the way to convince them"—M. H. (Rom. 12. 17; 2 Cor. 8. 21; Phil. 2. 15; Tit. 2. 8; ch. 3. 16; Matt. 5. 16; Luke 19. 44.)

13. **Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man**—"to every secular power. Instrumentally these are *ordained* by men; but originally all their power is from God"—WESLEY.

"**Every human institution.** S. Peter condemns the principles of the Zealots, who maintained that obedience was due to those magistrates only who were appointed by God, as the Jewish kings had been. **For the Lord's sake**—remembering His example, and jealous of the honour of His name. **To the King.** Though at Rome the name of kings was odious, the people in the provinces gave that name to the Emperor, the Greek language not supplying a word with the full significance of the Roman *Imperator*. When this Epistle was written, Nero was Emperor"—B. (Matt. 22. 21; Rom. 13. 1; Tit. 3. 1.)

14. "**Or to** subordinate **governors** or magistrates"—WESLEY.

Sent by Him. "Those who from time to time were the local representatives of the supreme authority. The identity of thought with Rom. 13. 3, 4, will be noticed as another

coincidence in the teaching of the two apostles. Both recognise that even an imperfect and corrupt government works, on the whole, for greater good than anarchy"—C. B.

15. **For so is the will of God.** This was to be the reply of the Christian to the charges continually brought against him, the unanswerable argument of a blameless life. "**The ignorance** of them who blame you, because they do not know you; a strong motive to pity them" —WESLEY. (Tit. 2. 8; ver. 12.)

16. **As free**—"yet obeying governors for God's sake"—WESLEY.

"**Free** in the noblest sense, in consequence of your relation to Christ, as sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and therefore heirs of God. Free from the dominion of sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, yet not from subjection to magistrates"—B. (Gal. 5. 1, 13; 1 Cor. 7. 22.)

17. **Honour all men**—"as being made in the image of God, bought by His Son, and designed for His kingdom. **Honour the king** —pay him all that regard both in affection and action which the laws of God and man require" —WESLEY.

Perhaps no finer example of the laconic style could be found anywhere than in this passage. Observe that the special love of the Christian to the brotherhood does not exclude the general duty of loving his neighbour, any more than the special duty of honouring the king interferes with the general duty of honouring all men. (Rom. 12. 10; Phil. 2. 3; Heb. 13. 1; ch. 1. 22; Prov. 24. 21; Matt. 22. 21; Rom. 13. 7.)

18. **Servants**—"*lit.* 'household servants.' **With all fear**—of offending them or God. **Not only to the good**—tender, kind—**and gentle**—mild, easily forgiving"—WESLEY.

"The fulness with which slaves are addressed here and in Eph. 6. 5–8; Col. 3. 22; 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2, indicates the large number of converts who belonged to that class. The word 'household servants' may have been chosen as including the wide class of *libertini* or freedmen and freedwomen, who, though no longer in the status of slavery, were still largely employed in the households of the upper classes. Nearly all the names in Rom. 16., and many of those of other members of the Church, are found in the *Columbaria* or *Catacombs* of Rome, as belonging to slaves or freedmen. **With all fear.** There was, in the then existing relations of society, a comparative nobleness in a service into which the fear of offending their master, as distinct from the mere dread of punishment, entered as a motive for obedience"—C. B. (Tit. 2. 9.)

19. "**This is thankworthy** (R.V. 'acceptable,' *lit.* 'grace.') **For conscience toward God**—from a pure desire of pleasing Him. **Grief**—severe treatment"—WESLEY.

Suffering wrongfully. "This was the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. The allowance of any exception to the rule makes it inoperative. Each party in a quarrel thinks himself at the moment in the right, and it is only by acting on the principle that the more he believes himself to be in the right the more it is his duty to submit patiently, that a man can free himself from endless recrimination and retaliation"—C. B. (Matt. 5. 10; Rom. 13. 5; ch. 3. 14.)

20. **Buffeted for your faults**—"the common practice of Roman life, as of all countries where slavery has prevailed"—C. B. (Ch. 3. 14; 4. 14, 15.)

21. **Hereunto are ye**—Christians—**called** —to suffer wrongfully. **Leaving you an example**—when He went to God. **That ye might follow His steps**—of innocence and patience"—WESLEY.

An example. The word literally means a pattern to be copied, in writing or drawing. Thus S. Peter paints the character of Christ, laying stress upon those points in which it would be a guide to these ill-used slaves. (Matt. 16. 24; Acts 14. 22; 1 Thess. 3. 3; 2 Tim. 3. 12; ch. 3. 13; John 13. 15; Phil. 2. 5; 1 John 2. 6.)

22, 23. **Who did no sin.** "This is an allusion to the words of Isaiah concerning the Messiah. (Ch. 53. 9.) 'Neither was any deceit in His mouth.' **He was reviled**—being called a Samaritan, a glutton, a wine-bibber, a blasphemer, a demoniac, one in league with Beelzebub, a perverter of the nation, and a deceiver of the people"—B. "In all these instances the example of Christ is peculiarly adapted to the state of servants, who easily slide into either **sin** or **guile**, **reviling** their fellow-servants, or **threatening** them, the natural result of anger without power. **He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously**, the only solid ground of patience in affliction" —WESLEY. (Isa. 53. 9; Luke 23. 41; John 8. 46; 2 Cor. 5. 21; Heb. 4. 15; Isa. 53. 7; Matt. 27. 39; John 8. 48, 49; Heb. 12. 3; Luke 23. 46.)

24. "Lest any should think from what is said in vers. 21, 22, 23, that Christ's death was designed only for an example of patience under sufferings, the apostle here adds a more glorious design and effect of it"—M. H. **Who Himself bore our sins**—"that is, the punishment due to them—**in His** afflicted, torn, dying **body on the tree**—the cross, whereon chiefly slaves or servants were wont to suffer. **That we being dead to sin**—wholly delivered both from the guilt and power of it; indeed, without an atonement first made for the guilt, we could never have been delivered from the power. **Might live to righteousness**—which is one only. The sins we had committed, and He bore, were manifold"—WESLEY.

Dead to sin. The resemblance to S. Paul's language (Rom. 6. 2, 11; Gal. 2. 19) can scarcely have been accidental. **By whose stripes.** We may well believe that the specific

term was chosen rather than any more general term, as bringing before the minds of the slave readers of the Epistle that feature in their Lord's sufferings in which they would recognise the closest parallel with their own. (Isa. 53. 4-6, 11; Matt. 8. 17; Heb. 9. 28; Rom. 7. 6; Isa. 53. 5.)

25. **As sheep going astray.** "The apostle has still in his mind the beautiful fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Ye were wandering out of the way of truth and duty, of safety, holiness, and happiness, into the by-paths of error and sin. **Returned**—through the influence of Divine grace"—B. **The bishop**—"the kind observer, inspector, or overseer—**of your souls**"—WESLEY. (Isa. 53. 6; Ezek. 34. 6; 34. 23; 37. 24; John 10. 11, 14, 16; Heb. 13. 20; ch. 5. 4.)

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1-7. DUTIES OF WIVES AND HUSBANDS. 1, 2. **Likewise**—"as I have exhorted servants to be in subjection to their masters, in like manner I say"—B. **Your own husbands.** "The word 'own' is intended to lay stress on the fact that their husbands, because they were such, had a right to expect a due measure of obedience in all things lawful"—C. B. **If any**—"he speaks tenderly"—WESLEY.

Even if any (R.V.), indicating that in many cases both husband and wife embraced Christianity at the same time. **Won**—"gained over to Christ"—WESLEY.

Conversation (R.V. "behaviour"). "**Joined with** a loving **fear** of displeasing them"—WESLEY.

"S. Peter wisely intimates to these Christian women, that the silent persuasion of a becoming behaviour would be more effectual in winning their unbelieving husbands, than many arguments, proposed perhaps with heat, for the purpose of convincing them"—B. (1 Cor. 14. 34; Eph. 5. 22; Col. 3. 18; Tit. 2. 5; 1 Cor. 7. 16; Matt. 18. 15; 1 Cor. 9. 19-22; ch. 2. 12.)

3. "Three things are here expressly forbidden—**curling the hair, wearing gold** (by way of ornament), and **putting on** gay and costly **apparel.** These, therefore, ought never to be allowed, much less defended, by Christians"—WESLEY. (1 Tim. 2. 9; Tit. 2. 3, etc.)

4. **The hidden man of the heart**—"complete inward holiness, which implies **a meek and quiet spirit.** A meek spirit gives no trouble willingly to any; a quiet spirit bears all wrongs without being troubled. **In the sight of God**—who looks at the heart. All superfluity of dress contributes more to pride and anger than is generally supposed. The apostle seems to have his eye to this by substituting meekness and quietness in the room of the ornaments he forbids. 'I do not *regard* these things,' is often said by those whose hearts are wrapped up in them; but offer to take them away, and you touch the very idol of their soul. Some, indeed, only dress elegantly that they may be looked on; that is, they squander away their Lord's talent to gain applause; thus making sin to beget sin, and then plead one in excuse of the other"—WESLEY.

In the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit (R.V.). Even gold and silver and gems are in their very nature perishable; not so that moral and spiritual adornment which is within the reach of all. "The question may be asked, Are the apostle's words prohibitive? Is it wrong for Christian women now to plait their hair, or to wear gold ornaments or pearls? The answer must be left mainly to the individual conscience. As some help to a decision, it may be noted—(1) that the language is not that of formal prohibition, but of a comparative estimate of the value of the two kinds of adornment; (2) that in regard to the third kind of ornamentation, seeing that some clothes must be worn, the words cannot have a merely prohibitory force; and (3) that in the possible, if not common case of the husband giving such ornaments and wishing his wife to wear them, the **meek and quiet spirit** would naturally show itself in compliance rather than in obstinate refusal. On the whole we may say, that while the words do not condemn the use of jewellery, or attention to the colour and form of dress, *within the limits of simplicity and economy*, they tend to minimise that form of personal adornment, and bid women trust not to them, but to moral qualities as elements of attraction"—C. B. **Meek and quiet.** "So far as we can distinguish, where it is almost impossible to separate, 'meekness,' the absence of self-assertion, may be thought of as the cause, and 'quietness' as the effect. In their union, the apostle, *speaking, we may hope, from his own experience*, rightly finds a charm compared with which gold and jewels are as nothing"—C. B. (Ps. 45. 13; Rom. 2. 29; 7. 22; 2 Cor. 4. 16.)

5. "The adorning of those **holy women who trusted in God**, and therefore did not act thus from servile fear, was—(1) their meek subjection to their husbands; (2) their quiet spirit, 'not afraid,' or amazed; and (3) their unblamable behaviour, 'doing' all things 'well'"—WESLEY.

6. **Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham.** (Gen. 12. 5; 18. 6.) By mentioning the reverence with which Sarah spoke of Abraham, the apostle intimates that she entertained the highest respect for him, and a just sense of her own subjection to him. **Whose children ye are now** (R.V. "In a spiritual as well as a natural sense, and entitled to the same inheritance, while ye discharge your conjugal duties not out of fear but for conscience sake"—WESLEY.

Are not afraid with any amazement (R.V. "Put in fear by any terror"). "While they were to submit to their husbands in all things lawful, they were not to be discouraged from any duty, or induced, through fear of displeas

ing their husbands, to do actions contrary to their religion"—B. (Gen. 18. 12.)

7. **Dwell with the woman according to knowledge**—"knowing they are weak, and therefore to be used with all tenderness. Yet do not despise them for this, but **give them honour**—both in heart, in word, and in action; **as** those who are called to be **joint-heirs of** that eternal **life** which ye and they hope to receive by the free **grace of** God. **That your prayers be not hindered**—on the one part or the other. All sin hinders prayer; particularly anger. Anything at which we are angry is never more apt to come into our mind than when we are at prayer; and those who do not forgive will find no forgiveness from God"—WESLEY.

"In the term **vessel** we have the thought that all, men and women alike, are instruments which God has made for His service. (2 Tim. 2. 20, 21)"—C. B. (1 Cor. 7. 3; Eph. 5. 25; Col. 3. 19; 1 Cor. 12. 23; 1 Thess. 4. 4; Job 42. 8; Matt. 5. 23, 24; 18. 19.)

Vers. 8–22, 4. 11. GENERAL EXHORTATIONS.

8. **Finally.** "This part of the Epistle reaches to ch. 4. 11. The apostle seems to have added the rest afterwards. **Sympathising**—rejoicing and sorrowing together. **Love** all believers **as brethren. Be pitiful**—toward the afflicted. **Be courteous**—to all men. Courtesy is such a behaviour toward equals and inferiors as shows respect mixed with love"—WESLEY.

"For **be courteous** the R.V. has 'humble-minded,' which is probably the correct reading. This forms the conclusion to a beautiful climax, and presents the root of the preceding qualities"—W. W. (Rom. 12. 16; 15. 5; Phil. 3. 16; Rom. 12. 10; Heb. 13. 1; ch. 2. 17; Col. 3. 12; Eph. 4. 32.)

9. **Not rendering**—alluding to Christ's precepts and example. **Ye were called.** The apostle glances at their original condition, at the Being into whose service they were admitted, at the high end and destiny reserved for them. These considerations would move them to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called. (Eph. 4. 1.) **Ye are called to inherit a blessing**—"therefore their railing cannot hurt you; and by 'blessing' them, you imitate God, who blesses you"—WESLEY. (Prov. 17. 13; 20. 22; Matt. 5. 39; Rom. 12. 14, 17; 1 Cor. 4. 12; 1 Thess. 5. 15; Matt. 25. 34.)

10. **For he that desireth to love life, and to see good days**—"that would make life amiable and desirable"—WESLEY.

Refrain his tongue from evil—"from railing, backbiting, talebearing, and all rash and provoking expressions. **Speak no guile**—nothing contrary to simplicity and sincerity. In this and the following verses, the apostle offers three arguments of great importance, to induce even men to the practice of piety and virtue—(1) it secures the happiness both of the present and of the future life; (2) it insures the favour and protection of God (ver. 12); (3) it disarms the malice of men (ver. 13)"—B. (Ps. 34. 12; James 1. 26; ch. 2. 1, 22; Rev. 14. 5.)

11. **Eschew evil** (R.V. "Turn away from evil"). "From evil dispositions, as well as evil words and actions"—B. **Let him seek**—"to live peaceably with all men—**and pursue it**—even when it seems to flee from him"—WESLEY. (Ps. 37. 27; Isa. 1. 16, 17; 3 John 11; Rom. 12. 18; 14. 19; Heb. 12. 14.)

12. "The eyes of **the Lord are over the righteous**—for good. Anger appears in the whole face; love, chiefly in the eyes"—WESLEY.

It will be observed that S. Peter commonly quotes from the Old Testament, without using any form of quotation, in a manner which suggests that he wrote to persons to whom it was perfectly familiar. In this respect the ancient Church was a pattern for us. (John 9. 31; James 5. 16.)

13. **Who is he that will harm you**—"none can"—WESLEY.

Followers of that which is good (R.V. "Zealous for"). As a word in frequent use among devout Jews, it would carry special weight. **Be zealous** not for the external and ceremonial part of religion, but for that which is morally and eternally **good.** (Prov. 16. 7; Rom. 8. 28.)

14. **But and if ye suffer.** "This is not a harm to you, but a good"—WESLEY.

The apostle quotes almost verbally from the Sermon on the Mount, then passes on immediately to repeat the exhortation which Isaiah gave to the Jews when threatened with an Assyrian invasion. **Fear ye not their fear.** "The very words of the LXX. (Isa. 8. 12, 13.) Let not that fear be in you which the wicked feel"—WESLEY. (Matt. 5. 10–12; ch. 2. 19; 4. 14; James 1. 12; Isa. 8. 12, 13; Jer. 1. 8; John 14. 1, 27.)

15. **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts**—"have a holy fear, and a full trust in His wise providence. **The hope**—of eternal life. **With meekness**—for anger would hurt your cause as well as your soul. **And fear**—a filial fear offending God, and a jealousy over yourselves, lest ye speak amiss"—WESLEY.

Sanctify Christ as Lord (R.V.). "The whole text in Isaiah was doubtless in the apostle's mind, 'Let Him be your fear,' etc. Sanctify Him by fearing Him more than men; by believing all His promises; by trusting in His wisdom, power, and goodness; by acknowledging His justice in the punishments He inflicts; and by patiently bearing all the trials He is pleased to appoint. By these dispositions, believers sanctify God in their hearts; they give Him the glory of all His perfections"—B. **Ready to give an answer**—"by a familiar acquaintance with the doctrines and with the evidences of your holy religion, and by that cheerfulness and presence of mind

which spring from a consciousness of your practical regard to it"—B. (Ps. 119. 46; Acts 4. 8; Col. 4. 6; 2 Tim. 2. 25.)

16. **Having a good conscience.** "So much the more beware of anger, to which the very consciousness of your innocence may betray you. Join with a good conscience meekness and fear, and you obtain a complete victory. **Your good conversation in Christ**—that is, which flows from faith in Him"—WESLEY.

They speak evil of you. At this time Christians were charged especially with doctrines and conduct subversive of the peace and order of society, with "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17. 6). (Heb. 13. 18; Tit. 2. 8; ch. 2. 12.)

17. "**It is** infinitely **better, if it be the will of God**, ye should suffer. His permissive will appears from His Providence"—WESLEY.

If the will of God should so will (R.V.). "Men naturally feel most aggrieved when they suffer wrongfully. But the apostle reminds us that if we suffer for well-doing, the testimony of a good conscience, and the sense of the Divine favour, will support us; while those who suffer for evil-doing, will not only be destitute of such support, but will endure all the torment which the guilty mind inflicts upon itself in self-reproach and in forebodings of the future. And further, in suffering for the truth, we have the comfort of reflecting that we follow our blessed Redeemer"—B.

18. **For**—"this is undoubtedly best, whereby we are most conformed to Christ. Now **Christ suffered once**—to suffer no more—**for sins**—not His own, but ours—**the just for the unjust**—the word signifies, not only them who have wronged their neighbours, but those who have transgressed any of the commands of God; as the preceding word, 'just,' denotes a person who has fulfilled, not barely social duties, but all kind of righteousness. **That He might bring us to God**—now to His gracious favour, hereafter to His blissful presence, by the same steps of suffering and of glory. **Being put to death in the flesh**—as man—**but raised to life by the Spirit**—both by His own Divine power, and by the power of the Holy Ghost"—WESLEY.

"In the sufferings of Christ we have a clear proof that sufferings are no evidence of the wickedness of the sufferer, or of the badness of his cause; and the power of God, visible in Christ's resurrection, affords to those who lose their lives for the gospel sure ground of hope that God will raise them also at the last day"—B. (Rom. 5. 6; Heb. 9. 26, 28; ch. 2. 21; 4. 1; Col. 1. 21, 22; Rom. 1. 4; 8. 11.)

19. **By which** Spirit **He preached**—"through the ministry of Noah—**to the spirits in prison**—the unholy men before the flood, who were then reserved by the justice of God, as in a prison, till He executed the sentence upon them all; and are now also reserved to the judgment of the great day"—WESLEY.

20. **When the long-suffering of God waited**—"for a hundred and twenty years; all the time **the ark was preparing**; during which **Noah** warned them all to flee from the wrath to come"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits **once**, and for **saved by water** has "saved through water," with a marginal reading, "brought safely through water." The interpretation of this difficult passage in Mr. Wesley's Note is that which has been adopted by commentators in general. "If we consider the purpose for which the fact is mentioned here, we shall see reason to conclude that those to whom Christ is said to have preached were the antediluvian sinners in the time of Noah. Clearly the object of the apostle is to show that Christ acted for the salvation of men in the administration of the Spirit in former and ancient times, even as He does now. A gospel of grace and righteousness, of faith and obedience, was preached to them as to us, by which the believing and obedient lived as now (ver. 21), but under which the unbelieving and disobedient perished (ch. 4. 6). The expression, **went and preached**, as applied to Christ preaching by Noah, may be compared with Eph. 2. 17, 'He came and preached peace,' which applies to His preaching by the apostles"—W. W. (Ch. 1. 12; 4. 6; Isa. 13. 7; 49. 9; 61. 1; Gen. 6. 3; 5. 13; Heb. 11. 7; Gen. 7. 7; 8. 18; 2 Pet. 2. 5.)

21. **The antitype whereof**—"the thing typified by the ark, even **baptism, now saveth us**—that is, through the water of baptism we are saved from the sin which overwhelms the world as a flood; **not**, indeed, the bare outward sign, but the inward grace; a Divine consciousness that both our persons and our actions are accepted through Him who died and rose again for us"—WESLEY.

Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not . . . but the interrogation (*margin*, "inquiry or appeal") **of a good conscience toward God** (R.V.). "The most natural interpretation of the expression is perhaps to be found, partly in the forensic use of the Greek word for 'question,' as including, like our word 'examination,' both question and answer, and partly in the fact that at a date so early that it is reasonable to infer an apostolic origin, the liturgical administration of (adult) baptism involved interrogatives and replies, in substance identical with those that have been in use in the Church at large, and are in use still. In this practice of interrogation we find that which explains S. Peter's meaning. Of the essence of the saving power of baptism is the confession and the profession which precedes it. If that comes from a conscience that really renounces sin and believes on Christ, then baptism, as the channel through which the grace of the new birth is conveyed, and the convert admitted into the Church of Christ, 'saves us,' but not otherwise"—C. B. **By the resurrection of Christ.** "The apostle shows

that the efficacy of baptism to salvation depends upon the resurrection of Christ, which supposes His death, and is the foundation of our faith and hope, to which we are rendered conformable by dying to sin, and rising again to holiness and newness of life"—M. H. (Eph. 5. 26; Tit. 3. 5; Rom. 10. 10; ch. 1. 3.)

22. **Angels and authorities and powers**—"that is, all orders both of angels and men"—WESLEY.

Being made subject to Him. "The apostle, in speaking here of the resurrection and glory of Christ, means not only to represent Him as the object of our confidence, but to intimate that, if we imitate His courageous fidelity, we may hope to partake with Him in His glory"—B. (Ps. 110. 1; Rom. 8. 34; Eph. 1. 20; Col. 3. 1; Heb. 1. 3; Rom. 8. 38; 1 Cor. 15. 24; Eph. 1. 21.)

CHAPTER IV.

1. **Arm yourselves with the same mind**—"which will be armour of proof against all your enemies. **For he that hath suffered in the flesh**—that hath so suffered as to be thereby made inwardly and truly conformable to the sufferings of Christ—**hath ceased from sin**—is delivered from it"—WESLEY.

"The apostle draws a new inference from the consideration of Christ's sufferings. As he had before made use of it to persuade to patience in suffering, so here to mortification of sin"—M. H. **Hath ceased**—"is discharged from the service of sin. By the Roman law, a slave who was delivered up as a public offender became freed from his master. After undergoing his sentence, the offender was enfranchised"—W. W. (Ch. 3. 18; Rom. 6. 2, 7; Gal. 5. 24; Col. 3. 3, 5.)

2. **That ye may no longer live in the flesh**—"even in this mortal body—**to the desires of men**—either your own or those of others. These are various; but **the will of God** is one"—WESLEY.

"The lusts of men are springs of all their wickedness; let the occasional temptations be what they will, they could not prevail, but for men's own corruptions"—M. H. (Rom. 14. 7; ch. 2. 1; Gal. 2. 20; ch. 1. 14; John 1. 13; Rom. 6. 11; 2 Cor. 5. 15; James 1. 18.)

3. **For the time past of our life may suffice us.** "The expression is soft, but conveys a very strong meaning—namely, that at no period of our lives ought we to have wrought the will of the Gentiles; and that whatever time we spent in so doing was too much"—B. **The will of the Gentiles.** The grossest forms of immorality were sanctioned by public opinion, and were promoted by religious observances among the idolatrous Gentiles. **Revellings, banquetings.** "Have these words any meaning now? They had seventeen hundred years ago. Then the former meant, meetings to eat; meetings, the direct end of which was to please the taste; the latter, meetings to drink; both of which Christians then ranked with abominable idolatries"—WESLEY. (Ezek. 44. 6; 45. 9; Acts 17. 30; Eph. 2. 2; 4. 17; 1 Thess. 4. 5; Tit. 3. 3; ch. 1. 14.)

4. **They think it strange.** "It is not hard, even from our own experience, to picture to ourselves the surprise of the heathen when he found his friend refusing an invitation to a banquet, shrinking from contact with the prostitutes of Greek cities, or, when there, passing the wine-cup untasted"—C. B. **The same**—"as ye did once—**speaking evil of you**—as proud, singular, silly, wicked, and the like"—WESLEY. (Acts 13. 45; 18. 6; ch. 3. 6.)

5. **Who shall give account**—"of this, as well as all their other ways—**to Him who is ready**—so faith represents Him now"—WESLEY.

They, who now call you to account falsely, shall have to give account themselves for this very evil-speaking (Jude 15), and be condemned justly. (Acts 10. 42; 17. 31; Rom. 14. 10, 12; 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52; 2 Tim. 4. 1; James 5. 9.)

6. **For to this end was the gospel preached**—"ever since it was given to Adam—**to them that are now dead**—in their several generations—**that they might be judged**—that though they were judged—**in the flesh according to** the manner of **men**—with rash, unrighteous judgment—**they might live according to** the will and word of **God, in the Spirit**; the soul renewed after His image"—WESLEY.

"S. Peter, representing the attitude of the Church in every age, expecting Christ at any moment, says, the Judge is ready to judge the quick and the dead; **the dead**, I say, for they too in their lifetime have had the gospel preached to them, that so they might be judged at the last in the same way as those living now, viz. **men in the flesh**, and that they might, having escaped condemnation by embracing the gospel so preached, live unto God in the Spirit. **Live according to God** means, live a life with God, such as God lives, as contrasted with **according to men in the flesh**"—P. (Ch. 3. 19.)

7. **But the end of all things**—"and so of their wrongs, and your sufferings—**is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer**—temperance helps watchfulness, and both of them help prayer. Watch, that ye may pray; and pray, that ye may watch"—WESLEY.

Be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer (R.V.). "The second verb implies, in the strictest sense, **abstinence from wine and strong drink.** The word commonly translated **watch** (Matt. 24. 42, 43; 26. 38–41) is altogether different. It may be noticed that the tense of the two verbs in the original implies not a general precept, but a

call to an immediate act. The words of S. Peter present a singular contrast to the effect that has commonly been produced by the belief that the end of the world was near. Terror and alarm, the abandonment of earthly callings and social duties, accompanied that belief in the tenth century, when kings left their thrones and sought the seclusion of the monastery. 'Appropinquante jam fine sæculi,' and a like agitation has accompanied it since. To the apostle's mind the approach of the end of all things is a motive for calmness and self-control"—C. B. (Matt. 24. 13, 14; Rom. 13. 12; Phil. 4. 5; Heb. 10. 25; James 5. 8; 2 Pet. 3. 9, 11; 1 John 2. 18; Matt. 26. 41; Luke 21. 34; Col. 4. 12; ch. 1. 13; ver. 8.)

8. **Love covered a multitude of sins**—"yea, 'love covereth all things.' He that loves another, covers his faults, how many soever they be. He turns away his own eyes from them; and, as far as is possible, hides them from others. And he continually prays that all the sinner's iniquities may be forgiven and his sins covered. Meantime the God of love measures to him with the same measure into his bosom"—WESLEY.

"**Covereth** so as not harshly to condemn or expose faults, but forbearingly to bear the other's burdens, forgiving and forgetting past offences. Perhaps the additional idea is included, that by prayer for them, love tries to have them covered by God; and so, being the instrument of converting the sinner from his error, **covereth a multitude of sins.** But the former idea, taken from Prov. 10. 12, is the prominent one"—P. (Heb. 13. 1; Col. 3. 14; Prov. 10. 12; 1 Cor. 13. 7; James 5. 20.)

9. **One to another**—"ye that are of different towns or countries. **Without murmuring**—with all cheerfulness"—WESLEY.

Use hospitality. "The stress laid upon this virtue in the New Testament brings before us striking features of the social life of Christians in the first three centuries. The Christian in a strange city was in a position of no little difficulty. The houses of heathen friends, if he had any, were likely to bring trials of one kind or another. He might be taunted and persecuted for his faith; or he might be tempted to 'run to the same excess of riot' with them. Inns presented too often scenes of drunkenness and impurity, foul words and fouler acts. It was an unspeakable gain for such an one to find shelter in a Christian home, to present a 'letter of commendation' (2 Cor. 3. 1), and to be received as a brother. It was in the nature of things that strangers might thus present themselves under inconvenient conditions, and therefore S. Peter adds **without murmurings.** Men were not to look upon it as a trouble or a nuisance; they might be entertaining angels unawares (Heb. 13. 2)"—C. B. (Rom. 12. 13; 2 Cor. 9. 7; Phil. 2. 14; Philem. 14.)

10. **As every one hath received a gift**—"spiritual or temporal, ordinary or extraordinary, although the latter seems primarily intended—**so minister it one to another**—employ it for the common good—**as good stewards of the manifold grace of God**—the talents wherewith His free love has entrusted you"—WESLEY.

"In receiving and using the manifold gifts of God, we must look upon ourselves as stewards only, and act accordingly. The goods we are entrusted with are our Lord's goods, and must be employed as He directs; and it is required in a steward, that a man be found faithful"—M. H. (Rom. 12. 6; 1 Cor. 4. 7; Matt. 24. 45; 25. 14, 21; Luke 12. 42; 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2; Tit. 1. 7; 1 Cor. 12. 4; Eph. 4. 11.)

11. **If any man speak, let him**—"in his whole conversation, public and private. **Speak as the oracles of God**—let all his words be according to this pattern, both as to matter and manner, more especially in public. By this mark we may always know who are, so far, the true or false prophets. **The oracles of God** teach that men should repent, believe, obey. He that treats of faith and leaves out repentance, or does not enjoin practical holiness to believers, does not speak as the oracles of God; he does not preach Christ, let him think as highly of himself as he will. **If any man minister**—serve his brother in love, whether in spirituals or temporals—**let him minister as of the ability which God giveth**—that is, humbly and diligently, ascribing all his power to God, and using it with his might—**whose is the glory**—of his wisdom, which teaches us to speak. **And the might**—which enables us to act"—WESLEY.

Speaking as if it were oracles of God (R.V.). His divinely-inspired words are not his own, but God's, and as a steward, having them committed to him, he ought so to speak them. Jesus was the Pattern in this respect. (Matt. 7. 29; John 12. 49; 14. 10.) **Ability** (R.V. "Strength"). Physical power for outward service, rather than moral or intellectual ability. **That God in all things may be glorified**—the final end of all a Christian's acts. **To whom** (R.V. "Whose, Christ's") **is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.** (Jer. 23. 22; Rom. 12. 6-8; 1 Cor. 3. 10; Eph. 5. 20; ch. 2. 5; 1 Tim. 6. 16; ch. 5. 11; Rev. 1. 6.)

Vers. 12-19. CONSOLATION UNDER TROUBLE.—12. **Wonder not at the burning which is among you**—"this is the literal meaning of the expression. It seems to include both martyrdom itself, which so frequently was by fire, and all the other sufferings joined with, or previous to, it; **which is** permitted by the wisdom of God **for your trial.** Be not surprised at this"—WESLEY.

The fiery trial among you. "The mind of the apostle goes back once more to the

afflictions and persecutions, of which he had spoken in ch. 1., 2., 3. He meets the terror they were likely to cause by the thought that all this was to be expected. Men were to enter the kingdom of God 'through much tribulation.' All 'they that would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.' The strange thing would be if it were otherwise"—C. B. (1 Cor. 3. 13; ch. 1. 7.)

13. **But as ye partake of the sufferings of Christ**—"ver. 1, while ye suffer for His sake, **rejoice** in hope of more abundant glory. For the measure of glory answers the measure of suffering; and much more abundantly"—WESLEY.

Rejoice. The apostle remembers the Beatitude in Matt. 5. 11. **Inasmuch** (R.V. "Insomuch"). The Greek conjunction expresses more than the ground of the joy. Men are to rejoice "in proportion as" they are sharers in the sufferings of Christ. (Acts 5. 41; James 1. 2; Rom. 8. 17; 2 Cor. 1. 7; 4. 10; Phil. 3. 10; Col. 1. 24; 2 Tim. 2. 12; ch. 5. 1, 10; Rev. 1. 9; ch. 1. 5, 6.)

14. **If ye are reproached for Christ**—"reproaches and cruel mockings were always one part of their sufferings. **The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you**—the same Spirit which was upon Christ. (Luke 4. 18.) He is here termed, 'the Spirit of glory,' conquering all reproach and shame, and 'the Spirit of God,' whose Son, Jesus Christ is. **On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified**—that is, while they are blaspheming Christ, you glorify Him in the midst of your sufferings (ver. 16)"—WESLEY.

Lit. **In the name of Christ.** Again the evident reference is to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5. 11, "*for My sake*"). **The Spirit of glory.** Believers may well overcome the reproach of the world, seeing that the Spirit of glory rests upon them, as it did on Christ. R.V. omits the latter portion of the verse. **On their part,** etc. (Matt. 5. 11; 2 Cor. 12. 10; James 1. 12; ch. 2. 12; 2. 19, 20; 3. 14; 3. 16.)

15. **Let none of you** deservedly **suffer, as an evildoer**—"in any kind"—WESLEY.

The second **as,** see R.V., distinguishes the **busybody in other men's matters** from the previous class of delinquents. Christians, from mistaken zeal, might easily step out of their own calling, and make themselves judges of others. *Lit.* "a bishop in what is (not his own but) another's province," a self-constituted overseer of other people. (Ch. 2. 20; 1 Thess. 4. 11; 1 Tim. 5. 13.)

16. **Let him glorify God**—'who giveth him the honour so to suffer, and so great a reward for suffering"—WESLEY.

A Christian—a name first given, probably in contempt, by the Greeks at Antioch. The Jews, who denied that Jesus was Christ, would not call His followers Christians. The date of this epistle must have been when this had become the recognised designation among Gentiles, and when the name exposed one to reproach and suffering, though not as yet to systematic persecution. (Acts 5. 41.)

17. **The time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God.** "God first visits His Church, and that both in justice and mercy. **What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel**—how terribly will He visit them! The judgments which are milder at the beginning, grow more and more severe. But good men, having already sustained their part, are only spectators of the miseries of the wicked"—WESLEY.

"The words of the apostle stand in close connection with his belief that he was living in the last age of the world, that 'the end of all things was at hand.' He saw in the persecutions and sufferings that fell on the Church, beginning **from the house of God,** the opening of the judgment"—C. B. (Isa. 10. 12; Jer 25. 29; 49. 12; Ezek. 9. 6; Mal. 3. 5; Luke 23. 31; 10. 12, 14.)

18. **If the righteous scarcely be saved**—"escape with the utmost difficulty—**where shall the ungodly**—the man who knows not God—**and the** open **sinner appear**—in that day of vengeance. The salvation here primarily spoken of is of a temporal nature. But we may apply the words to eternal things, and then they are still more awful"—WESLEY.

"The righteous man has always more or less of trial, but the issue is certain if he hold fast his confidence in Christ, and the entrance into the kingdom will be abundant at last. The 'scarcely' marks the severity of the ordeal. **The ungodly**—having no regard for God; negative description; **sinner**—loving sin; positive character of same person"—P. The text is one of S. Peter's unacknowledged quotations from the Old Testament, the LXX. (Prov. 11. 31; Luke 23. 31.)

19. **Let them that suffer according to the will of God**—"both for a good cause, and in a right spirit—**commit to Him their souls**—(whatever becomes of the body) as a sacred *depositum*—**in well-doing**—be this your care, to do and suffer well; He will take care of the rest—**as unto a faithful Creator**—in whose truth, love, and power, ye may safely trust"—WESLEY.

In suffering according to the will of God, much more is meant than submission to an inevitable destiny. If we think of pain and persecution as working out God's will, permitted and controlled by Him, we know that that will is righteous and loving, and that it plans our completeness in holiness and happiness. The example of the Divine Sufferer is in the apostle's mind, and almost on his pen. "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt;" and again as the pattern for committing the soul, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My

spirit." (Ps. 31. 5; Luke 23. 46; 2 Tim. 1. 12.)

CHAPTER V.

Vers. 1–4. COUNSELS TO MINISTERS.—1. **I who am a fellow-elder**—"so the first though not the head of the apostles appositely and modestly styles himself. **And a witness of the sufferings of Christ**—having seen Him suffer, and now suffering for Him"—WESLEY.

Witness of the sufferings of Christ. The one point on which he lays stress as distinguishing him from others. His dignity as an apostle is delicately implied, as eye-witnessing was a necessary qualification for the apostleship. (Philem. 9; Luke 24. 48; Acts 1. 8, 22; 5. 32; 10. 39; Rom. 8. 17, 18; Rev. 1. 9.)

2. **Feed the flock**—"both by doctrine and discipline—**not by constraint**—unwillingly, as a burden. **Not for filthy gain**—which, if it be the motive of acting, is 'filthy' beyond expression. Oh consider this, ye that leave one flock and go to another, merely because there is more gain, a large salary! Is it not astonishing that men can see no harm in this? that it is not only practised, but avowed, all over the nation?"—WESLEY.

Tend the flock (R.V. also inserts after "willingly," **according to God**). S. Peter has in mind Christ's injunction to him, "Feed My sheep," and he invites the elders to share with him the same duty. The word implies all a shepherd's duty, guiding, directing, protecting, as well as supplying food; and thus involves more than preaching and teaching, and takes in all the varied duties of the *pastoral* office. In the words the **flock of God** men are reminded who is the chief Shepherd, to whom they will have to render an account. **Willingly according to God**—ready to encounter the labours and the perils of conspicuous station in the Church, when satisfied that such is the will of God. **Not for filthy lucre.** The words are interesting, as showing that even in the troubled times in which S. Peter wrote there was enough wealth in the Church to make the position of a bishop-presbyter a lucrative one. The term is one commonly used in one seeking gain in base and sordid ways—C. B. (1 Cor. 9. 17; 1 Tim. 3. 8; Tit. 1. 7.)

3. **Neither as lording over the heritage**—"behaving in a haughty, domineering manner, as though you had dominion over their conscience. The word translated 'heritage' is, literally, 'the portions.' There is one flock under the one chief Shepherd; but many 'portions' of this under many pastors. **But being examples to the flock**—this procures the most ready and free obedience"—WESLEY.

Lording it over the charge allotted to you (R.V.). **Ensamples**—"A monstrosity it is to see the highest rank joined with the meanest mind, the first seat with the lowest life, a grandiloquent tongue with a lazy life, much talking but no fruit"—BERNARD. "The best way a minister can take to engage the respect of a people is to discharge his own duty among them in the best manner that he can, and to be a constant example to them of all that is good"—M. H. (Ezek. 34. 4; Matt. 20. 25, 26; 1 Cor. 3. 9; 2 Cor. 1. 24; Ps. 33. 12; 74. 2; Phil. 3. 17; 2 Thess. 3. 9; 1 Tim. 4. 12; Tit. 2. 7.)

4. **A crown of glory that fadeth not away** (R.V. "*The* crown"). "The four last words answer to the one Greek word, amaranthine, or unfading. The crown is the wreath or chaplet of flowers worn by conquerors or heroes, as in 1 Cor. 9. 25; James 1. 12; and differs from the crowns or 'diadems' of Rev. 12. 3; 19. 12, which were distinctively the badge of sovereignty"—C. B. (Heb. 13. 20; 1 Cor. 9. 25; 2 Tim. 4. 8; James 1. 12; ch. 1. 4.

Vers. 5–14. FINAL COUNSELS AND GREETINGS. "**Ye younger, be subject to the elder**—in years. **And be all**—elder or younger—**subject to each other.** Let every one be ready, upon all occasions, to give up his own will. **Be clothed with humility—bind it on** (so the word signifies), so that no force may be able to tear it from you"—WESLEY.

It is uncertain whether the words **elder** and **younger** refer to age only, or to office. In support of the latter view, it may be argued that it is not likely that the same writer would have used the word "elder" in two different senses in such close juxtaposition. **Yea, all of you** (R.V. "All of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another"). This version irresistibly recalls the Master's example, and shows S. Peter teaching the lesson that he learned the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed. **God resisteth the proud.** Another passage from the Old Testament (Prov. 3. 34, LXX.). (Rom. 12. 10; Eph. 5. 21; Phil. 2. 3; James 4. 6; Isa. 57. 15; 66. 2.)

6. **The hand of God**—"is in all troubles"—WESLEY.

"Receive His corrections with reverence and patient submission, even though wicked men should be made the instrument of them. **In due time**—the time which He knows will be the most proper for your exaltation"—B. (James 4. 10.)

7. **Casting all your care upon Him**—"in every want or pressure"—WESLEY.

Your anxiety (A.V.). Exemption from anxious care goes along with humble submission to God. **Careth for you**—*lit.* "*respecting* you." The word is not so strong as the previous "anxiety." (Ps. 37. 5; 55. 22; Matt. 6. 25; Luke 12. 11, 22; Phil. 4. 6; Heb. 13. 5.)

8. "But in the meantime **watch.** There is a close connection between this and the duly 'casting our care' upon Him. How deeply has S. Peter himself suffered for want of watching? **Be vigilant**—as if he had said, Awake, and

keep awake. Sleep no more: be this your care. **As a roaring lion**—full of rage. **Seeking**—with all subtlety likewise. **Whom he may devour or swallow up**—both soul and body"—WESLEY.

The tense implies an immediate act, as though he said, "Rouse yourselves to sobriety and watchfulness." R.V. omits "because," and so brings out the strength and terseness of the original. **Adversary**—*lit.* "opponent in a court of justice." **Devil**—"accuser or slanderer." **Roaring lion**—implying his violent and insatiable thirst for prey. **Devour**—entangle in worldly "cares," or in other snares, so as finally to destroy. (Luke 21. 34, 36; 1 Thess. 5. 6; ch. 4. 7; Job 1. 7; 2. 2; Luke 22. 31; Rev. 12. 12.)

9. "Be the more **steadfast**, as ye **know the same** kind of **afflictions are accomplished in**—that is, suffered by—**your brethren**, till the measure allotted them is filled up"—WESLEY.

In your faith (R.V.). The apostle does not allude to unwavering orthodoxy, but to unshaken trust in God. **Your brethren**—*lit.* "brotherhood"—**that are in the world.** "These Christians might sometimes seem to be isolated, but really there were many comrades, far and near, fighting the same battle. It was both their duty and their privilege to follow all examples of steadfastness of which they heard elsewhere, and to set the example themselves, that others might be cheered by it, and might endure to the end"—C. B. (Eph. 6. 11. 13; James 4. 7; Acts 14. 22; 1 Thess. 3. 3; 2 Tim. 3. 12; ch. 2. 21.)

10. **Now the God of all grace**—"by which alone the whole work is begun, continued, and finished in your soul. **After ye have suffered awhile**—a very little while compared with eternity. **Himself**—ye have only to watch and resist the devil: the rest God will perform. **Perfect**—that no defect may remain. **Stablish**—that nothing may overthrow you. **Strengthen**—that ye may conquer all adverse power. **And settle you**—as an house upon a rock. So the apostle, being converted, does now 'strengthen his brethren'"—WESLEY.

Shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you (R.V.). **God of all grace**—"the source of all those influences of the Spirit by which alone true spiritual light, peace, and power may be attained. **Called us to His eternal glory**—not merely to behold it, but to partake it. But this calling is **in Christ**, not merely by Him as the person by whom the call came, but as being '*in Him*,' that is, by virtue of our union with Him. **After ye have suffered.** Observe, suffering must precede glory"—B. (1 Cor. 1. 9; 1 Tim. 6. 2; 2 Cor. 4. 17; ch. 1. 6; Heb. 13. 21; Jude 24; 2 Thess. 2. 17; 3. 3.)

12. **As I suppose**—"as I judge, upon good grounds, though not by immediate inspiration. **I have written**—that is, sent my letter by him. **Adding my testimony**—to that which ye before heard from Paul, **that this is the true** gospel of the **grace of God**"—WESLEY.

Silvanus—the person, probably, of that name whom S. Paul united with himself in writing the Epistles to the Thessalonians, namely, Silas, who (Acts 15. 22, 32) is called "a chief man among the brethren," and a "prophet." Being S. Paul's constant companion in travel after the defection of John Mark, he had assisted in planting churches in Galatia, and in other countries of the Lesser Asia, mentioned ch. 1. 1. So, being well known to the brethren in those parts, he was a fit person to carry to them this letter from S. Peter. **As I suppose** (R.V. "As I account him")—**wherein ye stand** (R.V. "Stand ye fast therein"). (2 Cor. 1. 19; Heb. 13. 22; Acts 20. 24; 1 Cor. 15. 1; 2 Pet. 1. 12.)

13. **The Church that is at Babylon**—"near which S. Peter probably was when he wrote this Epistle—**elected together with you**—partaking of the same faith with you. **Mark**—it seems the Evangelist. **My son**—probably converted by S. Paul. And he had occasionally served him, 'as a son in the gospel'"—WESLEY.

She that is in Babylon, *margin*, "That is, the Church, or the sister" (R.V.). There was from the days of the Captivity a large Jewish population residing in the new Babylon, which had risen on or near the ruins of the old. Whether "she that is in Babylon" refers to the Church, or to an individual; if the latter, whether it was the wife of the apostle, spoken of 1 Cor. 9. 5, as the companion of his labours, or some conspicuous member of the Church of Babylon unknown to us, are questions which the text does not enable us to decide; and conjecture is useless. (Acts 12. 12, 25.)

14. **Peace be with you all.** "It is, perhaps, significant that while the final benediction of the Apostle of the Gentiles is "Grace be with you all" (see all his Epistles), that of the Apostle of the Circumcision is the old Hebrew "Peace," as in Matt. 10. 13, in all the fulness of its meaning"—C. B. (Rom. 16. 16; 1 Cor. 16. 20; 2 Cor. 13. 12; 1 Thess. 5. 26; Eph. 6. 23.)

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

THE Second Epistle of Peter, written evidently near the close of life, and in anticipation of martyrdom, exhorts believers to perseverance in truth amidst prevailing error and practical infidelity. The best preservative, as he informs them, is progress in piety. In terms of terrible energy he warns them against false teachers, Antinomian in doctrine, worldly, covetous, and scandalously impure in personal conduct; and assures them that the Coming of the Lord, though delayed through His long-suffering, is as certain as the fact of the Deluge. He exhibits the brighter side of the same truth, and exhorts Christians to be diligent and holy. His last precept is "Grow in grace," and his last testimony is to the Divinity of his Lord: "To Him be glory both now and ever, Amen."

"THE PARTS OF THIS EPISTLE ARE THREE—

I. The Inscription, ... Chap. i. 1-2.
II. A further stirring up of the minds of Believers—
1. He exhorts them to give all diligence to grow in grace, . ,, ,, 3-11.
2. He incites them from the firmness of true teachers, . . ,, ,, 12-21.
And from the wickedness of false teachers, . . . ,, ii. 1-28.
3. He guards them against impostors, by confuting their error, . ,, iii. 1-9.
And by describing the great day, ... ,, ,, 10-14.
III. The Conclusion, in which he
1. Declares his agreement with S. Paul, ... ,, ,, 15-16.
2. Repeats the sum of the Epistle, ... ,, ,, 17-18."
—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1-4. THE INSCRIPTION.—1. **To them that have obtained**—"not by their own works, but by the free grace of God—**like precious faith with us**—the apostles. The faith of those who have not seen, being equally precious with that of those who saw our Lord in the flesh. **Through the righteousness**—both active and passive. **Of our God and Saviour**—it is this alone by which the justice of God is satisfied, and for the sake of which he gives this precious faith"—WESLEY.

Equally precious (R.V.). "Faith is alike precious in the private Christian and in the apostle; it produces the same precious effects in the one as in the other; faith unites the weak believer to Christ as really as the strong one, and purifies the heart of one as truly as of another"—M. H. R.V. translates, as Wesley, **Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.** (Rom. 1. 12; 2 Cor. 4. 13; Eph. 4. 5; Tit. 1. 4.)

2. "**Through the** Divine, experimental **knowledge of God and of Christ**"—WESLEY.

In the knowledge (R.V.). The sphere in which alone **grace and peace** can be enjoyed. The word for knowledge means "full knowledge." (Dan. 4. 1; 6. 25; 1 Pet. 1. 2; Jude 2.)

3. **As His Divine power has given us all things.** "There is a wonderful cheerfulness in this exordium, which begins with the exhortation itself. **That pertain to life and godliness**—to the present, natural life, and to the continuance and increase of spiritual life. **Through** that Divine **knowledge of Him**—of Christ. **Who hath called us by**—His own glorious power, to eternal **glory**, as the end; by Christian **virtue** or **fortitude**, as the means"—WESLEY.

"The words that follow show that **life** must be taken in its higher sense, as extending to that eternal life which standeth in the knowledge of God. Spiritual life must exist before there can be true **godliness**, and the experimental knowledge of God is the first step to spiritual life. **To glory and virtue** (R.V. 'By His own glory and virtue'). The thought expressed is that the attributes of God manifested by Him are the means by which He calls men to the knowledge of the truth"—C. B. (John 17. 3; 1 Thess. 2. 12; 4. 7; 2 Thess. 2. 14; 2 Tim. 1. 9; 1 Pet. 2. 9; 3. 9.)

4. "**Through which**—glory and fortitude. **He hath given us exceeding great**, and inconceivably **precious promises**—both the promises and the things promised, which follow

in their due season, that, sustained and encouraged by the promises, we may obtain all that he has promised. **That having escaped the** manifold **corruption which is in the world**—from that fruitful fountain, evil *desire*—**ye may become partakers of the Divine nature**—being renewed in the image of God, and having communion with Him, so as to dwell in God and God in you"—WESLEY.

Partakers of the Divine nature—not His essence, but His holiness, including His "glory and virtue," the opposite to **corruption through lust.** Sanctification is the imparting to us of God Himself, by the Holy Spirit. (2 Cor. 3. 18; 7. 1; Eph. 4. 24; Heb. 12. 10; 1 John 3. 2.)

Vers. 5–11. EXHORTATION TO GROWTH IN GRACE.—5. **For this very reason**—"because God hath given you so great blessings. **Giving all diligence.** It is a very uncommon word which we render 'giving.' It literally signifies, 'bringing in by the by,' or 'over and above'; implying that God works the work, yet not unless we are diligent. Our diligence is to follow the gift of God, and is followed by an increase of all His gifts. **Add to**—and *in* all the other gifts of God. Superadd the latter, without losing the former. The Greek word properly means 'lead up,' as in a dance, one of these after the other, in a beautiful order. **Your faith** — that 'evidence of things not seen,' termed before 'the knowledge of God and of Christ,' the root of all Christian graces. **Courage**—whereby ye may conquer all enemies and difficulties, and execute whatever faith dictates. In this most beautiful connection, each preceding grace leads to the following; each following, tempers and perfects the preceding. They are set down in the order of nature, rather than the order of time. For though every grace bears a relation to every other, yet here they are so nicely ranged, that those which have the closest dependence on each other are placed together. **And to your courage knowledge**—wisdom, teaching how to exercise it on all occasions"—WESLEY.

In your faith supply virtue, and in your virtue knowledge, etc. "Each grace being assumed, becomes the stepping-stone to the succeeding grace; and the latter in turn qualifies and completes the former. Faith leads the band; love brings up the rear. The fruits of faith specified are seven, the perfect number. **Virtue**—moral excellency, manly, strenuous energy; **and in your virtue knowledge**—practical discrimination of good and evil; intelligent appreciation of what is the will of God in each detail of practice"—P. (Ch. 3. 18; 1 Pet. 3. 7.)

6. **And to your knowledge temperance, and to your temperance patience.** "Bear and forbear; sustain and abstain; deny yourself and take up your cross daily. The more knowledge you have, the more renounce your own will; indulge yourself the less. 'Knowledge puffeth up,' and the great boasters of knowledge (the Gnostics) were those that turned the grace of God into wantonness. But see that 'your' knowledge be attended with 'temperance.' Christian temperance implies the voluntary abstaining from all pleasure which does not lead to God. It extends to all things inward and outward: the due government of every thought, as well as affection. 'It is using the world,' so to use all outward, and so to restrain all inward things, that they may become a means of what is spiritual; a scaling ladder to ascend to what is above. Intemperance is to abuse the world. He that uses anything below, looking no higher, and getting no further, is intemperate. He that uses the creature only so as to attain to more of the Creator, is alone temperate, and walks as Christ Himself walked. **And to patience godliness** — its proper support: a continual sense of God's presence and providence, and a filial fear of, and confidence in, Him; otherwise your patience may be pride, surliness, stoicism, but not Christianity"—WESLEY.

"The word **temperance** has a wider range than the modern sense of the English term. Self-control would be a better equivalent"—C. B. "To **patience** we must add **godliness**, and this is the very thing that is produced by patience, for that worketh experience. (Rom. 5. 4.) When Christians bear afflictions patiently, they get an experimental knowledge of the loving-kindness of their heavenly Father; and hereby they are brought to the childlike fear, and reverential love, wherein true godliness consists"—M. H.

7. **And to godliness brotherly kindness**—"no sullenness, sternness, moroseness: 'sour godliness,' so called, is of the devil. Of Christian godliness it may always be said—

Mild, sweet, serene, and tender is her mood,
Nor grave with sternness, nor with lightness free:
Against example resolutely good,
Fervent in zeal, and warm in charity.

And to brotherly kindness love—the pure and perfect love of God and of all mankind. The apostle here makes an advance upon the preceding article, 'brotherly kindness,' which seems only to relate to the love of Christians toward one another"—WESLEY.

From **brotherly kindness** we are to go forward to **love** — love one toward another (brotherly kindness), love toward men (charity). So charity completes the choir of graces in Col. 3. 14. "In a retrograde order, he who has 'love' will exercise brotherly kindness; he who has 'brotherly kindness' will feel godliness needful; the *godly* will mix nothing stoical with his patience; to the *patient*, temperance is easy; the *temperate* weighs things well, and so has knowledge; *knowledge* guards against sudden impulse, carrying away its virtue"—BENGEL. (Gal. 6. 10; 1 Thess. 3, 12; 5. 15; 1 John 4. 21.)

8. "**For these being** really **in you**—added to your faith—**and abounding**—increasing more and more, otherwise we fall short—**make you neither slothful nor unfruitful**—do not suffer you to be faint in your mind, or without fruit in your lives. If there is less faithfulness, less care and watchfulness, since we were pardoned, than there was before, and less diligence, less outward obedience, than when we were seeking remission of sin, we are both 'slothful and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ,' that is, in the faith, which then cannot work by love"—WESLEY.

"**Idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge** (R.V.). The **full knowledge** (Greek) of Christ is the goal towards which all these graces tend. As their subsisting in us constitutes us not **barren** or **idle**, so their abounding in us constitutes us not unfruitful in respect to it. It is through doing His will, and so becoming like Him, that we grow in the knowledge of Him. (John 7. 17)"—P. (John 15. 2; Tit. 3. 14.)

9. **But he that wanteth these**—"that does not add them to his faith—**is blind**—the eyes of his understanding are again closed. He cannot see God, or His pardoning love. He has lost the evidence of things not seen. **Not able to see afar off**—*lit.* 'purblind.' He has lost sight of the precious promises: perfect love and heaven are equally out of his sight. Nay, he cannot now see what himself once enjoyed. **Having**, as it were, **forgot the purification from his former sins**—scarce knowing what he himself then felt, when his sins were forgiven"—WESLEY.

For he that lacketh these things (R.V.) **is blind, seeing only what is near.** The word "for" indicates the connection. We are to press on from one point to another in the knowledge of Christ,—*because*, if we do not press onward, we sink into a want of power to perceive the elementary truths of religion. The man in this state sees the near things of his daily life, but has lost the power to look to the far-off things of the life eternal. **Hath forgotten.** The continually present sense of our sins having been forgiven through the blood of Christ, is the strongest stimulant to every grace. (1 John 2. 9, 11; Eph. 5. 26; Heb. 9. 14; 1 John 1. 7.)

10. **Wherefore**—"considering the miserable state of these apostates—**brethren.** S. Peter nowhere uses this appellation in either of his Epistles, but in this important exhortation—**be the more diligent**—by courage, knowledge, temperance, etc.—**to make your calling and election firm.** God hath called you by His word and His Spirit; He hath elected you, separated you from the world, through sanctification of the Spirit. Oh cast not away these inestimable benefits! **If ye are thus diligent to make your election firm, ye shall never finally fall**"—WESLEY.

Never stumble (R.V.). **To make your calling and election sure.** "The ensuring of our election is not spoken of in respect to God, but in respect to *our part*. There is no uncertainty on His part, but on ours the only security is our faith in His promise, producing the fruits of the Spirit"—P. "**Calling** and **election** were, in S. Peter's view, the conditions of a covenant offered by God's mercy, and it rested with man to rescind or to ratify the compact"—C. B. (1 John 3. 19; ch. 3. 17.)

11. "**For** if ye do **so, an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom**—ye shall go in full triumph to glory"—WESLEY.

Shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance (R.V.). The verb is the same as in ver. 5. **Minister, supply,** in your faith virtue and the other graces, so shall there be "ministered," "supplied" to you the entrance into that heaven where these graces shine most brightly. The reward of grace hereafter corresponds with the work of grace here.

Vers. 12–21. THE APOSTLE'S FAITHFUL TESTIMONY.—12. **Wherefore** — "since everlasting destruction attends your sloth, everlasting glory your diligence, **I will not neglect always to remind you of these things**—therefore he wrote another, so soon after the former, Epistle. **Though ye are established in the present truth**—that truth which I am now declaring"—WESLEY.

The truth that is with you (R.V.). **Always**—implying the reason why he writes the Second Epistle so soon after the first. He feels that there is likely to be more and more need of admonition on account of the increasing corruption. **The present truth**—the gospel truth now present with you: formerly promised to Old Testament believers, now in the New Testament actually present with and in believers, so that they are established in it. (Rom. 15. 14, 15; Phil. 3. 1; ch. 3. 1; 1 John 2. 21; Jude 5; 1 Pet. 5. 12; ch. 3. 17.)

13. **In this tabernacle**—"or tent. How short is our abode in the body! How easily does a believer pass out of it!"—WESLEY.

This tabernacle. "The term is interesting—(1) as parallel to S. Paul's use of the same imagery in 2 Cor. 5. 1; and (2) as connected with the reference to the Transfiguration which follows. It will be remembered that, in that vision, S. Peter had said, 'Let us make three tabernacles' (Matt. 17. 4); he had now learned that the true tabernacle of Christ was His human body, and to think of his own body also as the tabernacle of His Spirit"—C. B. (2 Cor. 5. 1, 4; ch. 3. 1.)

14. **Even as the Lord Jesus showed me**—in the manner which He foretold (John 21. 18, etc.) It is not improbable, He had also showed him that the time was now drawing nigh"—WESLEY.

The putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly (R.V.). We have the two closely associated ideas of a tent and a garment, as in

2 Cor. 5. 1, 3. **Hath showed** (R.V.) "signified," the tense intimating a definite time. (Deut. 4. 21, 22; 31. 14; 2 Tim. 4. 6; John 21. 18, 19.)

15. **That ye may be able**—"by having this Epistle among you"—WESLEY.

Decease. In the word employed, *lit.* "Exodus," we have another coincidence with the story of the Transfiguration. The word does not appear, as a synonym for death, in older Greek writers. These evidently undesigned coincidences of language confirm S. Peter's authorship of the Epistle. The gradation in this passage is beautiful. "He proposed to put the brethren in remembrance of some revealed truths, with which they were already acquainted; he proposed to do this, not once or twice, but always, as long as he lived—nay, he proposed, by leaving this written testimony among them, to put them in remembrance of these things after his death. Wherefore, the ministers of the gospel ought to insist most upon the things that are of most importance to their people, although they are already well acquainted with them, the influence of truth depending, not on the knowledge, but on the frequent recollection of it" —M'K.

16. "**These things** are worthy to be **always had in remembrance**—**for** they are **not cunningly devised fables**—like those common among the heathens. **While we made known to you the power and coming**—that is, the powerful coming **of Christ** in glory. But if what they advanced of Christ was not true, if it was of their own invention, then to impose such a lie on the world, as it was, in the very nature of things, above all human power to defend, and to do this at the expense of life and all things, only to enrage the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, against them, was no cunning, but was the greatest folly that men could have been guilty of. **But were eyewitnesses of His majesty**—at His transfiguration, which was a specimen of His glory at the last day"—WESLEY.

Fables—as the heathen mythologies, and the subsequent Gnostic "fables and genealogies," of which the germs already existed in the junction of Judaism with Oriental philosophy in Asia Minor. The word is a prophetic protest against the rationalistic theory of the gospel history being *myth*. **We made known unto you.** He was one of the apostles, whose testimony had reached the whole Church. **The coming.** The word always refers to the second coming, not the first. **Eyewitnesses of His majesty.** The word was used for the initiated spectators of the mysteries among the heathen. The word "His" is somewhat emphatic. (1 Cor. 1. 17; 2. 1, 4; 2 Cor. 2. 17; 4. 2; Matt. 17. 1, 2; Mark 9. 2; John 1. 14; 1 John 1. 1; 4. 14.)

17. "**For he received** Divine **honour and** inexpressible **glory**—shining from heaven above the brightness of the sun—**when there came such a voice from the excellent glory**—that is, from God the Father"—WESLEY.

From the excellent glory—*lit.* "by the magnificent glory"—that is, "by God." **This is My beloved Son.** The words are given, with one slight variation not perceptible in the English, as we find them in Matt. 17. 5. It is obvious that we have here a testimony of great value to the truth of the gospel records; and as there is no reference to any written record, and as S. Peter omits the words "Hear ye Him," which S. Matthew adds, the testimony has distinctly the character of independence. If the story were based on the written records, it is at least probable that the words would have been given in the precise form in which they appear in one or other of the Gospels. The accounts, in their present form, corroborate each other. (Matt. 3. 17; 17. 5; Mark 1. 11; 9. 7; Luke 3. 22; 9. 35.)

18. **And we**—"Peter, James, and John. S. John was still alive. **Being with Him in the holy mount**—made so by that glorious manifestation, as Mount Horeb was of old (Ex. 3. 4, 5)"—WESLEY.

We—emphatic. **Which came from heaven**—Greek, "We heard borne from heaven." The language appears to assume that his readers already had some knowledge of the fact alluded to. (Ex. 3. 5; Josh. 5. 15; Matt. 17. 6.)

19. **And we.** "S. Peter here speaks in the name of all Christians—**have the word of prophecy**—the words of Moses, Isaiah, and all the prophets, are one and the same word, every way consistent with itself. S. Peter does not cite any particular passage, but speaks of their entire testimony. **More confirmed**—by that display of His glorious majesty. **To which** word **ye do well that ye take heed, as to a lamp which shown in a dark place**—wherein there was neither light nor window. Such anciently was the whole world, except that little spot where this lamp shone. **Till the day should dawn**—till the full light of the gospel should break through the darkness. As is the difference between the light of a lamp and that of the day, such is that between the light of the Old Testament and of the New. **And the morning star**—Jesus Christ (Rev. 22. 16)—**arise in your hearts**—be revealed in you"—WESLEY.

And we have the word of prophecy made more sure (R.V.). The correction is important; the A.V. would seem to imply that "the word of prophecy" is more sure than the voice of God Himself at the Transfiguration, which is plainly not the fact. Evidently the meaning is, "We, in these days, have the word of prophecy confirmed." Prophecy assures us that Christ's *sufferings*, now past, are to be followed by Christ's *glory*, still future; and the fulfilment of prophecy so far makes us surer of what is yet to be fulfilled, while in the Transfiguration we have already seen a type of the

coming glory. **The daystar arise in your hearts.** The words point to a direct manifestation of CHRIST to the soul of the believer, as being higher than even the prophetic word. Christ arising in the heart, by the Holy Spirit giving full assurance, creates spiritually full day in the heart, the means to which is "giving heed to the word." (Ps. 119. 105; John 5. 35; Rev. 2. 28; 22. 16; 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6.)

20. "Ye do well, as **knowing this, that no Scripture prophecy is of private interpretation**—it is not any man's own word. It is God, not the prophet himself, who thereby interprets things till then unknown" —WESLEY.

"The apostle calls on men to give heed to the prophetic word, on the ground that no prophecy, authenticated as such by being recognised as Scripture, comes by the prophet's own interpretation of the facts with which he has to deal. It is borne to him, as he proceeds to show in the next verse, from a higher source"—C. B. ALFORD translates **springs not out of human interpretation**, that is, "is not a prognostication made by a man, knowing what he means when he utters it." Archbishop WHATELY paraphrases the passage, "We have the word of prophecy confirmed by the event fulfilling it; for no prophecy is to be interpreted by the words themselves in which it is written, but by the event; for it came not by man's device (if men had been left to their own judgment, they would have probably foretold things quite plainly); but prophets spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God (whose decree was that the clear and full understanding of the predictions should not take place at the time when they were uttered)." (Rom. 12. 6.)

21. **For prophecy came not of old by the will of man**—"of any mere man whatever—**but the holy men of God**—devoted to Him, and set apart by Him for that purpose—**spake** and wrote—**being moved**—*lit.* 'carried.' They were purely passive therein"—WESLEY.

For no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost (R.V.). (2 Tim. 3. 16; 1 Pet. 1. 11; 2 Sam. 23. 2; Luke 1. 70; Acts 1. 16; 3. 18.)

CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1-22. WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS.—1. **But there were false prophets also**—"as well as true—**among the people**—of Israel. Those that spake even the truth, when God had not sent them; and also those that were truly sent of Him, and yet corrupted or softened their message, were false prophets. **As there shall be false**—as well as true—**teachers among you, who will privately bring in**—into the Church—**destructive heresies.** They first, by denying the Lord, introduced destructive heresies, that is, divisions; or they occasioned first these divisions, and then were given up to a reprobate mind, even to deny the Lord that bought them. Either the heresies are the effect of denying the Lord, or the denying the Lord was the consequence of the heresies. **Even denying**—both by their doctrine and their works—**the Lord that bought them**—with His own blood. Yet these very men perish everlastingly. Therefore Christ bought even them that perish"—WESLEY.

"The section of the Epistle which now opens presents so many parallelisms with the Epistle of S. Jude that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that one was derived from the other, or both from a common source"—C. B. **Privily bring in**—not at first openly and directly, but *by* the *way*, bringing in error by the side of the true doctrine—**damnable heresies** (R.V. "Destructive heresies," *margin*, "sects of perdition"). **The Lord that bought them** (R.V. "the Master that bought them"). The word signifies literally, a master as contrasted with a slave. (1 Tim. 6. 1, 2.) It is used of Christ in Acts 4. 24; Rev. 6. 10; and Jude 4. Here the choice of the word was probably determined by the connection with the idea of purchase, as a master buys a slave. So we read, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." Here, as there, the price referred to is the precious blood of Christ, and the universality of the redemption could not be more plainly declared. (Deut. 13. 11; Matt. 24. 11; Acts 20. 30; 1 Cor. 11. 19; 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Tim. 3. 1, 5; 1 John 4. 1; Jude 18, 4; 1 Cor. 6. 20; Gal. 3. 13; Eph. 1. 7; Heb. 10. 29; 1 Pet. 1. 18; Rev. 5. 9; Phil. 3. 19.)

2. **Their pernicious ways** (R.V. "their lascivious doings"). "False doctrine and immoral practice, in the Church, often go together"—P. **The way of truth will be evil spoken of**—"by those who blend all false and true Christians together"—WESLEY.

3. **They will make merchandise of you**—"only use you to gain by you, as merchants do their wares—**whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not**—was long ago determined, and will be executed speedily. All sinners are adjudged to destruction; and God's punishing some proves He will punish the rest"—WESLEY.

Damnation (R.V. "destruction.") The writer personifies; judgment does not loiter, destruction does not sleep. Both are eager and ready, waiting the appointed hour. (Rom. 16. 18; 2 Cor. 12. 17, 18; 1 Tim. 6. 5; Tit. 1. 11; 2 Cor. 2. 17; ch. 1. 16; Deut. 32. 35; Jude 4, 15.)

4. **Cast them down to hell**—"the bottomless pit, a place of unknown misery. **Delivered them**—like condemned criminals to safe custody, as if bound with the strongest **chains** in a dungeon of **darkness, to be reserved unto the judgment** of the great day. Though still those chains do not hinder their often

walking up and down seeking whom they may devour"—WESLEY.

Chains of darkness (R.V. "pits of darkness"). If God in time past has punished the ungodly, and saved His people, He will be sure to do so also in our days. **Angels.** The highest of intelligent creatures were not spared when they sinned. "The nature of the angels' sin is not specified. We may either think of a rebellion of angels headed by Satan, such as Milton has represented in *Paradise Lost*, or of the degradation of their spiritual nature by sensual lust, as in Gen. 6. 2"—C. B. The difficulty is created by the parallel passage in S. Jude, which appears to compare the sin of the angels with that of Sodom and Gomorrah. **Hell**—"Tartarus," a word not elsewhere found either in the New Testament or in the LXX. (Job 4. 18; Jude 6; John 8. 44; 1 John 3. 8; Luke 8. 31; Rev. 20. 2, 3.)

5. **And spared not the old,** "the antediluvian, **world, but he preserved Noah the eighth person**—that is, Noah and seven others, **a preacher,** as well as practiser, **of righteousness. Bringing a flood on the world of the ungodly**—whose numbers stood them in no stead"—WESLEY.

A preacher of righteousness—*lit.* "a herald," as if, like Jonah, he uttered some well-known proclamation which became associated with his name. A contrast is implied between the **world of the ungodly** and the few that were saved, teaching the awful and inflexible justice of God. (Gen. 7. 1, 7, 23; Heb. 11. 7; 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20; ch. 3. 6.)

6. **Sodom and Gomorrah—an example.** "S. Peter does not see in the destruction of the cities of the plain an exception to the normal order of the Divine government. It was rather a pattern instance of the judgment sure to fall, sooner or later, on all who were guilty of like sins. It may be noted that that destruction had been used as an illustration by the older prophets (Isa. 1. 9, 10; Ezek. 16. 48–56) as well as by our Lord"—C. B. (Gen. 19. 24; Deut. 29. 23; Jude 7; Num. 26. 10.)

7. **Vexed with the filthy conversation**—(R.V. "Sore distressed by the lascivious life"). The A.V. uses "conversation" in the sense of "conduct." **The wicked**—*lit.* "the lawless," setting at defiance the laws of nature, as well as those of God and man. (Gen. 19. 16.)

8. **Vexed His righteous soul**—*lit.* as R.V. *margin*, "tormented." The words refer to the pain suffered by a man of sensitive moral nature at the sight and report of the flagrant evil. Compare Ezekiel's language as to those who "sigh and cry" for the abominations done in Jerusalem. The character is the opposite of that described in Rom. 1. 32. (Ps. 119. 139, 158; Ezek. 9. 4.)

9. "It plainly appears, from these instances, that **the Lord knoweth,** hath both wisdom and power and will, **to deliver the godly out of all temptations, and to** punish the ungodly"—WESLEY.

To keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment (R.V.). **Temptations**—trials of all kinds. (Ps. 34. 17, 19; 1 Cor. 10, 13.)

10. **Chiefly them that walk after the flesh**—"corrupt nature; particularly **in the lust of uncleanness—and despise government**—the authority of their governors. **Dignities**—persons in authority"—WESLEY.

The lust of defilement (R.V.). The apostle seems to have in view the horrible impurities which were common throughout the Roman empire. (Rom. 1. 24–28.) **Dignities**—*lit.* "glories." (See note on parallel passage in Jude 4, 7, 8, 10, 16.)

11. **Whereas angels**—"when they appear **before the Lord** (Job 1. 6; 2. 1), to give an account of what they have seen and done on the earth"—WESLEY.

Jude instances Michael. If superior angels dare not, as being in the presence of God, speak evil even of the bad angels, how awful the presumption of those who speak evil blasphemously of good "dignities," as Korah did, and Shimei. (Jude 9.)

12. "Savage **as brute beasts**—several of which, in the present disordered state of the world, seem **born to be taken and destroyed**"—WESLEY.

"In contrast to angels. In reading these terrible invectives, it must be noted that the whole context implies a depth of infamy and impurity for which no language could be too strong in condemnation"—C. B. (Jer. 12. 3; Jude 10.)

13. **They count it pleasure to riot in the day time**—"they glory in doing it in the face of the sun. They are **spots** in themselves, **blemishes** to any church. **Sporting themselves with their own deceivings**—making a jest of those whom they deceive, and even jesting while they are deceiving their own souls'—WESLEY.

Revelling in their love-feasts while they feast with you (R.V.). (See note on Jude 12.) "The 'false teachers' and their followers took their place in the company of the faithful, and instead of being content with their simple food, consisting probably of bread, fish, and vegetables (the fish are always prominent in the representations of the *Agapæ* in the catacombs of Rome), brought with them, it would seem, the materials for a more luxurious meal (comp. 1 Cor. 11. 21), and, as the context shows, abused the opportunities thus given for wanton glances and impure dalliance. If the A.V. reading, **deceivings**, be adopted, the apostle points out that in so doing they were practising a fraud on the Christian society into which they intruded themselves"—C. B. But the R.V. is more probably correct. (Phil. 3. 9; Rom. 13. 13.)

15. **The way of Balaam the son of Bosor**

—"so the Chaldeans pronounced what the Jews termed 'Beor'; namely, the way of covetousness. **Who loved**—earnestly desired, though he did not dare to take, **the reward of unrighteousness**—the money which Balak would have given him for cursing Israel"—WESLEY.

"This form was adopted, perhaps because the kindred word **Bosor** means 'flesh'; and Balaam is justly termed 'son of carnality,' as covetous, and as the enticer of Israel to lust, **loved the wages of unrighteousness**, and therefore wished, in order to obtain them, to curse Israel whom you had blessed, and at last gave the hellish counsel, that the only way to bring God's curse upon Israel was to entice them to *fleshly lust* and *idolatry*, which almost always go together"—P. (Num. 22. 5, 7, 21, 23, 28 ; Jude 11.)

16. **The beast**—"though naturally dumb"—WESLEY.

"It was not what the ass said, nor direct opposition offered in words or otherwise by the animal, but the miracle itself which **forbade** (R.V. 'stayed') **the madness of the prophet**"—W. W.

17. "**Fountains** and **clouds** promise water ; so do these promise, but do not perform"—WESLEY.

Mists driven by a storm (R.V.). "The word was probably chosen as indicating what we should call the haziness of the speculations of the false teachers"—C. B. "There being few wells and little rain in Eastern countries, for a thirsty traveller to come to a well that had no water was a great disappointment ; as it was also for the husbandman to see clouds arise which give him the promise of rain, but which, ending in a tempest, destroyed instead of refreshing the fruits of the earth"—B. (Jude 12, 13.)

18. **They ensnare in the desires of the flesh**—"allowing them to gratify some unholy desire. **Those who were** before **entirely escaped from** the spirit, custom, and company of **them that live in error**—in sin"—WESLEY.

Those who are just escaping (R.V.). **Great swelling words of vanity.** "Vanity is used in its proper sense of 'emptiness.' There was no substance below their show of a transcendental knowledge. Again we trace a parallel with S. Paul's language, 'knowledge puffeth up'"—C. B. (Jude 16 ; Acts 2. 40 ; ch. 1. 4 ; ver. 20.)

19. **While they promise them liberty**—"from needless restraints and scruples, from the bondage of the Law. **Themselves are slaves of corruption**—even sin, the vilest of all bondage"—WESLEY.

"We have here the characteristic feature of the teaching which S. Peter condemns. It offered freedom from the restraints which the Council of Jerusalem had imposed alike on participation in idolatrous feasts and on sins of impurity. (Acts 15. 29.) That this was the keynote of their claims, we have distinct indication in S. Paul's teaching on the same subject. This question, 'Am I not free' (1 Cor. 9. 1), his condemnation of those who boasted of their 'right' (liberty in the English version) to eat things sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8. 9), who proclaimed that all things were 'lawful' for them (1 Cor. 10. 23), show that this was the watchword of the party of licence at Corinth ; and the language of S. Peter, though coloured with the feeling of a burning indignation against the later developments of the system, is in substance but the echo of that of his brother apostle. In his contrast between the boast of liberty and the actual bondage to corruption, we may trace a reproduction of our Lord's teaching in John 8. 34, and of S. Paul's in Rom. 6. 16"—C. B. (Gal. 5. 13 ; 1 Pet. 2. 16.)

20. **For if after they**—"who are thus ensnared—**have escaped the pollutions of the world**—the sins which pollute all who know not God—**through the knowledge of Christ**—that is, through faith in Him. (2 Pet. 1. 3.) **They are again entangled therein, and overcome, their last state is worse than the first**—more inexcusable, and causing a greater damnation"—WESLEY.

Entangled and overcome. "When men are once entangled, they are easily overcome ; therefore should men keep close to the word of God, and shun those who seek to perplex and bewilder them"—M'K. **The last state is worse than the first**—evidently quoted from the Master's own words in Matt. 12. 45. S. Peter regarded the spiritual condition of these men as a fulfilment of them. (Luke 11. 26 ; Heb. 6. 4 ; 10. 26, 27 ; ch. 1. 4 ; ver. 18 ; ch. 1. 2.)

21. **The commandment**—"the whole Law of God, **once**, not only **delivered** to their ears, but written in their hearts"—WESLEY.

"The apostle sets himself to prove that a state of apostasy is worse than a state of ignorance, for this is a condemning of the way of righteousness, after they have had some knowledge of it, and expressed some liking to it ; this carries in it a declaring that they have found some iniquity in the way of righteousness, and some falsehood in the word of truth"—M'K. (Luke 12. 47, 48 ; John 9. 41 ; 15. 22.)

22. **The dog : the sow**—"such are all men in the sight of God, before they receive His grace, and after they have made shipwreck of faith"—WESLEY.

Another of S. Peter's informal quotations of the Old Testament. He employs the language of Scripture much as Christian people use it now, without regard to literal accuracy. "You need not wonder at the event, for **dogs** and **swine** they were before, and dogs and swine they will continue. They scarcely have escaped from their filthy folly

when they are again entangled in it. S. Peter often quoted Proverbs in his First Epistle (ch. 1. 7; 2. 17; 4. 8, 18), another proof that both Epistles came from the same writer"—P. (Prov. 26. 11.)

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1. THE CERTAINTY OF THE SECOND ADVENT.—1. **This Second Epistle.** The Second Epistle, though more general in its address, yet *included* especially the same persons as the First Epistle was more particularly addressed to. **Pure minds** (R.V. "sincere")—*lit.* "pure when examined by sunlight," opposite to "having the understanding darkened." (Eph. 4. 18; ch. 1. 13.)

2, 3. "**Be** the more **mindful** thereof, because ye **know scoffers will come first**—before the Lord comes—**walking after their own evil desires**—here is the origin of the error, the root of libertinism. Do we not see this eminently fulfilled?"—WESLEY.

R.V., following the better MSS. with an overwhelming weight of authority, gives **through your apostles**, for "of us the apostles." The reading gives special interest to the words. They are a distinct recognition, like that in 1 Pet. 5. 12, and here in ver. 15, of the apostleship of S. Paul and his fellow-workers. **Scoffers**—their very scoffing confirms the truth of the prediction. (Jude 17; 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Tim. 3. 1; Jude 18; ch. 2. 10.)

4. **Saying, Where is the promise of His coming**—"to judgment (they do not even deign to name Him). We see no sign of any such thing. **For ever since the fathers**—our first ancestors—**fell asleep, all things**—heaven, water, earth—**continue as they were from the beginning of the creation**—without any such material change as might make us believe they will ever end"—WESLEY.

"The length of the interval gives occasion for the scoff of the unbeliever, and exercises the patience of the saints. **All things**, the existence and motion of the heavenly bodies, the succession of the seasons, the revolutions of day and night, every part of creation, which undergoes no visible change. It is clear that the expectation of Christ's second advent was connected with that of the change or dissolution of all things visible"—W. W. (Isa. 5. 19; Jer. 17. 15; Ezek. 12. 22, 27; Matt. 24. 48; Luke 12. 45.)

5. **For this they are willingly ignorant of**—"they do not care to know or consider—**that by the** almighty **word of God**—which bounds the duration of all things, so that it cannot be either longer or shorter—**of old**—before the flood—**the** aerial **heavens were, and the earth**—not as it is now, but **standing out of the water and in the water**—perhaps the interior globe of earth was fixed 'in the' midst of the great deep, the abyss of 'water'; the shell or exterior globe 'standing out of the water,' covering the great deep. This, or some other great and manifest difference between the original and present constitution of the terraqueous globe, seems then to have been so generally known that S. Peter charges their ignorance of it totally upon their wilfulness"—WESLEY.

That there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God (R.V.). "That is, having been in a fluid state, and continuing to be surrounded and filled with fluid. These mockers forgot the history of the creation and the deluge. The word of God caused the earth to appear out of the waters (Gen. 1. 9); water is an element in the construction of the earth, and yet, by the appointment of God, became the means of its destruction"—W. W. (Gen. 1. 6, 9; Ps. 33. 6; Heb. 11. 3; Ps. 24. 2; 136. 6; Col. 1. 17.)

6. **Through which**—"heaven and earth, the windows of heaven being opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up—**the world that then was**—the whole antediluvian race—**being overflowed with water, perished**—and the heavens and earth themselves, though they did not perish, yet underwent a great change. So little ground have these scoffers for saying that **all things continue as they were from the creation**"—WESLEY.

By which means (R.V.), "that is, by the waters from the heaven and the earth, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven opened"—W. W. The apostle speaks from the standpoint of the physical science of his time; the commentator can only do the same. The suggestions so cautiously expressed in Mr. Wesley's note on ver. 5 will not be accepted by the scientist of the present day. But the apostle's argument is clear and unanswerable. The law of continuity, on which such stress was laid, had not been without exception. There had been a great catastrophe in the past. There might be a yet greater one in the future. (Gen. 7. 11, 21-23; ch. 2. 5.)

7. **But the heavens and the earth that are now**—"since the flood. **Are reserved unto fire at the day** wherein God will **judge** the world, and punish the ungodly with everlasting **destruction**"—WESLEY.

Stored up for fire (*margin*, "stored with fire") **being reserved** (R.V.). "By analogy with ver. 5 we understand that the fire for which the present heavens and earth are reserved exists now as a constituent in their original condition, but prepared and designed as the agent of their dissolution"—W. W. **Reserved**—it is only God's watchful providence which holds together the present state of things until His time for ending it. (Ver. 10; Matt. 25. 41; 2 Thess. 1. 8.)

8. **But be not ye ignorant**—"whatever they are—**of this one thing**—which casts much light on the point in hand—**that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a**

thousand years as one day—Moses had said (Ps. 90. 4), 'A thousand years in Thy sight are as one day'; which S. Peter applies with regard to the last day, so as to denote both His eternity, whereby He exceeds all measure of time in His essence and in His operation; His knowledge, to which all things past or to come are present every moment; His power, which needs no long delay, in order to bring its work to perfection; and His long-suffering, which excludes all impatience of expectation, and desire of making haste. 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years'—that is, in one day, in one moment, He can do the work of a thousand years. Therefore He 'is not slow'—He is always equally ready to fulfil His promise. 'And a thousand years are as one day'—that is, no delay is long to God. A thousand years are as one day to the eternal God. Therefore 'He is long-suffering': He gives us space for repentance, without any inconvenience to Himself. In a word, with God time passes neither slower nor swifter than is suitable to Him and His economy; nor can there be any reason why it should be necessary for Him either to delay or hasten the end of all things. How can we comprehend this? If we could comprehend it, S. Peter needed not to have added, 'with the Lord'"—WESLEY.

"Not that God does not perceive any difference between one day and a thousand years; but that these differences do not affect His designs, or actions, or felicity, as they do those of finite creatures. What He brings to pass on the day He declares His purpose, is not more certain than what He will bring to pass a thousand years after such declaration"—B. (Ps. 90. 4.)

9. **The Lord is not slow**—"as if the time fixed for it were past—**concerning His promise**, which shall surely be fulfilled in its season—**by His long-suffering toward us**—children of men—**not willing that any** soul which He hath made **should perish**"—WESLEY.

The third answer rests upon the purpose of what men regarded as delay in the fulfilment of the promise. That purpose was one of love and mercy. It was not tardiness or slowness, but **long-suffering.** "We note, as an evidence of identity of authorship, the recurrence of the thought we found in 1 Pet. 3. 20. The long-suffering, which waited a hundred and twenty years while the ark was preparing, is exhibited again in the interval between the first and the second comings of Christ"—C. B. (Hab. 2. 3; Heb. 10. 37; Isa. 30. 18; 1 Pet. 3. 20; ver. 15; Ezek. 18. 23, 32; 33. 11; Rom. 2. 4; 1 Tim. 2. 4.)

10. **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief**—"suddenly, unexpectedly—**in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise**—surprisingly expressed by the very sound of the original word. **The elements shall melt with fervent heat.** 'The elements' seem to mean, the sun, moon, and stars; not the four commonly so called; for air and water cannot melt, and the earth is mentioned immediately after. **The earth and** all **the works**—whether of nature or art—**that are therein shall be burned up.** And has not God already abundantly provided for this? —(1) By the stores of subterranean fire which are so frequently bursting out at Ætna, Vesuvius, Hecla, and many other burning mountains; (2) by the ethereal (vulgarly called electrical) fire, diffused through the whole globe, which, if the secret chain that now binds it up were loosed, would immediately dissolve the whole frame of nature"—WESLEY.

Will come—emphatical—in spite of the mockers, notwithstanding the delay—**as a thief.** S. Peter remembers and repeats his Lord's image (Luke 12. 39, 41) used in the conversation in which he took a part. He declares the certainty, the suddenness, and the overwhelming issues of the second coming. Compare a like picture of the end of the world's history in Rev. 20. 11; 21. 1. (Matt. 24. 43; Luke 12. 39; 1 Thess. 5. 2; Rev. 3. 3; 16. 15; Ps. 102. 26; Isa. 51. 6; Matt. 24. 35; Mark 13. 31; Rom. 8. 20; Heb. 1. 11.)

11. **Seeing then that all these things are dissolved**—"to the eye of faith it appears as done already. 'All these things'—mentioned before; all that are included in that scriptural expression, 'the heavens and the earth'; that is, the universe. **What persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation**—with men. **And godliness**—toward your Creator"—WESLEY.

What manner of persons—"how serious, how watchful, how free from levity and folly, how unmoved by the trifling changes which are now continually occurring, the comparatively insignificant losses and gains, honour and reproach, pleasure and pain! How heavenly-minded, having our thoughts and affections set upon that world, with its riches, glories, and joys, which is durable and eternal"—B. (1 Pet. 1. 15.)

12. **Hastening on**—"as it were by your earnest desires and fervent prayers. **The coming of the day of God**—many myriads of days He grants to men: one, the last, is the day of God Himself"—WESLEY.

Earnestly desiring (R.V.). "Not that God's eternal appointment of the time is changeable, but God appoints us as instruments of accomplishing those events which must be first before the day of God can come. By praying for His coming, and by furthering the preaching of the gospel for a witness to all nations, we **hasten** the coming of the day of God. Christ says, 'Surely I come quickly. Amen.' Our part is to speed forward this consummation by continually praying, 'Even so; come, Lord Jesus'"—P. (1 Cor. 1. 7; Tit. 1. 13; Ps. 50. 3; Isa. 34. 4; Micah 1. 4; ver. 10.)

13. **We look for new heavens and a new**

earth—"raised as it were out of the ashes of the old; we look for an entire new state of things—**wherein dwelleth righteousness**—only righteous spirits. How great a mystery!"—WESLEY.

According to His promise—"the promise of which the apostle speaks is that of Isa. 65. 17; 66. 22, where we have the very words, 'new heavens and a new earth,' the context there connecting it with the restoration of Israel to their own land, and the renewed glory of Jerusalem. The same hope shows itself in the visions of the Apocalypse. (Rev. 21. 1.) **Wherein dwelleth righteousness.** This, again, reproduces the thought of Isaiah (ch. 65. 26), that 'they shall not hurt' (LXX. 'act unrighteously') 'nor destroy in all my holy mountain,' and S. John's account of the New Jerusalem, that 'there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth' (Rev. 21. 27)"—C. B. "This cannot be the new creation of which Isaiah speaks, for from this sin and death must be excluded. The words **heaven and earth** do not require a more exact correspondence to things present, than the words 'house,' 'building' (2 Cor. 5. 1). The Holy Ghost makes use of words with which we are familiar, to represent to our minds things to come"—W. W.

THE FINAL EXHORTATION.—14. "**Labour** that, whenever He cometh, **ye may be found in peace**—may meet Him without terror, being sprinkled with His blood, and sanctified by His Spirit, so as to be **without spot and blameless**"—WESLEY.

Blameless in His sight (R.V.). **In peace**—in all its aspects, towards God, your own conscience, and your fellow-men, and as its consequence eternal blessedness. The exhortation is an echo from the Master's teaching. (Matt. 24. 46.) The words **without spot and blameless** are nearly identical with those describing Christ "as a lamb without blemish and without spot." Those who expect the coming of Christ should be like Him in their lives. (1 Cor. 1. 8; 15. 58; Phil. 1. 10; 1 Thess. 3. 13; 5. 23.)

15. **And account the long-suffering of the Lord salvation**—"not only designed to lead men to repentance, but actually conducing thereto: a precious means of saving many more souls. **As our beloved brother Paul also hath written to you.** This refers not only to the single sentence preceding, but to all that went before. S. Paul had written to the same effect, concerning the end of the world, in several parts of his Epistles, and particularly in his Epistle to the Hebrews"—WESLEY.

The long-suffering of our Lord—connected with vers. 9, 18, shows the full participation of the Son in the counsels of the Father. **Paul hath written** (R.V. "wrote"). "The tense agrees with the idea that S. Peter had some particular Epistle in his mind. Some think that 1 Thess. 4. 13 to 5. 11 is referred to"—W. W. (Rom. 2. 4; 1 Pet. 3. 20; ver. 9.)

16. **As also in all his Epistles.** "S. Peter wrote this a little before his own and S. Paul's martyrdom. S. Paul therefore had now written all his Epistles; and even from this expression we may learn that S. Peter had read them all, perhaps sent to him by S. Paul himself. Nor was he at all disgusted by what S. Paul had written concerning him in the Epistle to the Galatians. **Speaking of these things**—namely, of the coming of our Lord, delayed through His long-suffering, and of the circumstances preceding and accompanying it. **Which** things **the unlearned** — they who are not taught of God—**and the unstable**—wavering, double-minded, unsettled men. **Wrest** — as though Christ would not come—**as they do also the other scriptures**—therefore S. Paul's writings were now part of the scriptures—**to their own destruction.** But that some use the scriptures ill, is no reason why others should not use them at all"—WESLEY.

"The Pauline Epistles were by this time become the common property of all the Churches. The **all** seems to imply they were now completed. **Hard to be understood.** When religion is studied as a science, nothing is more abstruse; when studied in order to know our duty, and practise it, nothing is easier. **Other scriptures.** S. Paul's Epistles were, therefore, by this time recognised in the Church as 'scriptures,' a term never applied, in any of the fifty places where it occurs, save to the Old and New Testament sacred writings. Men in each church having *miraculous discernment of spirits* prevented any uninspired writing being put on a par with the Old Testament Word of God; the apostles' lives were also providentially prolonged, so that fraud in the canon is out of question. The three first Gospels and the Acts are included in the 'other Scriptures,' and perhaps all the New Testament books, save John and Revelation, written later"—P. **To their own destruction.** Probably **the unlearned and unstable** claimed S. Paul as their teacher, in eating things sacrificed to idols, and indulging in sins of impurity. (See note ch. 2. 19.) Perhaps they justified a profligate Antinomianism, as others have done, by **wresting** his doctrine of justification by faith. (Rom. 8. 19; 1 Cor. 5. 24; 1 Thess. 4. 15.)

17. "**Seeing ye know these things before.** One great purpose for which prophets were inspired to foretell the corruptions which were to arise in the Church, and the evils which were to befall the sincere disciples of Christ, was to put them on their guard against these corruptions, and to arm them with fortitude to bear persecution. **Fall from your own steadfastness.** The steadfastness of the readers of the Epistle, as contrasted with the 'unstable' or 'unsteadfast' of ver. 16, is acknowledged; but they are warned that it needs care and

watchfulness to preserve it. He does not assume unconditional perseverance. The tense of the verb in 'lest ye fall' indicates that it would be a single and decisive act"—C. B. (Mark 13. 23; ch. 1. 12; Eph. 4. 14; ch. 1. 10, 11; 2. 18.)

18. **But grow in grace**—"that is, in every Christian temper. There may be, for a time, grace without growth, as there may be natural life without growth. But such sickly life, of soul or body, will end in death, and every day draw nigher to it. Health is the means of both natural and spiritual growth. If the remaining evil of our fallen nature be not daily mortified, it will, like an evil humour in the body, destroy the whole man. But if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body (only so far as we do this), ye shall live the life of faith, holiness, happiness. The end and design of grace being purchased and bestowed on us, is to destroy the image of the earthly, and restore us to that of the heavenly. And so far as it does this, it truly profits us; and also makes way for more of the heavenly gift, that we may at last be filled with all the fulness of God. The strength and well-being of a Christian depend on what his soul feeds on, as the health of the body depends on whatever we make our daily food. If we feed on what is according to our nature, we grow; if not, we pine away and die. The soul is of the nature of God, and nothing but what is according to His holiness can agree with it. Sin, of every kind, starves the soul, and makes it consume away. Let us not try to invert the order of God in His new creation: we shall only deceive ourselves. It is easy to forsake the will of God, and follow our own; but this will bring leanness into the soul. It is easy to satisfy ourselves without being possessed of the holiness and happiness of the gospel. It is easy to call these frames and feelings, and then to oppose faith to one and Christ to the other. Frames (allowing the expression) are no other than heavenly tempers, 'the mind that was in Christ.' Feelings are the Divine consolations of the Holy Ghost shed abroad in the heart of him that truly believes. And wherever faith is, and wherever Christ is, there are these blessed frames and feelings. If they are not in us, it is a sure sign that though the wilderness became a pool, the pool is become a wilderness again. **And in the knowledge of Christ**—that is, in faith the root of all. **To Him be the glory to the day of eternity**—an expression naturally flowing from that sense which the apostle had felt in his soul throughout this whole chapter. Eternity is a day, without night, without interruption, without end"—WESLEY.

Grow in the grace and knowledge (R.V.). "Not only do not fall from, but grow onward; the true secret of not going backward. **The grace and knowledge of Christ.** The 'grace' of which Christ is the author, and the 'knowledge' of which Christ is the object"—P. "The final thought of the Epistle, like that with which it opens, is the growth of the Christian life. The absence of salutations, such as those with which the First Epistle ended, may be in part due to the fact that this Epistle is not addressed to any particular church, or group of churches, but to the Christian world. The apostle was content that his last words should be, on the one hand, an earnest entreaty that men should 'grow' to completeness in their spiritual life, and, on the other, the ascription of eternal glory to the Master whom he loved"—C. B. (Eph. 4. 15; 1 Pet. 2. 2; 2 Tim. 4. 18; Rev. 1. 6.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

MR. WESLEY, in the subjoined analysis, has called this book "a tract." There is nothing epistolary in the method either of its commencement or its close.

Internal evidence, corroborated by the unbroken testimony of Christian antiquity, assures us that it was written by John, the Apostle and Evangelist; and the constant allusions to the language of the Fourth Gospel render it probable that it was written at about the same time, or a little later. The persons, or churches, for whom it was intended, and the immediate purpose it was designed to serve, can only be the subjects of uncertain conjecture. But it is evident that the Gnostic heresy, which prevailed so widely not long afterwards, had already begun to trouble the Church. Repeated allusion will be found in the following notes to this long-perished system of "philosophy, falsely so called." Under the guidance of the Spirit of

Inspiration, the statements of Christian doctrine, and the descriptions of Christian life, which were called forth by the conflict of the day, were, in this case, as well as in many others, made profitable to the Church in all ages.

The style is characteristic of S. John. Employing language of an almost infantile simplicity, he presents the profoundest truths concerning the Divine nature, and the great work of human redemption.

"THE PARTS OF IT ARE THREE—

I. The Preface, ... Chap. i. 1-4.
II. The Tract itself, ... ,, i., v. 5-12.
III. The Conclusion, ... ,, ,, 13-31.

In the Preface he shows the authority of his own preaching and writing, and expressly points out the design of his present writing. To the Preface exactly answers the Conclusion, more largely explaining the same design.

THE TRACT ITSELF HAS TWO PARTS, TREATING—

I. Severally—
1. Of communion with the Father, ... Chap. i. 5-10.
2. Of communion with the Son, with a distinct application to fathers, young men, and little children, and an exhortation to abide in Him, ... ,, ii. 1-12.
3. Of the confirmation and fruit of this abiding through the Spirit, ... ,, iv. 1-21.

II. Conjointly—
1. Of the testimony of the Father, Son, and Spirit; on which faith in Christ, love to God, and victory over the world, are founded, ... ,, v. 1-12."
—WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1-4. THE AUTHORITY AND THE DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE.—1. **That which was**—"here means, He which was the Word Himself; afterwards it means, that which they had heard from Him. **Which was**—namely, with the Father (ver. 2), before He was manifested. **From the beginning.** This phrase is sometimes used in a limited sense; but here it properly means from eternity, being equivalent with 'in the beginning' (John 1. 1). **That which we**—the apostles—**have** not only **heard**, but **seen with our eyes, which we have beheld** — attentively considered on various occasions. **Of the word of life.** He is termed 'the Word' (John 1. 1); 'the life' (John 1. 4); as He is the living Word of God, who, with the Father and the Spirit, is the fountain of life to all creatures, particularly of spiritual and eternal life"—WESLEY.

Concerning the word of life (R.V.). "Note the climax. Seeing is more than hearing, and beholding (which requires time) is more than seeing (which may be momentary), while handling is more than all. With all the language at his command, the apostle insists on the reality of the Incarnation, of which he can speak from personal knowledge, based on the combined evidence of all the senses. The Docetic heresy of supposing that the Lord's body was unreal, and the Cerinthian heresy of supposing that He who was from the beginning was different from Him whom they had seen and handled, are authoritatively condemned by implication at the outset"—C. B. (John 1. 1; ch. 2. 13; John 1. 14; 2 Pet. 1. 16; ch. 4. 14; Luke 24. 39; John 20. 27.)

2. **For the life**—"the living Word—**was manifested**—in the flesh, to our very senses. **And we testify and declare**—we testify by declaring, by preaching, and writing (vers. 3, 4). Preaching lays the foundation (vers. 5-10), writing builds thereon. **To you**—who have not seen. **The eternal life** — which always was, and afterward **appeared to us.** This is mentioned in the beginning of the Epistle. In the end of it is mentioned the same 'eternal life,' which we shall always enjoy"—WESLEY.

In this parenthetical verse, as in vers. 1 and 3, the apostle emphatically reiterates that what he has to communicate is the result of his own personal experience. Several instances of this occur in S. John's Gospel. (John 1. 4; 11. 25; 14. 6; Rom. 16. 26; 1 Tim. 3. 16; ch. 3. 5; John 21. 24; Acts 2. 32; ch. 5. 20; John 1. 1, 2.)

3. **That which we have seen and heard**—"of Him and from Him—**declare we to you** —for this end—**that ye also may have**

fellowship with us—may enjoy the same fellowship which we enjoy. **And truly our fellowship**—whereby He is in us and we in Him—**is with the Father and with the Son**—of the Holy Ghost he speaks afterwards"—WESLEY.

That ye also—"that being fully satisfied and firmly persuaded of the truth of our testimony, and laying hold on Him by a lively faith, ye may have fellowship with God and with Christ, such as we apostles and other faithful Christians have, and may partake with us of the benefits and privileges we enjoy thereby"—B. (Acts 4. 20; John 17. 11; 2 Cor. 1. 9; ch. 2. 24.)

4. **That your joy may be full.** "So our Lord also. (John 15. 11; 16. 22.) There is a joy of hope, a joy of faith, and a joy of love. Here the joy of faith is directly intended. It is a concise expression. 'Your joy'—that is, your faith and the joy arising from it; but it likewise implies the joy of hope and love"—WESLEY.

"These words apply to the whole Epistle, of which he here states the purpose, just as in John 20. 31 he states the purpose of his Gospel. The following profound thoughts struggle for expression in these four opening verses. There is a Being who has existed with God the Father from all eternity; He is the Father's Son; He is also the expression of the Father's nature and will (the Word); He has been manifested in space and in time; and of that manifestation I and others have had personal knowledge. In revealing to us the Divine nature, He becomes to us life, eternal life. We come to you with the declaration of all this in our hands, that you may unite with us in our great possession, and that our joy in the Lord may be complete"—C. B. The marginal references point out the striking identity, both in thought and language, of the Gospel and the Epistle. (John 15. 11; 16. 24; 2 John 12.)

Vers. 5–10. OF COMMUNION WITH THE FATHER.—5. "**And this is** the sum of **the message which we have heard of Him**—the Son of God—**that God is light**—the light of wisdom, love, holiness, glory. What light is to the natural eye, that God is to the spiritual eye—**and in Him is no darkness at all**—no contrary principle. He is pure, unmixed light"—WESLEY.

"The schoolmen well said that there is a fourfold darkness—of nature, of ignorance, of misery, and of sin. The symbol of light applied to God must designate perfect goodness and beauty, with blissful consciousness of it, and luminous clearness of wisdom"—E. "There are three statements in the Bible which stand alone as revelations of the nature of God, and they are all in the writings of S. John: 'God is Spirit' (John 4. 24); 'God is light,' and 'God is love' (1 John 4. 16)"—C. B. (Ch. 3. 11; John 1. 9; 8. 12; 9. 5; 12. 35, 36.)

6. **If we say**—"either with our tongue, or in our heart, if we endeavour to persuade either ourselves or others—**we have fellowship with Him**, while we **walk**, either inwardly or outwardly, **in darkness**—in sin of any kind—**we do not the truth**—our actions prove that the truth is not in us"—WESLEY.

As light is the symbol of wisdom and holiness, so darkness represents folly and sin. The repeated antithesis, **God is light, and in Him is no darkness; we lie and do not the truth**, is characteristic of S. John. The energy with which he insists on the necessity of practical holiness suggests the existence and the prevalence of a contrary opinion. The Gnostics taught that to the enlightened man all conduct was morally indifferent. (2 Cor. 6. 14; ch. 2. 4.)

7. **But if we walk in the light**—"in all holiness—**as God is** (a deeper word than 'walk,' and more worthy of God) **in the light**, then we may truly say, **we have fellowship one with another**—we who have seen, and you who have not seen, do alike enjoy that fellowship with God: the imitation of God being the only sure proof of our having fellowship with Him. **And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son**—with the grace purchased thereby—**cleanseth us from all sin**—both original and actual, taking away all the guilt and all the power"—WESLEY.

The blood of Jesus His Son (R.V.). "This word **(the blood)** declares more vividly than any other could do three great realities of the Christian belief: the reality of the manhood of Jesus, the reality of His sufferings, the reality of His sacrifice. Much modern criticism of hymns and sermons, where the blood of Jesus is at all appealed to, is unscriptural and rationalistic in its ultra-refinement. It is out of touch with S. Paul (Col. 1. 14–20), with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 9. 14), with S. Peter (1 Pet. 1. 19), with S. John in this Epistle, with the redeemed in heaven (Rev. 5. 9)"—E. **His Son.** Not redundant. It explains how this blood can have such virtue. **Cleanseth us.** The present tense of what goes on continually. "This passage shows that the gratuitous pardon of sins is given to us not once only, but is a benefit perpetually residing in the Church, and daily offered to the faithful"—CALVIN. (1 Cor. 6. 11; Eph. 1. 7; Heb. 9. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 19; ch. 2. 2; Rev. 1. 5.)

8. **If we say**—"any child of man, before His blood has cleansed us—**we have no sin**—to be cleansed from, instead of 'confessing our sins' (ver. 9), **the truth is not in us**—neither in our mouth nor in our heart"—WESLEY.

"We must be destitute even of that self-knowledge which, in the nature of things, must necessarily precede every other branch of experimental and practical religion"—B. (1 Kings 8. 46; 2 Chron. 6. 36; Job 9. 2; 15.

14; 25. 4; Prov. 20. 9; Eccles. 7. 20; Jas. 2. 2; ch. 2. 2.)

9. "But **if** with a penitent and believing heart **we confess our sins, He is faithful**—because He had promised this blessing, by the unanimous voice of all His prophets. **Just**—surely then He will punish: no; for this very reason He will pardon. This may seem strange; but upon the evangelical principle of atonement and redemption, it is undoubtedly true; because, when the debt is paid, or the purchase made, it is the part of equity to cancel the bond, and consign over the purchased possession. **Both to forgive us our sins**—to take away all the guilt of them—**and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**—to purify our souls from every kind and every degree of it"—WESLEY.

"Obviously confession to Him who is **faithful and just**, and to those **selves** whom we should otherwise **deceive** and lead astray, is all that is meant. The passage has nothing to do with the question of confession to our fellow-men. **To forgive us our sins and to cleanse us.** (1) We are absolved from sin's punishment; (2) We are freed from sin's pollution. The forgiveness is the averting of God's wrath, the cleansing is the beginning of holiness"—C. B. (Ps. 32. 5; Prov. 28. 13; ver. 7; Ps. 51. 2.)

10. "Yet still we are to retain, even to our lives' end, a deep sense of our past sins. Still, **if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar**—who saith, all have sinned. **And His word is not in us**—we do not receive it; we give it no place in our hearts"—WESLEY.

We make him a liar. "Mark the gradation—ver. 6, 'We lie,' ver. 8, 'We deceive ourselves,' and now, ver. 10, 'We make him a liar,' by denying His word that all have sinned. **His word is not in us**—His word, which is 'the truth,' accuses us truly; by denying it, we drive it from our hearts"—P.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1–12. OF COMMUNION WITH THE SON.—1. **My beloved children**—"so the apostle frequently addresses the whole body of Christians. It is a term of tenderness and endearment, used by our Lord Himself to His disciples. (John 13. 33.) And perhaps many to whom S. John now wrote were converted by His ministry. It is a different word from that which is translated 'little children,' in several parts of the Epistle, to distinguish it from which it is here rendered 'beloved children.' **I write these things to you, that ye may not sin.** Thus he guards them beforehand against abusing the doctrine of reconciliation. All the words, institutions, and judgments of God are levelled against sin, either that it may not be committed, or that it may be abolished. **But if anyone sin**—let him not lie in sin, despairing of help—**we have an advocate**—we have for our advocate, not a mean person, but Him of whom it was said, 'This is My beloved Son'—not a guilty person, who stands in need of pardon for himself, but **Jesus Christ the righteous**—not a mere petitioner, who relies purely upon liberality, but one that has merited, fully merited, whatever He asks"—WESLEY.

"In order to walk in the light, the first step is confession of sin (ch. 1. 9), the next (ch. 2. 1) is that we should forsake all sin. **An advocate** (Greek, 'Paraclete'). The same term applied to the Holy Ghost, showing the unity of the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity. Christ is the Intercessor **for us** above, and in His absence the Holy Ghost is the other Intercessor **in us.** Christ's advocacy is inseparable from the Holy Spirit's comforting us and assisting our prayers"—P. (Rom. 8. 34; 1 Tim. 2. 5; Heb. 7. 25; 9. 24.)

2. **And He is the propitiation**—"the atoning sacrifice, by which the wrath of God is appeased. **For our sins**—who believe—**and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world**—just as wide as sin extends, the propitiation extends also"—WESLEY.

Note the present tense throughout. **We have an advocate, He is the propitiation**; this condition of things is perpetual, it is not something that took place a long time ago once for all. The term used for 'propitiation' occurs in the New Testament only here and ch. 4. 10; it is found in the LXX. repeatedly. (Num. 5. 8; 29. 11; Lev. 25. 9.) It is clear that the word is used in the New Testament to express expiation by an offering or sacrifice. (Rom. 3. 25; 2 Cor. 5. 18; ch. 1. 7; 4. 10.)

3. "**And hereby we know that we** truly and savingly **know Him**—as He is the advocate, the righteous, the propitiation—**if we keep His commandments**—particularly those of faith and love"—WESLEY.

The Gnostics boasted of enlightenment, but regarded moral character as insignificant. The apostle repeatedly warns his friends against the dangerous heresy, and under Divine inspiration employs language profitable to the Church in all ages.

4. **He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar.** "Heretics of that age, living in the most criminal sensual indulgence, boasted that they were the objects of Divine favour, and sure of obtaining eternal life, merely because they possessed the knowledge of the true God, and of His mercy in forgiving men's sins. In this boasting the apostle declared them liars"—B. But the same heresy nevertheless has reappeared in many forms in different ages. (Ch. 1. 6, 8; 4. 20.)

5. **But whoso keepeth His word**—"His commandments. **Verily in Him the love of God**—reconciled to us through Christ—**is perfected**—is perfectly known. **Hereby**—by our keeping His word—**we know that we are in Him**—so is the tree known by its fruits. To 'know Him,' to be 'in Him,' to 'abide in Him,'

are nearly synonymous terms; only with a gradation—knowledge, communion, constancy" —WESLEY.

This verse expands ver. 3. "'The love of God' here means 'the love of man to God'; this is the common usage in this Epistle. (Ch. 2. 15; 3. 17; 4. 12; 5. 3.)"—C. B. Obedience, not feeling, is the test of love. And knowledge is not love, though love must spring from knowledge. (John 14. 21–23; ch. 4. 12, 13.)

6. **He that saith he abideth in Him**—"which implies a durable state; a constant, lasting knowledge of and communion with Him—**ought himself**—otherwise they are vain words—**so to walk, even as He walked**—in the world—**as He**, are words that frequently occur in this Epistle. Believers having their hearts full of Him, easily supply His name"—WESLEY.

"We have here the climax complete—(ver. 3); to know Him (ver. 5), to be in Him, and here to abide in Him. **Even as He walked.** The 'He' in the Greek is a different pronoun from the 'Him' immediately preceding. 'In Him' means 'in God'; 'even as He walked' refers to Christ"—C. B. (John 15. 4, 5; Matt. 11. 29; John 13. 15; 1 Pet. 2. 21.)

7. "When I speak of keeping His word, **I write not a new commandment**—I do not speak of any new one—**but the old commandment, which ye had**—even from your forefathers"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits the second **from the beginning.** "**An old commandment** concerning holiness of life, and loving one another which was given to your forefathers at the forming of your commonwealth"—B. (2 John 5; ch. 3. 11.)

8. **Again, I do write a new commandment to you**—"namely, with regard to loving one another. A commandment **which**, though it also was given long ago, yet **is** truly new **in Him and in you.** It was exemplified **in Him**, and is now fulfilled by you, in such a manner as it never was before. For there is no comparison between the state of the Old Testament believers, and that which ye now enjoy; the **darkness** of that dispensation **is passed away; and** Christ **the true light now shineth** in your hearts"—WESLEY.

The darkness is passing away (R.V.). "The repetition, **in Him and in you**, implies that the love-commandment finds its realisation separately, first in Him, and then in us, through His Spirit given to us. So Jesus said, 'My Father and your Father'—your Father in the highest and best sense, because He is Mine"—P. (John 13. 34; 15. 12; Rom. 13. 12; Eph. 5. 8; 1 Thess. 5. 5–8; John 1. 9; 8. 12; 12. 35.)

9. **He that saith he is in the light**—"in Christ united to him—**and hateth his brother**—the very name shows the love due to him—**is in darkness until now**—void of Christ and of all true light"—WESLEY.

His brother—his neighbour, and especially those of the Christian brotherhood. **Even until now**—notwithstanding that the true light already shineth. (1 Cor. 13. 2; 2 Pet. 1. 9; ch. 3. 14, 15.)

10. **He that loveth his brother**—"for Christ's sake—**abideth in the light**—of God—**and there is no occasion of stumbling in him**—whereas he that hates his brother is an occasion of stumbling to himself. He stumbles against himself, and against all things within and without; while he that loves his brother has a free, disencumbered journey"—WESLEY.

S. John has in mind Jesus' words in John 11. 9, 10, "Abiding in the light, we abide also in love, for the gospel light not only enlightens, but warms the heart into love"—P. (Ch. 3. 14; 2 Pet. 1. 10.)

11. **He that hateth his brother**—"and he must hate, if he does not love him: there is no medium. **Is in darkness**—in sin, perplexity, entanglement. He **walketh in darkness, and knoweth not** that he is in the high road to hell"—WESLEY.

There is no medium. Wherever spiritual life does not exist, there is the root and possibility of all evil. "The light and the darkness are within ourselves, admitted into us by the eye, whose singleness fills the whole body with light"—ALFORD. (John 12. 35.)

12. **I have written to you, beloved children.** "Thus S. John bespeaks all to whom he writes. But, from vers. 13–27, he divides them particularly into 'fathers,' 'young men,' and 'little children.' **Because your sins are forgiven you.** As if he had said, This is the sum of what I have now written. He then proceeds to other things, which are built upon this foundation"—WESLEY.

Little children—Greek, "little sons," or "dear children," not the same word as in ver. 13, "little *children*," infants in age or standing. He calls all to whom he writes by the first word (ch. 2. 1, 28; 3. 18; 4. 4; 5. 21); the second is only used in vers. 13–18. It is to all God's children without exception that he says, **Your sins are forgiven you, for His name's sake.** (Luke 24. 47; Acts 4. 12; 10. 43; 13. 38; ch. 1. 7.)

Vers. 13–27. DISTINCT APPLICATION TO FATHERS, YOUNG MEN, AND LITTLE CHILDREN.—13. "The address to spiritual fathers, young men, and little children, is first proposed in this verse, wherein he says, **I write to you, fathers: I write to you, young men: I write to you, little children:** and then enlarged upon; in doing which he says, 'I have written to you, fathers' (ver. 14). 'I have written to you, young men' (vers. 14–17). 'I have written to you, little children' (vers. 18–27). Having finished his address to each, he returns to all together, whom he again terms (as ver. 12), 'beloved children.' **Fathers, ye have known Him that is from the beginning**—ye have known the eternal God, in a manner wherein no other, even true believers, know

Him. **Young men, ye have overcome the wicked one**—in many battles, by the power of faith. **Little children, ye have known the Father**—as your Father (though ye have not yet overcome), by 'the Spirit witnessing with your spirit, that ye are the children of God'" WESLEY.

"The **fathers** were the most ancient believers, who had made the greatest progress in the knowledge, experience, and practice of religion. **Young men** were those in the greatest vigour of the spiritual life, and who were considered by the apostle as soldiers fighting under Christ against the powers of darkness. **Little, or young children**, were the newly converted"—B. (John 1. 1.)

14. **I have written to you, fathers**—"as if he had said, Observe well what I but now wrote. He speaks very briefly and modestly to these, who needed not much to be said to them, as having that deep acquaintance with God which comprises all necessary knowledge. **Young men, ye are strong**—in faith. **And the word of God abideth in you**—deeply rooted in your hearts, whereby ye have often foiled your great adversary"—WESLEY.

In R.V., following the oldest MSS., the tense changes in the last clause of ver. 13. **I have written unto you, young children.** "It was a classic idiom to employ the past tense in letter-writing, regarding the time from the reader's point of view; when he received the letter the writing would be past"—P. By **Him that was from the beginning** the apostle probably means the Lord Jesus. (See ch. 1. 1.) **The word of God abideth in you**—the secret of their strength and the source of their victory. They are strong because they have God's will, as revealed in Scripture, as a permanent principle of action within them. The expression was an echo from the Master's words (John 15. 7), as is so frequently the case in this Epistle. (Eph. 6. 10.)

15. "To you all, whether fathers, young men, or little children, I say, **Love not the world**—pursue your victory by overcoming the world. **If any man love the world**—seek happiness in visible things, he does not love God"—WESLEY.

"The world which the 'young men' had overcome, and which we are warned not to love, means 'man and man's world, considered as in a state of estrangement from God.' God loved the world with the love of compassion, and we should so love every grade and every individual of the race, however deeply fallen. But we cannot love the world in its estrangement from God, with congeniality and complacency, and at the same time love God"—P. (Rom. 12. 2; Matt. 6. 24; Gal. 1. 10; James 4. 4.)

16. **The desire of the flesh**—"of the pleasure of the outward senses, whether of the taste, smell, or touch. **The desire of the eye**—of the pleasures of imagination, to which the eye chiefly is subservient; of that internal sense whereby we relish whatever is grand, new, or beautiful. **The pride of life**—all that pomp in clothes, houses, furniture, equipage, manner of living, which generally procure honour from the bulk of mankind, and so gratify pride and vanity. It therefore directly includes the desire of praise, and, remotely, covetousness. All these desires are not from God, but from the prince of this world"—WESLEY.

"A parallel has been drawn between S. John's classification and the three elements in the temptation by which Eve was overcome by the evil one, and again the three temptations by which Christ overcame the evil one: When the woman saw that the tree was good for food (the lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eye (the lust of the eye), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (the vainglory of life). (Gen. 3. 6.) Similarly the temptations—(1) to work a miracle in order to satisfy the cravings of the flesh; (2) to submit to Satan in order to win possession of all that the eye could see; (3) to tempt God, in order to win the glory of a miraculous preservation"—C. B. All this is **not of the Father.** The child of God turns to God. (Eccles. 5. 11.)

17. **The world passeth away and the desire thereof**—"that is, all that can gratify those desires passeth away with it—**but he that doeth the will of God**—that loves God, not the world—**abideth**—in the enjoyment of what he loves, **for ever**"—WESLEY.

"We see once more how S. John, in giving the antithesis of a previous idea, expands it. He says that the world and all its ways are on the wane; but as the opposite of this, he says, not merely that God and His will and ways abide, but that **he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.** Again, he speaks of the love of the world and the love of the Father; but as the opposite of him who loves the world he says not, 'he that loveth the Father,' but 'he that doeth the will of the Father.' This implies that true love involves obedience"—C. B. (1 Cor. 7. 31; James 1. 10; 4. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 24.)

18. **My little children, it is the last time.** "The last dispensation of grace, that which is to continue to the end of time, is begun. **Ye have heard that Antichrist cometh.** Under the term Antichrist, or the spirit of Antichrist, he includes all false teachers and enemies to the truth; yea, whatever doctrines or men are contrary to Christ. It seems to have been long after this that the name of Antichrist was appropriated to that grand adversary of Christ, 'the man of sin' (2 Thess. 2. 3). Antichrist in S. John's sense, that is, antichristianism, has been spreading from his time till now; and will do so, till that great adversary arises, and is destroyed by Christ's coming"—WESLEY.

It is the last hour (R.V.). "It has been supposed to derogate from the Divine mission of the apostles to admit that they might be

mistaken as to the closing hour of time. But to know that supreme instant would involve a knowledge of the whole plan of God and of the whole of the motives which would determine the appointment of that day, that is, it would constructively involve omniscience"—E. "The only point upon which we can say that the apostles were in error, is in their expectation of the immediate coming of Christ; and this is the very point, which our Saviour says (Mark 13. 32) is known only to the Father"—JELF. "The term Antichrist involves the two ideas of counterfeiting and opposing: it means an opposition Christ or rival Christ, just as we call a rival pope an anti-pope"—C. B. "In the heart of the apostolic Church was one awful anticipation: it came from those who received it from Christ (John 5. 43), and S. John gives it a name. In the Antichrist the antichristian principle is personally consecrated. Shadows and anticipations the Church has seen, but it is evident that as yet the Antichrist has not come. Wherever S. John mentions him, he connects the name with the denial of the Manhood, the Messiahship, the everlasting Sonship of Jesus, of the Father, who is His and our Father"—E. (John 21. 5; Heb. 1. 2; 2 Thess. 2. 3; 2 Pet. 2. 1; ch. 4. 3; Matt. 24. 5-24; 2 John 7; 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Tim. 3. 1.)

19. **They were not of us.** "When they went; their hearts were before departed from God, otherwise, **they would have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest**—that is, this was made manifest by their going out"—WESLEY.

"Hence it is one of the marks of Antichrist that he had been once in the Christian Church, and a teacher by profession, but had left it or apostatised"—B. (Deut. 13. 13; Ps. 41. 9; Acts 20. 30; Matt. 24. 24; John 6. 37; 10. 28, 29; 2 Tim. 2. 19; 1 Cor. 11. 19.)

20. **But ye have an anointing**—"a chrism; perhaps so termed in opposition to the name of Antichrist; an inward teaching **from the Holy Ghost**, whereby ye **know all things**—necessary for your preservation from these seducers, and for your eternal salvation. S. John here but just touches upon the Holy Ghost, of whom he speaks more largely. (1 John 3. 24; 4. 13; 5. 6.)"—WESLEY.

"There appears no proof that the apostle is addressing those members of the primitive Church only who were endued with extraordinary gifts. Through the whole Epistle he is addressing Christians in general; all of whom are represented in this Epistle as dwelling in God, and God in them, and as knowing that He dwelt in them by the Spirit which He had given them. (Ch. 3. 24; 4. 16.) Now this Spirit, which all true believers possess, is a Spirit of truth as well as of grace, and leads those on whom He is conferred into all essential truth, all the grand leading doctrines of the gospel; which would sufficiently secure those to whom the apostle wrote, against the seductions of the false teachers, the Antichrists here referred to"—B. (2 Cor. 1. 21; Heb. 1. 9; ver. 27; Mark 1. 24; Acts 3. 14; John 10. 4. 5; 14. 26; 16. 13.)

21. **I have written**—"namely (ver. 13)—**to you because ye know the truth**—that is, to confirm you in the knowledge ye have already. **Ye know that no lie is of the truth**—that all the doctrines of these Antichrists are irreconcilable to it"—WESLEY.

Lit. Every **lie is not from the truth.** The true doctrine is divine in its origin, the false is not.

22. **Who is that liar**—"who is guilty of that lying, but he who denies that truth which is the sum of all Christianity? That Jesus is the Christ; that He is the Son of God; that He came in the flesh, is one undivided truth: and he that denies any part of this, in effect denies the whole. **He is Antichrist**—and the spirit of Antichrist, who in denying the Son denies the Father also"—WESLEY.

Who is the liar? (R.V.). That is, the person guilty of the lie just mentioned. (John 4. 3; 2 John 7.)

23. "**Whosoever denieth the** eternal **Son** of God, **he hath not** communion with **the Father**; but **he that** truly and believingly **acknowledgeth the Son hath** communion with **the Father also**"—WESLEY.

The italics in the second clause in A.V. may be disregarded. The words are evidently genuine, with the exception of the conjunction *but*. So R.V. **Hath not the Father**—"hath no interest in him as his Father, since that is only obtained through Christ"—B. **Hath the Father**—as his "portion." (John 15. 23; 2 John 9; John 14. 7, 9, 10; ch. 4. 15.)

24. "**If that** truth concerning the Father and the Son, **which ye** have **heard from the beginning abide** fixed and rooted **in you, ye also shall abide in** that happy communion with **the Son and the Father**"—WESLEY.

As for you, let that abide in you (R.V.). Also note that the words **remain** and **continue** should be **abide**. S. John used the same word thrice; and when he speaks of abiding in Christ, he repeats the Master's own exhortations. (2 John 6; John 14. 23; ch. 1. 3.)

25. "**He**—the Son—**hath promised us**—if we abide in Him"—WESLEY.

Some of these promises of eternal life S. John had recorded in his Gospel. (John 3. 15, 36; 6. 40, 47, 57; 17. 2, 3; ch. 1. 2; 5. 11.)

26. **These things**—"from ver. 21—**I have written to you.** S. John, according to his custom, begins and ends with the same form, and, having finished a kind of parenthesis (ver. 20-27), continues (ver. 27) what he said in ver. 20, **concerning them that** would **seduce you**"—WESLEY.

That would lead you astray (R.V.). (Ch. 3. 7; 2 John 7.)

27. **Ye need not that any should teach you, save as that anointing teacheth you**—"which is always the same, always consistent

with itself. But this does not exclude our need of being taught by them who partake of the same anointing. **Of all things**—which it is necessary for you to know. **And is no lie**—like that which Antichrist teaches. **Ye shall abide in Him**—this is added both by way of comfort and of exhortation. The whole discourse, from ver. 18 to this, is peculiarly adapted to little children"—WESLEY.

And as for you, the anointing—"not that the believer is made infallible, for no believer here receives the Spirit in all its fulness, but only the measure needful for keeping him from soul-destroying error. So the Church, though having the Spirit in her, is not infallible, but is kept from ever wholly losing the saving truth"—P. (Ver. 20; Jer. 31. 33, 34; Heb. 8. 10, 11; John 14. 26; 16. 13.)

Ver. 28-3. 24.—EXHORTATION TO ABIDE IN CHRIST, IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.—28. **And now, beloved children.** "Having finished his address to each, he now returns to all in general. **Abide in Him, that we**—a modest expression—**may not be ashamed before Him at His coming.** Oh how will ye Jews, Socinians, nominal Christians, be ashamed in that day!"—WESLEY.

That if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness (R.V.). The word "if" implies no doubt as to the fact, but it suggests uncertainty as to the time. (Ch. 3. 2; 4. 17.)

29. **Everyone**—"and none else—**who practiseth righteousness**—from a believing, loving heart—**is born of Him**—for all His children are like Himself"—WESLEY.

"God is righteous, and therefore the source of righteousness; when a man doeth righteousness, we know that the source of his righteousness is God; that, consequently, he has acquired by new birth from God that righteousness which he had not by nature. We argue from his **doing righteousness** to his being **born of God.** The error of Pelagians is to conclude that doing righteousness is a condition of *becoming* a child of God"—ALFORD. So in Luke 7. 47, 50. "Her much love evinced that her sins were already forgiven, not, was the condition of her sins being forgiven"—P. (Acts 22. 14; ch. 3. 7, 10.)

CHAPTER III.

1. **That we should be called**—"that is, should be **the children of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not**—they know not what to make of us. We are a mystery to them"—WESLEY.

That we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world (R.V.). That is, "we are children of God, and for this cause the world knows us not, because it knew Him not." The third sentence explains how the second follows from the first. Note how R.V. has strengthened this beautiful text, by the insertion of the lost clause, **and such we are.** (John 1. 12; 15. 18, 19; 16. 3; 17. 25.)

2. **It doth not yet appear**—"even to ourselves—**what we shall be.** It is something ineffable, which will raise the children of God to be, in a manner, as God Himself. **But we know,** in general, that **when He,** the Son of God, **shall appear, we shall be like Him,** the glory of God penetrating our inmost substance. **For we shall see Him as He is**—manifestly, without a veil. And that sight will transform us into the same likeness"—WESLEY.

If He shall be manifested (R.V.). The word "if" used exactly as in ch. 2. 28. "The transition from God the Father to **He, Him,** referring to Christ (who alone is said in Scripture to be manifested), not the Father (John 1. 18), implies the entire unity of the Father and the Son"—P. **Like Him**—continual beholding will produce likeness. (2 Cor. 3. 18.) **As He is**—namely, in the glorified humanity of the Son. (Isa. 56. 5; Rom. 8. 15; Gal. 3. 26; 4. 6; ch. 5. 1; Rom. 8. 18; 2 Cor. 4. 17; Rom. 8. 29; 1 Cor. 15. 49; Phil. 3. 21; Col. 3. 4; 2 Pet. 1. 4; Job 19. 26; Ps. 16. 11; Matt. 5. 8; 1 Cor. 13. 12; 2 Cor. 5. 7.)

3. **And everyone that hath this hope in Him**—"in God"—WESLEY.

In Him . . . as He. In the Greek the pronouns are different. Probably we should understand that he who, relying on God, hopes to be like God hereafter, must purify himself now after the example of Christ. (Ch. 4. 17.)

4. **Whosoever committeth sin**—"thereby transgresseth the holy, just, and good law of God, and so sets His authority at nought; for this is implied in the very nature of sin"—WESLEY.

Everyone that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness (R.V.). The apostle's meaning is that no one should presume to think lightly of sin. Some of the Gnostics, as we have noted previously, declared that their spiritual enlightenment placed them above the moral law. The apostle shows that sin, being disregard of God's revealed will, cannot be reconcilable with being a child of God. (Rom. 4. 15; ch. 5. 17.)

5. "**And ye know that He**—Christ—**was manifested**—that He came into the world for this very purpose—**to take away our sins**—to destroy them all, root and branch, and leave none remaining. **And in Him is no sin**—so that He could not suffer on His own account, but to make us as Himself"—WESLEY.

Two more arguments to prove that sin is incompatible with the character of the child of God—first from the mission, then from the character of the Eternal Son, who is the perfect pattern of what a son should be. (Ch. 1. 2; Isa. 53. 5, 6, 11; 1 Tim. 1. 15; Heb. 1. 3; 9. 26; 1 Pet. 2. 24; 2 Cor. 5. 21; Heb. 4. 15; 9. 28; 1 Pet. 2. 22.)

6. "**Whosoever abideth in** communion with **Him,** by loving faith, **sinneth not**—while he so abideth. **Whosoever sinneth** certainly **seeth Him not**—the loving eye of his soul is

not fixed upon God; **neither** doth he then experimentally **know Him**—whatever he did in time past"—WESLEY.

Hath not seen Him. "S. John does not say this of every one who commits any sin, but of the habitual sinner (present participle in the Greek). Although the believer may sometimes fall into sin, yet not sin, but opposition to sin, is the ruling principle of his life"—C. B. (Ch. 2. 4; 4. 8; 3 John 11.)

7. **Let no one deceive you**—"let none persuade you that any man is righteous but **he that** uniformly **practises righteousness**; he alone **is righteous**, after the example of his Lord"—WESLEY.

The apostle's words imply that some persons had endeavoured to deceive the brethren by teaching what he here condemns. If faith without works is dead, much more is knowledge without works dead. Works do not justify, but the justified man works, and from his doing righteousness we safely infer that he is righteousness. (Ch. 2. 26; Ezek. 18. 5, 9; Rom. 2. 13; ch. 2. 29.)

8. "**He that committeth sin is** a child **of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning**—that is, was the first sinner in the universe, and has continued to sin ever since. **The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil**—all sin. And will He not perform this in all that trust in Him"—WESLEY.

As before, the present participle in the Greek intimates the *habitual* sinner. **Of the devil.** "The devil made no man, begat no man: but whoso imitates the devil becomes a child of the devil. In what sense art thou a child of Abraham? Not that Abraham begat thee. In the same sense as that in which the Jews, the children of Abraham, by not imitating the faith of Abraham, are become children of the devil"—S. AUGUSTINE. **From the beginning.** "The phrase intimates that there has been no period of the existence of human beings in which they have not been liable to the assaults of this tempter; that accusations against God, reasons for doubting and distrusting Him, have been offered to one man after another, to one generation after another. This is just what the Scripture affirms; just the assumption which goes through the book from Genesis to the Apocalypse"—MAURICE. **To destroy.** The argument is that Christ's people cannot do that which Christ came to destroy. (Matt. 13. 38; John 8. 44; Gen. 3. 15; Luke 10. 18; John 16. 11; Heb. 2. 14.)

9. **Whosoever is born of God**—"by living faith, whereby God is continually breathing spiritual life into his soul, and his soul is continually breathing out love and prayer to God, **doth not commit sin. For** the Divine **seed** of loving faith **abideth in Him; and**, so long as it doth, **he cannot sin, because he is born of God**—is inwardly and universally changed"—WESLEY.

"**His seed**, the living word of God, made by the Holy Spirit the seed in us of a new life, and the continual means of sanctification. **He cannot sin.** (Comp. Gen. 39. 9.) 'How *can* I do this great wickedness? The principle within me is at utter variance with it.' The exceptional sins into which the regenerate may be surprised are owing to the new life-principle being for a time dormant, and to the sword of the Spirit not being drawn instantly. Sin is ever active, but no longer reigns"—P. "The Divine principle implanted within has not only manifested the infinite evil and the destructive consequences of sin, but has produced a fixed hatred to it, and a *power over it*"—B. (Ch. 5. 18; 1 Pet. 1. 23.)

10. **Neither he that loveth not his brother.** "Here is the transition from the general proposition to one particular"—WESLEY.

Children of the devil—an echo of the Master. "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8. 44). There is no middle class between the children of God and the children of the devil. **Loveth not**—with such a love as the apostle describes and proceeds to insist upon. (Ch. 2. 49; 4. 8.)

11. **The message**—not a mere ethical principle, or even a mere command, but a message from "Him who hath loved us." **Love one another**—primarily refers to those who are our brethren in Christ. (Ch. 1. 5; 2. 7; John 13. 34; 15. 12; ver. 23; ch. 4. 7, 21; 2 John 5.)

12. **Who was of the wicked one**—"who showed he was a child of the devil by killing his brother. **And wherefore slew he him**—for any fault? No, just the reverse; for his goodness"—WESLEY.

"He could not bear that his brother's sacrifice was accepted of God while his own was rejected; a circumstance that, instead of humbling him and bringing him to repentance, as it should have done, only excited his envy and hatred, which at length settled into the most rancorous malice"—B. (Gen. 4. 4, 8; Heb. 11. 4; Jude 11.)

13. **Marvel not if the world hate you**—"for the same cause"—WESLEY.

The world hateth you (R.V.). There is no question of the fact. The marginal reference points to the origin of the statement. (John 15. 18, 19; 17. 14; 2 Tim. 3. 12.)

14. **We know**—"as if he had said, We ourselves could not love our brethren, unless we were **passed from** spiritual **death to life**, that is, born of God. **He that loveth not his brother abideth in death**—that is, is not born of God. And he that is not born of God cannot love his brother"—WESLEY.

"All mankind, being born in sin, are in a state of spiritual death, until they are born again; and none are born again who do not truly love God and His people"—B. **We know because we love.** Love is not the cause of our acceptance and regeneration, but

it is the satisfactory evidence to our own minds. (Ch. 2. 10; 9. 11.)

15. "He, I say, abideth in spiritual death, is void of the life of God. **For whosoever hateth his brother,** and there is no medium between loving and hating him, **is,** in God's account, **a murderer**; every degree of hatred being a degree of the same temper which moved Cain to murder his brother. **And no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him**—but every loving believer hath. For love is the beginning of eternal life. It is the same, in substance, with glory"—WESLEY.

"Quite as a matter of course S. John passes from not loving to hating. The crisis caused by the coming of the light into the world leaves no neutral ground; all is either light or darkness, of God or of the evil one, in love or in hate. **Is a murderer.** Human law considers overt acts, but the Lord looketh at the heart"—C. B. (Matt. 5. 21, 22; ch. 4. 20; Gal. 5. 21; Rev. 21. 8.)

16. "The word **God** is not in the original. It was omitted by the apostle just as the particular name is omitted by Mary, when she says to the gardener, 'Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence,' and by the Church, when she says, 'Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth' (Sol. Song, 1. 1); in both which places there is a language, a very emphatical language, even in silence. It declares how totally the thoughts were possessed by the blessed and glorious subject. It expresses also the superlative dignity and amiableness of the person meant, as though He, and He alone, was, or deserved to be, both known and admired by all. **Because He laid down His life**—not merely for sinners, but **for us** in particular. From this truth believed, from this blessing enjoyed, the love of our brethren takes its rise, which may very justly be admitted as an evidence that our faith is no delusion"—WESLEY.

Hereby know we love (R.V.). We have obtained the knowledge of what love is, by the one perfect illustration and pattern of it. **Lay down our lives**—"if absolutely needed for the glory of God, the good of the Church, or the salvation of a brother"—P. (John 3. 16; 15. 13; Rom. 5. 8; Eph. 5. 2, 25; ch. 4. 9, 11.)

17. **But whoso hath this world's good**—"worldly substance, far less valuable than life. **And seeth his brother have need**—the very sight of want knocks at the door of the spectator's heart—**and shutteth up**—whether asked or not—**his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?** Certainly not at all, however he may talk (ver. 18) of loving God"—WESLEY.

"If, so far from laying down our lives for them, we refuse them, when in need, some portion of our worldly goods to support their lives, the love of God can in no sense be said to be in us"—B. (Deut. 15. 7; Luke 3. 11; ch. 4. 20.)

18. **Not in word** only, **but in deed**—"in action; not **in tongue,** by empty professions, but **in truth**"—WESLEY.

In word or with the tongue (R.V.). "Contenting ourselves with complimentary expressions of regard, or with giving our Christian brethren nothing but fair speeches"—B. (Ezek. 33. 31; Rom. 12. 9; Eph. 4. 15; Jas. 2. 15; 1 Pet. 1. 22.)

19. **And hereby we know**—"we have a farther proof by this real, operative love—**that we are of the truth**—that we have true faith, that we are true children of God. **And shall assure our hearts before Him**—shall enjoy the assurance of His favour, and the testimony of a good conscience towards God. The 'heart,' in S. John's language, is the conscience. The word 'conscience' is not found in his writings"—WESLEY.

20. "**For if** we have not this testimony, if in anything **our heart,** our own conscience, **condemn us,** much more does **God,** who **is greater than our heart**—an infinitely holier and a more impartial Judge—**and knoweth all things**—so that there is no hope of hiding it from Him"—WESLEY.

Shall assure our heart before Him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us; because God is greater than our heart (R.V.). "We must not give 'God is greater' a one-sided interpretation, either 'God is more merciful' or 'God is more strict.' It means that God is a more perfect Judge than our heart can be. It is the difference between conscience and omniscience. The force of the verses may be summed thus: by loving our brethren in deed and truth, we come to know that we are God's children, and have His presence within us, and are able to meet the disquieting charges of conscience. For if conscience condemns us, its verdict is neither infallible nor final. We may still appeal to the omniscient God, whose love implanted within us is a sign that we are not rejected by Him"—C. B. (John 18. 37; ch. 1. 8; 1 Cor. 4. 4.)

21. **If our heart condemn us not**—"if our conscience, duly enlightened by the word and Spirit of God, and comparing all our thoughts, words, and works with that word, pronounce that they agree therewith—**then have we confidence towards God.** Not only our consciousness of His favour continues and increases, but we have a full persuasion, that **whatsoever we ask we** shall **receive of Him**"—WESLEY.

"S. John does not mean that all whose heart does not condemn them are safe before God; for some have their consciences seared, others are ignorant of the truth, and it is not *sincerity* simply, but sincerity in the truth which can save men. Christians are those meant here"—P. "These three verses probably present more difficulties than any other portion of this Epistle. All interpretations seem to fall into two classes, as S. John is supposed to aim at

(*a*) *soothing* conscience, or (*b*) *awakening* it. But may he not really intend people to supply something which he has omitted, and to apply it as required? The saying 'God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things' probably cuts two ways"—E. Job 22. 26; Heb. 10. 22; ch. 2. 28; 4. 17.)

22. **Whatsoever we ask, we receive.** Believers, as such, ask only what is in accordance with God's will; and in all they ask they bow their wishes to God's will, and so God grants them either their request, or something better than it. **Because we keep His commandments.** So Jesus promised, only expressing more fully the same thought, "If ye *abide in Me* and *My words* abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will." (Ps. 34. 15; 145. 18, 19; Prov. 15. 29; Jer. 29. 12; Matt. 7. 8; 21. 22; Mark 11. 24; John 14. 13; 15. 7; 16. 23; Jas. 5. 16; ch. 5. 14; 8. 29; 9. 31.)

23. **And this is His commandment**—"all His commandments in one word. **That we should believe and love**—in the manner and degree which He hath taught. This is the greatest and most important command that ever issued from the throne of glory. If this be neglected, no other can be kept; if this be observed, all others are easy"—WESLEY.

"This verse is the answer to those who would argue from the preceding verses that all that is required of us is to *do* what is right; it does not much matter what we believe. Not so, says the apostle; in order to do right it is necessary to believe; this is the first step in our obedience to God's commands"—C. B. (John 6. 29; 17. 3; Matt. 22. 39; John 13. 34; 15. 12; Eph. 5. 2; 1 Thess. 4. 9; 1 Pet. 4. 8; ver. 11; ch. 4. 21; 2. 8, 11.

24. **And he that keepeth His commandments** — "that thus believes and loves— **abideth in Him, and God in him; and hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us**—which witnesses with our spirits that we are His children, and brings forth His fruits of peace, love, holiness. This is the transition to the treating of the Holy Spirit which immediately follows"—WESLEY.

"This appears to allude to our Lord's words (John 14. 23), 'If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' S. John once more insists that *conduct* is all-important; that we may possess many kinds of enlightenment, intellectual and spiritual, but there is no union with God, and indeed no true knowledge of Him, without obedience"—C. B. (John 14. 23; 15. 10; ch. 4. 12; John 17. 21, etc.; Rom. 8. 9; ch. 4. 13.)

CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1-21. OF THE CONFIRMATION AND FRUIT OF THIS ABIDING THROUGH THE SPIRIT. —1. **Believe not every spirit** — "whereby any teacher is actuated—**but try the spirits**—by the rule which follows. We are to try all spirits by the written word: 'To the law and to the testimony!' If any man speak not according to these, the spirit which actuates him is not of God"—WESLEY.

"Because the Gnostics and others, to gain the greater credit to their doctrines, assumed to themselves the character and authority of inspired teachers, S. John put his disciples in mind that they had an unction from the Holy One (ch. 2. 27) by which they might judge with certainty, both of teachers and of their doctrine. In this chapter he commands them not rashly to believe every teacher who professed to be inspired, but to try the inspiration, whether it was from God or from evil spirits"—B. Note that this command is addressed to all Christians. (Jer. 29. 8; Matt. 24. 4; 1 Cor. 14. 29; 1 Thess. 5. 21; Rev. 2. 2; Matt. 24. 5, 24; Acts 20. 30; 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Pet. 2. 1; ch. 2. 18; 2 John 7.)

2. "**Every spirit**—or teacher—**which confesseth**—both with heart and voice—**Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh, is of God.** Thus His coming presupposes, contains, and draws after it the whole doctrine of Christ"—WESLEY.

"This is the crucial test, and would at once expose 'the spirits' of the Cerinthian and Docetic teachers. S. John does not say, **come into the flesh**; Christ did not descend, as Cerinthus said, into an already existing man; He 'became flesh.' And he does not speak simply of a Christ who *came*. The Greek tense implies that He is come and abides in the flesh"—C. B. In fact, the confession is that of the great twin doctrines, the incarnation and the atonement. (1 Cor. 12. 3; ch. 5. 1.)

3. **Every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of the Antichrist** (R.V.). **Ye have heard**—"from our Lord and us" **that it cometh**—WESLEY. (Ch. 2. 22; 2 John 7; 2 Thess. 2. 7; ch. 2. 18.)

4. **Ye have overcome** "those seducers, **because greater is the Spirit** of Christ **that is in you** than the spirit of Antichrist that **is in the world**"—WESLEY.

Ye—emphatic, in marked contrast to **them.** "In the masculine **them** the apostle passes from the antichristian spirits to the false teachers who are their mouthpieces. (Comp. John 10. 5, 'And a stranger they will not follow'; thus the stranger is defeated"—C. B. (Ch. 5. 4; John 12. 31; 14. 30; 16. 11; 1 Cor. 2. 12; Eph. 2. 2; 6. 12.)

5. **They**—"those false prophets—**are of the world**—of the number of those that know not God. **Therefore speak they of the world**—from the same principle, wisdom, spirit; and, of consequence, **the world heareth them**—with approbation"—WESLEY.

"Lest the faithful should be discouraged by the success which false teachers often have in spreading their errors, the apostle observes

that their success arises generally from their accommodating their doctrines to the prejudices and evil inclinations of the world. Wherefore, from the prevalence of any doctrine, no argument can be drawn in favour of its truth"—B. (John 3. 31; 15. 19; 17. 14.)

6. **We**—"apostles—**are of God**—immediately taught, and sent by Him. **Hereby we know**—from what is said (vers. 2, 6)"—WESLEY.

Hereby. "This mark by which S. John directed his disciples to judge of teachers, is not to be understood of their hearkening to the apostles personally, but of their receiving their doctrine with that submission which was due to persons inspired by the Spirit of God. Wherefore, as the apostles still speak in their divinely-inspired writings, S. John declares that their writings are the text by which we are to judge both of teachers and of their doctrine"—B. (John 8. 47; 10. 27; 1 Cor. 14. 37; 2 Cor. 10. 7; Isa. 8. 20; John 14. 17.)

7. **Let us love one another.** "From the doctrine he has just been defending he draws this exhortation. It is by the Spirit that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. **Everyone that** truly **loveth** God and his neighbour **is born of God**"—WESLEY.

Love is of God—"from Him as its source, and enjoined by Him as a duty of absolute necessity. **Everyone that loveth**—in whose head this Divine principle reigns, and conquers the selfish and contrary passions, shows by it that he is regenerated, and that by the teaching of the Holy Spirit he knoweth God"—B. (Ch. 3. 10, 11, 23.)

8. **God is love.** "This little sentence brought S. John more sweetness, even in the time he was writing it, than the whole world can bring. God is often styled holy, righteous, wise; but not holiness, righteousness, or wisdom in the abstract as He is said to be love; intimating that this is His darling, His reigning attribute, the attribute that sheds an amiable glory on all His other perfections"—WESLEY.

Knoweth not God. "This is a remarkable instance of S. John's habit of not making the second part of an antithesis an exact counterpart of the first, but an advance beyond it. Instead of saying, 'is not born of God,' he says, 'never knew God,' which is much stronger"—C. B. "God is essentially love; not merely *is loving*, for then S. John's argument would not stand"—P. (Ch. 2. 4; 3. 6; ver. 16.)

9. **Sent His Only-begotten Son.** Evidently the text alludes to our Lord's words, John 3. 16. But the expression "sent" insists upon the fact that He was the Only-begotten Son before He was **sent into the world. Live through Him**—who has redeemed us from sin and death, and by His Spirit dwells in us. (John 3. 16; Rom. 5. 8; 8. 32; ch. 3. 16; 5. 11.)

10. **Not that we loved God**—first; for we were, on the contrary, in a state of enmity to Him. **But that He loved us**—first, without any merit or motive in us. This is love in its ideal manifestation. (John 15. 16; Rom. 5. 8, 10; Tit. 3. 4; ch. 2. 2.)

11. **We ought,** as being born of God and bearing His likeness, to exhibit it in this, **to love one another.** (Matt. 18. 28; John 15. 12, 13; ch. 3. 16.)

12. **If we love one another, God abideth in us**—"this is treated of, vers. 13-16. **And His love is perfected**—has its full effect—**in us.** This is treated of, vers. 17-19"—WESLEY.

"God, whom **no man hath seen at any time,** has appointed His children as the visible recipients of our kindness, which flows from our love to Himself"—P. (John 1. 18; 1 Tim. 6. 16; ver. 20; ch. 2. 5; ver. 18.)

13. **He hath given us of His Spirit**—"in the enlightening, quickening, renewing, and comforting influences thereof"—B. **Of His Spirit.** To Christ alone is the Spirit given without measure. (John 14. 20; ch. 3. 24.)

14. "**And** in consequence of this, **we have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son.** These are the foundation and the criteria of our abiding in God and God in us, the communion of the Spirit, and the confession of the Son"—WESLEY.

The communion of the Spirit, spoken of in ver. 13, and the confession of the Son, ver. 15. (John 1. 14; ch. 1. 1, 2; John 3. 17.)

15. "**Whosoever shall,** from a principle of loving faith, openly **confess,** in the face of all opposition and danger, **that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in Him**"—WESLEY.

There is a blessed union between that soul and God, so that it is, in the language of Scripture, the habitation of God; while, at the same time, it makes the Most High its habitation. (Rom. 10. 9; ch. 5. 1, 5.)

16. **And we know and believe**—"by the same Spirit, **the love that God hath to us**"—WESLEY.

In us (R.V.)—that is, "in our case." "**He that abideth in love,** to God, His people, and all mankind, **abideth in God.** His union and communion with God are continued and increased"—B. (Vers. 8, 12; ch. 3. 4.)

17. **Hereby**—"that is, by this communion with God—**is our love made perfect; that we may**—that is, so that we shall **have boldness in the day of judgment**—when all the stout-hearted shall tremble. **Because as He**—Christ—**is**—all love—**so are we**—who are fathers in Christ, even **in this world**"—WESLEY.

Herein is love made perfect with us (R.V.). **Boldness.** "It is the splendid word which denotes the citizen's right of free speech, the masculine privilege of courageous liberty. It is the tender word which expresses the child's unhesitating confidence, the 'saying all out' to the parent. And the ground of the boldness is conformity to Christ"—E. (Jas. 2. 13; ch. 2. 28; 3. 19, 21.)

18. **There is no fear in love**—"no slavish fear can be where love reigns. **But perfect,** adult **love casteth out** slavish **fear; because** such **fear hath torment**—and so is inconsistent with the happiness of love. A natural man has neither fear nor love; one that is awakened, fear without love; a babe in Christ, love and fear; a father in Christ, love without fear"—WESLEY.

Fear hath punishment (R.V.). "This is true in two ways—(1) fear involves the idea of punishment; (2) fear is a foretaste of punishment"—C. B. **Fear** cannot exist where there is the boldness spoken of, ver. 17. Of course the filial fear of offending God is a perfectly different thing. (Ver. 12.)

19. **We love Him because He first loved us**—"this is the sum of all religion, the genuine model of Christianity. None can say more: why should anyone say less, or less intelligibly?"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits **Him. We love** Him and His children, and the whole world, **because He first loved us.** Observe that the pronouns are emphatic.

20. **Whom he hath seen**—"who is daily presented to his senses, to raise his esteem, and move his kindness or compassion towards him"—WESLEY.

Whom he hath not seen—"whose excellences are not the objects of his senses, but are discovered imperfectly from His works, and from the declarations and promises of His word"—B. Of course the argument is not that we must love the brethren first, in order that we may love God. It is simply that nothing can prove our love to God, but our love to our brethren. (Ch. 2. 4; 3. 17; ver. 12.)

21. **And this commandment have we from Him**—"both God and Christ—**that he who loveth God love his brother**—everyone, whatever his opinions or mode of worship be, purely because he is the child, and bears the image, of God. Bigotry is properly the want of this pure and universal love. A bigot only loves those who embrace his opinions, and receive his way of worship; and he loves them for that, and not for Christ's sake"—WESLEY.

"The apostle drives home the argument for the practice of brotherly love, by the fact that God has commanded those who love Him to love their brethren. Where has God given commandment? In the whole Law, which is summed up in loving God with all one's heart, and one's neighbour as one's self. (Deut. 6. 5; Lev. 19. 8; Luke 10. 27.) The apostle anticipates a possible objection. A man may say, 'I can love God without loving my brother; and I can prove my love by keeping His commandments.' (John 14. 15.) Nay, says S. John, your own argument shows your error; you cannot keep His commandments without loving your brother"—C. B. (Matt. 22. 37, 39; John 13. 34; 15. 12; ch. 3. 23.)

CHAPTER V.

Vers. 1-12. OF THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER, SON, AND SPIRIT, ON WHICH ALL CHRISTIANITY, DOCTRINAL, EXPERIMENTAL, AND PRACTICAL, IS FOUNDED.—1. "The scope and sum of this whole paragraph appears from the conclusion of it, ver. 13. 'These things have I written to you who believe, that ye may know that ye who believe have eternal life.' So faith is the first and the last point with S. John also. **Everyone who loveth God that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him**—hath a natural affection to all his brethren"—WESLEY.

"To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to believe that One who was known as a man fulfilled a known and Divine commission; that He who was born and was crucified is the Anointed, the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world. To believe this is to accept both the Old and the New Testaments; it is to believe that Jesus is what He claimed to be, One who is equal with the Father"—C. B. (John 1. 12; ch. 2. 22, 23; 4. 2, 15; John 1. 13; 15. 23.)

2. **Hereby we know**—"this is a plain proof—**that we love the children of God**—as His children"—WESLEY.

This is the converse of the fact stated in ch. 4. 20, 21. "And it is necessary to be showed, since men may love the children of God because of some common bond of friendship, etc. By what mark, then, can we know that our love to the children of God is of the right sort? By this, says the apostle, we may know that we love the children of God in a right manner, when we love God, and from that excellent principle, keep His commandments"—B.

3. **For this is the love of God**—"the only sure proof of it—**that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous**—to any that are born of God"—WESLEY.

"As they are all most equitable, reasonable, and gracious in themselves, and calculated to promote our happiness in time and eternity, so fervent love to Him whose commandments they are, and to His children, whom we desire to edify by a godly example, will make them pleasant and delightful to us"—B. (John 14. 15, 21, 23; 15. 10; 2 John 6; Micah 6. 8; Matt. 11. 30.)

4. **For whatsoever.** "This expression implies the most unlimited universality—**is born of God overcometh the world**—conquers whatever it can lay in the way, either to allure or fright the children of God from keeping His commandments. **And this is the victory**—the grand means of overcoming—**even our faith**—seeing all things are possible to him that believeth"—WESLEY.

That hath overcome the world (R.V.). "The victory, where faith is, hereby is implied

as having been already attained"—P. (John 16. 33; ch. 3. 9; 4. 4.)

5. **Who is he that overcometh the world**—"that is superior to all worldly care, desire, fear? Every believer, and none else. The seventh verse (usually so reckoned) is a brief recapitulation of all which has been before advanced concerning the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. It is cited, in conjunction with the sixth and eighth, by Tertullian, Cyprian, and an uninterrupted train of fathers. And indeed, what the sun is in the world, what the heart is in a man, what the needle is in the mariner's compass, this verse is in the Epistle. By this the sixth, eighth, and ninth verses are indissolubly connected; as will be evident, beyond all contradiction, when they are accurately considered"—WESLEY.

"By believing, we are made one with Jesus the Son of God, and partake His victory over the world"—P. In reference to Mr. Wesley's allusion to the seventh verse, both here and in subsequent notes, it must be at once remarked that the R.V., on conclusive evidence, entirely omits the passage in dispute. "If there is one thing that is certain in textual criticism, it is that this famous passage is not genuine. The Revisers have only performed an imperative duty in excluding it from both text and margin. There are three facts which every one should know, and which alone are enough to show that the words are an interpolation—(1) They are not found in any Greek MS. earlier than the fourteenth century; (2) Not one of the Greek or Latin fathers who conducted the controversies about the doctrine of the Trinity in the third, fourth, and first half of the fifth centuries, ever quotes the words; (3) The words occur first towards the end of the fifth century in Latin, and are found in no other language until the fourteenth century"—C. B. (1 Cor. 15. 57; ch. 4. 15).

6. **This is He.** "S. John here shows the immovable foundation of that faith that Jesus is the Son of God; not only the testimony of man, but the firm, indubitable testimony of God. **Who came.** Jesus is He of whom it was promised that He should come; and who, accordingly, **is** come. And this the Spirit, and the water, and the blood testify. **Even Jesus**—who, coming by water and blood, is by this very thing demonstrated to be the **Christ. Not by the water only**—wherein He was baptized—**but by the water and the blood**—which He shed when He had finished the work His Father had given Him to do. He not only undertook at His baptism 'to fulfil all righteousness,' but on the cross accomplished what He had undertaken; in token whereof, when all was finished, blood and water came out of His side. **And it is the Spirit who** likewise **testifieth**—of Jesus Christ, namely, by Moses and all the Prophets, by John the Baptist, by all the apostles, and in all the writings of the New Testament. And against His testimony there can be no exception, **because the Spirit is truth**—the very God of truth"—WESLEY.

Not with the water only, but with the water and the blood (R.V.). "We worship one Lord Jesus Christ, attested not only by baptism in Jordan, the witness of water, but by the death on Calvary, the witness of blood. He came *by* water and blood, as the means by which His office was manifested; but *with* the water and the blood, as the sphere in which He exercises that office"—E. "**The** implies that the water and the blood were sacred and well-known symbols. John Baptist came only baptizing with water, and therefore was not the Messiah. Jesus came first to undergo Himself the double baptism of water and blood, and then to baptize us with the Spirit-cleansing, of which water is the sacramental seal, and with His atoning blood, the efficacy of which, once for all shed, is perpetual in the Church, and therefore is the Messiah. The Spirit is an additional witness. He attested these truths at Jesus' baptism by descending upon Him and throughout His ministry, by enabling Him to speak and do what no man before or since has spoken or done; and He still bears witness in the Church"—P. (John 19. 34; 14. 17; 15. 26; 16. 13; 1 Tim. 3. 16.)

7, 8. **For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three agree in one** (R.V.)—*lit.* "testifying," or "bearing witness." "The participle is put for (instead of) the noun 'witness,' to intimate that the act of testifying, and the effect of it, are continually present. **The Spirit**—in the word, confirmed by miracles. **The water**—of baptism, wherein we are dedicated to the Son (with the Father and Spirit), typifying His spotless purity, and the inward purifying of our nature. **And the blood**—represented in the Lord's Supper, and applied to the consciences of believers. **And these three** harmoniously **agree in one**—in bearing the same testimony, that Jesus Christ is the Divine, the complete, the only Saviour of the world"—WESLEY.

N.B.—Part of Mr. Wesley's notes on these verses is omitted, being based on the retention of a passage which is absolutely excluded by a textual criticism more accurate than was possible in his day.

"By the baptism received by Christ, and by His redeeming blood-shedding, and by that which the Spirit of God, whose witness is infallible, has effected and still effects by Him, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood unite as the threefold witness, to verify His Divine Messiahship"—NEANDER. (John 1. 1; Rev. 19. 13; John 10. 30.)

9. **If we receive the testimony of men**—"as we do continually, and must do in a thousand instances—**the testimony of God is greater**—of higher authority, and much more worthy to be received, namely, **this** very **testimony** which God the Father, together

with the Word and the Spirit, **hath testified of the Son**, as the Saviour of the world"—WESLEY.

The witness of God is this, that He hath borne witness concerning His Son (R.V.). (John 8. 17, 18; Matt. 3. 16, 17; 17. 5.)

10. **He that believeth on the Son of God hath the testimony**—"the clear evidence of this, **in himself; he that believeth not God**, in this, **hath made Him a liar; because** he supposes that to be false which God has expressly testified"—WESLEY.

"For the first time in this Epistle we have the full phrase **to believe on**, of which S. John is so fond in his Gospel, where it occurs nearly forty times. It expresses the strongest confidence and trust; faith which moves towards and reposes on its object. 'To believe a person' need mean no more than to believe what he says (ch. 4. 1); 'to believe **on** or **in** a person' is to have full trust in his character"—C. B.

"**The witness in Himself**—God's Spirit testifying that 'Jesus is the Lord,' the 'Christ,' the 'Son of God.' The witness of the Spirit in the believer himself to his own sonship is not here expressed, but follows as a consequence"—P. (Rom. 8. 16; Gal. 4. 6; John 3. 33; 5. 38.)

11. "**And this is the** sum of that **testimony, that God hath given us** a title to, and the real beginning of, **eternal life; and that this is** purchased by, and treasured up **in, His Son**, who has all the springs and the fulness of it in Himself, to communicate to His body, the Church, first in grace and then in glory"—WESLEY.

That God gave unto us (R.V.). "**Gave** must not be weakened into 'offered,' still less 'promised'"—C. B. **Eternal life**—"viz. a title to it, in their justification and adoption (Tit. 3. 7; Rom. 8. 17); a meetness for it, in their new creation or sanctification (Col. 1. 12; 2 Cor. 5. 17; Eph. 4. 22, 24); and a foretaste, or earnest of it, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their hearts (Eph. 1. 14)"—B. **In His Son**—"whose doctrine revealed it, whose merits procured it, whose Spirit hath imparted the beginning of it, and whose example will conduct us to the complete possession of it"—B. (Ch. 2. 25; John 1. 4; ch. 4. 9.)

12. "It plainly follows, **He that hath the Son**—living and reigning in him by faith—**hath this life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not this life**—hath no part or lot therein. In the former clause, the apostle says simply **the Son**; because believers know Him: in the latter, **the Son of God**; that unbelievers may know how great a blessing they fall short of"—WESLEY.

"Faith is the means by which the regenerate **have** Christ as a present possession, and in having Him **have life** in its germ and reality now, and shall have life in its full manifestation hereafter"—P. (John 3. 36; 5. 24.)

13. **These things have I written.** "In the introduction (1 John 1. 4), he said, 'I write': now, in the close, 'I have written.' **That ye may know**—with a fuller and stronger assurance, **that ye have eternal life**"—WESLEY.

These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God (R.V.). **These things.** "This Epistle; he towards the close of his Gospel wrote similarly (John 20. 30, 31), stating his purposes in having written. In ch. 1. 4, he states the object of writing this Epistle to be, 'that your joy may be full.' To know that we have eternal life is the sure way to joy in God"—P. (John 20. 31; ch. 1. 1, 2.)

14. **And we**—"who believe—**have this** further **confidence in Him, that He heareth**—that is, favourably regards, whatever prayer we offer in faith, **according to His** revealed **will**"—WESLEY.

According to His will. "This is the only limitation, and it is a very gracious limitation. This will is always for His children's good, and therefore it is only when they ignorantly ask for what is not for their good that their prayers are denied. (Comp. S. Paul's case, 2 Cor. 12. 9)"—C. B. (Ch. 3. 32.)

15. **We have**—"faith anticipates the blessings—**the petitions which we asked of Him**—even before the event. And when the event comes, **we know** it comes in answer to our prayer"—WESLEY.

"The meaning of this is, that God's hearing is not in vain; but that, as He hears in general, so He will grant in due time, and in His own way, those particular mercies which we ask of Him"—B.

16. "This extends to things of the greatest importance. **If anyone see his brother**—that is, any man—**sin a sin which is not unto death**—that is, any sin but total apostasy from both the power and form of godliness—**let him ask, and God will give him life**—pardon and spiritual life, for that sinner. **There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for that**—that is, let him not pray for it. 'A sin unto death' may likewise mean, one which God has determined to punish with death"—WESLEY.

Sinning a sin not unto death (R.V.). **There is a sin unto death.** "The following explanations of 'sin unto death' may be safely *rejected*—(1) Sin punished by the Law with death; (2) Sin punished by Divine visitation with death or sickness; (3) Sin punished by the Church with excommunication. As a help to a right explanation, we may remember that no sin, if repented of, can be too great for God's mercy. Hence S. John does not speak of this sin as 'fatal' or 'mortal,' but as **unto death.** It is possible to close the heart against the influences of God's Spirit so obstinately and persistently, that repentance becomes a moral impossibility. Such a condition is necessarily sin, and **sin unto death.** Sin unto death, therefore, is not any act of

sin, however heinous, but a state or habit of sin wilfully chosen and persisted in; it is constant and consummate opposition to God. **Not concerning this do I say that he should make request** (R.V.). The prayer of faith is all-prevailing when it is in accordance with God's will. This is the sole limit as regards prayer on our own behalf. Is there any other limit in the case of prayer on behalf of another? Yes, there is in that other's own will; this will prove a further limitation. Against a rebel will even the prayer of faith in accordance with God's will (for, of course, God desires the submission of the rebel) may be offered in vain"—C. B. (Job 42. 8; Jas. 5. 14, 15; Matt. 12. 31, 32; Mark 3. 29; Luke 12. 10; Heb. 6. 4, 6; 10. 26; Jer. 7. 16; 14. 11; John 17. 9.)

17. "**All** deviation from perfect holiness is sin; but all sin is not unpardonable"—WESLEY. (Ch. 3. 4.)

18. "Yet this gives us no encouragement to sin: on the contrary, it is an indisputable truth, **he that is born of God**—that sees and loves God—**sinneth not**—so long as that loving faith abides in him, he neither speaks nor does anything which God hath forbidden. **He keepeth himself**—watching unto prayer. **And**, while he does this, **the wicked one toucheth him not**—so as to hurt him"—WESLEY.

We know—"thrice repeated emphatically, to enforce the three truths which the words preface. This verse warns against abusing vers. 16, 17, as warranting carnal security. **He that was begotten of God keepeth him** (R.V.). The first 'we know' is of a sense of purity made possible to the Christian through the keeping by Him who is the One-begotten of God"—E. (1 Pet. 1. 23; ch. 3. 9; Jas. 1. 27.)

19. **We know that we are children of God**—"by the witness and the fruit of His Spirit (1 John 3. 24). **But the whole world**—all who have not His Spirit, not only is 'touched' by him, but by idolatry, fraud, violence, lasciviousness, impiety, all manner of wickedness. **Lieth in the wicked one**—void of life, void of sense. In this short expression the horrible state of the world is painted in the most lively colours; a comment on which we have in the actions, conversations, contracts, quarrels, and friendships of worldly men"—WESLEY.

Lieth in the evil one (R.V.). "Lieth in the power of, and abiding in, the wicked one, as the resting-place and lord of his slaves"—P. (Gal. 1. 4.)

20. **And we know**—"by all these infallible proofs—**that the Son of God is come**—into the world. **And He hath given us a** spiritual **understanding, that we may know Him, the true One**—'the faithful and true Witness.' **And we are in the true One**—as branches in the vine, even in Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God. **This** Jesus **is the** only living and **true God**, together with the Father and the Spirit, and the original fountain of **eternal life**. So the beginning and the end of the Epistle agree"—WESLEY.

Is come. "This includes the notion 'is here'"—C. B. "He is here, all is full of Him. His incarnation, work, and abiding presence is to us a living fact"—ALFORD. "**He hath given us understanding that we know continuously the very God; and in His Son Jesus Christ** (this is the very God and eternal life) **we are in the very God.** This interpretation of the passage is supported by the position of the pronoun, which cannot be referred naturally to any subject but Jesus Christ"—E. "**We are in the true God** by virtue of being **in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God**, this Jesus Christ"—P. (Luke 24. 45; John 17. 3; Isa. 9. 6; 44. 6; 54. 5; John 20. 28; Acts 20. 28; Rom. 9. 5; 1 Tim. 3. 16; Tit. 2. 13; Heb. 1. 8.)

21. **Keep yourselves from idols**—"from all worship of false gods, from all worship of images, or of any creature, and from every inward idol; from loving, desiring, fearing anything more than God. Seek all help and defence from evil, all happiness in the true God alone"—WESLEY.

"There is no need to seek far-fetched figurative interpretations. The literal meaning lies close at hand, is suggested by the context, and is in harmony with the known circumstances of the time. Every street through which his readers walked, every heathen house they visited, swarmed with idols. The emphatic warning against the worship of creatures intensifies the whole teaching of the Epistle, the main purpose of which is to establish the fact that the Son of God is come in the flesh in the Man Jesus. Such a Being was worthy of worship"—C. B. (1 Cor. 10. 14.)

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THIS appears on the surface to be a private and friendly letter, sent by the venerable apostle to a worthy Christian matron. And in all probability such is its real character, although some interpreters have suggested that the "Elect Lady" was symbolical of a Church, and her "Elect Sister" (ver. 13), of another Church. Such a suggestion seems scarcely in keeping with the dignity and simplicity of the apostolic character. It is not improbable that the word which both the Authorised and Revised Versions render "Lady" may be, as Mr. Wesley suggested, a proper name, *Kyria*.

Many expressions in the letter recall similar language in the First Epistle, while the whole spirit of it is characteristic of the Apostle John.

"THE PARTS OF THIS EPISTLE, WRITTEN TO SOME CHRISTIAN MATRON AND HER RELIGIOUS CHILDREN, ARE THREE—

I. The Inscription, ... Vers. 1, 3.
II. An Exhortation to persevere in true faith and love, . . ,, 4-11.
III. The Conclusion, ... ,, 12, 13."
—WESLEY.

Vers. 1-3. THE INSCRIPTION.—1. **The elder**—"an appellation suited to a familiar letter, but upon a weighty subject. **To the elect**—that is, Christian. *Kuria* is undoubtedly a proper name, both here and in ver. 5; for it was not then usual to apply the title of lady to any but the Roman empress; neither would such a manner of speaking have been suitable to the simplicity and dignity of the apostle. **Whom**—both her and her children—**I love in the truth**—with unfeigned and holy love"—WESLEY.

The elder. "Clearly the writer meant to express the singular and lofty position he held in the circle around him, as the teacher venerable for his old age, and the last of the apostles"—DOLLINGER. **Unto the elect lady**—"or, possibly, 'unto the elect Kyria'; but the other is better, as leaving open the question, which cannot be determined with any approach to certainty, whether the letter is addressed to an individual or a community"—C. B. **Love in the truth** (R.V. "In truth"). **Not I only.** Mutual love was one of the marks of the primitive Church. (1 John 3. 18; 3 John 1; ver. 3; John 8. 32; Gal. 2. 5, 14; 3. 1; 5. 7; Col. 1. 5; 2 Thess. 2. 13; 1 Tim. 2. 4; Heb. 10. 26.)

2. **For the truth's sake, which abideth in us**—"as a living principle of faith and holiness"—WESLEY.

"**Which, I trust, God will enable us to believe and obey to the end**"—B.

3. "**Grace** takes away guilt; **mercy**, misery; **peace** implies the abiding in grace and mercy. It includes the testimony of God's Spirit, both that we are His children, and that all our ways are acceptable to Him. This is the very foretaste of heaven itself, where it is perfected. **In truth and love**—or, 'faith and love,' as S. Paul speaks. Faith and truth are here synonymous terms"—WESLEY.

Grace, mercy, and peace shall be with us (R.V.). (1 Tim. 1. 2; ver. 1.)

Vers. 4-11. THE EXHORTATION.—4. **I found of thy children**—"probably in their aunt's house (ver. 13)—**walking in the truth**—in faith and love"—WESLEY.

"The apostle has met with some of the elect lady's children (or some members of the particular church addressed) probably in one of his apostolic visits to some church in Asia Minor. Their Christian life delighted him, and apparently prompted him to write this letter"—C. B. **Even as.** The standard of truth in doctrine and in life is the commandment of the Father. (3 John 3.)

5. **That which we had from the beginning**—"of our Lord's ministry. Indeed it was, in some sense, from the beginning of the world. **That we may love one another**—more abundantly"—WESLEY.

Not a new commandment. "It was *old*, in that Christians heard it from the first in the gospel preaching; *new*, in that the gospel rested love on the new principle of filial imitation of God who first loved us, and gave Jesus to die for us"—P. **I beseech thee.** The word is perhaps rather "I *request* thee"—indicating some degree of authority. (1 John

2. 7, 8; 3. 11; John 13. 14; 15. 12; Eph. 5. 2; 1 Pet. 4. 8; 1 John 3. 23.)

6. "**And this is** the proof of true **love**, universal obedience built on the love of God. **This**—love—**is the great commandment which ye have heard from the beginning**—of our preaching"—WESLEY.

That ye should walk in it—in brotherly love; S. John speaks of walking *in* truth, *in* light, *in* darkness, but of walking *according* to the commandment. (John 14. 15, 21; 15. 10; 1 John 2. 5; 5. 3; 2. 24.)

7. "Carefully keep what ye have heard from the beginning, **for many seducers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ that came in the flesh**—who disbelieve either His prophetic, or priestly, or kingly office. Whosoever does **this is the seducer**—from God—**and the Antichrist**—fighting against Christ"—WESLEY.

Even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh (R.V.; Greek, "coming"). "The translation may be, 'that confess not Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh,' or 'that confess not Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh.' These deceivers denied not merely the fact of the Incarnation, but its possibility"—C. B. "**The** deceiver and **the** Antichrist (R.V.). The denial of the reality of His manifestation in the flesh at His first coming, and of His personal advent again, constitutes Antichrist. The many who in degree fulfil the character are forerunners of the final personal Antichrist"—P. (1 John 2. 22; 4. 1, 2, 3.)

8. **That we lose not the things which we have wrought**—"which every apostate does—**but receive a full reward**—having fully employed all our talents to the glory of Him that gave them. Here again the apostle modestly transfers it to himself"—WESLEY.

"That **ye** lose not the things which **we** have wrought (R.V.). That ye lose not the believing state of truth and love, which we, as God's workmen, have wrought. **Full reward.** Eternal life is called a 'full' reward in contrast to real but incomplete rewards which believers receive in this life"—C. B. (Mark 13. 9; Gal. 3. 4; Heb. 10. 32, 35.)

9. "Receive this as a certain rule, **Whosoever transgresseth**—any law of God—**hath not God**—for his Father and his God. **He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ**—believing and obeying it—**he hath both the Father and the Son**—for his God"—WESLEY.

Whosoever goeth onward (R.V.)—"may be interpreted in two ways—(1) Everyone who sets himself up as a leader; (2) Every one who goes on beyond the gospel. The latter is perhaps better. These antichristian Gnostics were advanced thinkers; the gospel was all very well for the unenlightened, but they knew something higher"—C. B. "The *loss* mentioned (ver. 8) is explained here. It is the not having God"—P. (1 John 2. 23.)

10. **If any come to you**—"either as a teacher or a brother—**and bring not this doctrine**—that is, advance anything contrary to it—**receive him not into your house**—as either a teacher or a brother—**neither bid him God-speed**—give him no encouragement therein"—WESLEY.

The Greek is indicative, implying that such persons actually do come; probably it refers to their coming as professed teachers. **Neither bid him God-speed** (R.V. "Give him no greeting"). (Rom. 16. 17; 1 Cor. 5. 11; 16. 22; Gal. 1. 8, 9; 2 Tim. 3. 5; Tit. 3. 10.)

11. **For he that biddeth him God-speed**—"that gives him any encouragement, **is** accessory to **his evil deeds**"—WESLEY.

"Those who entertained, or otherwise showed respect to false teachers, enabled them more effectually to spread their erroneous doctrines"—B. "S. John's naturally fiery zeal directed to a right end"—P.

12. **Having many things to write, I was not minded to write now**—"only of these, which were then peculiarly needful"—WESLEY.

"Probably the apostle meant that he had many things to say concerning the characters and actions of the false teachers, perhaps to mention the names of those whom he had particularly in view. But these things he did not think proper to write"—B. **Unto you**—includes the children mentioned in ver. 1. (3 John 13; John 17. 13; 1 John 1. 4.)

13. **The children of thy elect** or Christian **sister**—"absent, if not dead, when the apostle wrote this"—WESLEY.

"That the elect sister herself sends no greeting is taken as an argument in favour of this 'elect lady' being a church, and the 'elect sister' a sister church, which could send no greeting but that of its members or 'children.' But the verse fits the other hypothesis equally well; Kyria's nephews might be in business at Ephesus or elsewhere, the mother might be absent or dead"—C. B. (1 Pet. 5. 13.)

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

LIKE the Second Epistle, this is addressed to an individual Christian. It was evidently written at about the same time. Both these Epistles were for a time regarded as of doubtful origin, but the most recent and impartial criticism confirms the ancient estimate of them as genuine and apostolic.

This brief letter first expresses the apostle's gratification at what he had heard from certain travelling Evangelists, of the hospitality which Gaius had shown to them, and of the general consistency of his life. He speaks with just displeasure of the insolence of Diotrephes, and commends the character of Demetrius. He sends to personal friends an individual greeting, and hopes soon to see Gaius again.

"I. The Inscription, ... Vers. 1, 2.
II. The commendation of Caius, with a caution against Diotrephes and a recommendation of Demetrius, ... ,, 3–12.
III. The Conclusion, ... ,, 13–15."
—WESLEY.

Vers. 1, 2. THE INSCRIPTION.—1. "**Caius** was probably that Caius of Corinth whom S. Paul mentions. (Rom. 16. 23.) If so, either he was removed from Achaia into Asia, or S. John sent this letter to Corinth"—WESLEY.

The person addressed may, or may not, have been Gaius of Macedonia (Acts 19. 29), Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20. 4), or Gaius of Corinth. The name Caius was perhaps the most common of all Latin names. Gaius was the Greek form. (2 John 1.)

2. **That in all things thou mayest prosper.** "I know that you are prospering in spiritual things; I wish you similar prosperity in reference to bodily health and to all temporal business"—WESLEY.

Vers. 3–8. THE COMMENDATION OF GAIUS. —3. **For**—"I know thou usest all thy talents to His glory. **The truth that is in thee**—the true faith and love"—WESLEY. (2 John 4.)

4. **I have no greater joy than this**—"such is the spirit of every true Christian pastor—**to hear that my children walk in the truth**—Caius probably was converted by S. Paul. Therefore when S. John speaks of him, with other believers, as his children, it may be considered as the tender style of paternal love, whoever were the instruments of their conversion. And his using this appellation, when writing under the character of 'the elder,' has its peculiar beauty"—WESLEY.

"**My children**, means, in particular, members of the churches in Asia which were under S. John's apostolic care"—C. B. (1 Cor. 4. 15; Philem. 10.)

5. **Faithfully**—"uprightly and sincerely"—WESLEY.

Thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal (R.V.). "The brethren and the strangers are not two classes, but one and the same. It enhanced the hospitality of Gaius that the Christians whom he entertained were personally unknown to him"—C. B.

6. **Who have testified of thy love before the Church**—"the congregation with whom I now reside. **Whom if thou send forward on their journey**—supplied with what is needful—**thou shalt do well**—how tenderly does the apostle enjoin this!"—WESLEY.

"The brethren so entertained by Gaius were missionary evangelists (ver. 7); and probably, in narrating their missionary labours for the edification of the church where S. John then was, incidentally mentioned the loving hospitality shown them by Gaius"—P. **After a godly sort** (R.V. "worthily of God"). He who honours God's missionary servants honours God.

7. **They went forth**—"to preach the gospel"—WESLEY.

For his name's sake (R.V. "For the sake of the name"). **Taking nothing of the Gentiles**—towards their maintenance, as S. Paul at Corinth and at Thessalonica. (1 Cor. 9. 12, 15.)

8. **To receive**—"with all kindness—**the truth**—which they preach"—WESLEY.

We—"in contradistinction to the Gentiles. As they take nothing from the Gentiles, we ought to take them up so as to support them"—P.

Vers. 9–12. A CAUTION AGAINST DIOTREPHES, AND A RECOMMENDATION OF DEMETRIUS. —9. **I wrote to the church**—"probably that to which they came. **But Diotrephes**—perhaps the pastor of it—**who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them**—to govern all things according to his own will—**receiveth us not**—neither them nor me. So did the mystery of iniquity already work!"—WESLEY.

"This is the most surprising part of the letter; that any Christian should be found to act in this manner towards the last surviving apostle is nothing less than astounding. But from the first the New Testament is full of the saddest surprises. And those who accept as historical the treachery of Judas, the denial of S. Peter, the quarrels of apostles both before and after their Lord's departure, and the flagrant abuses in the church of Corinth, will not be disposed to think it incredible that Diotrephes acted in the manner here described even towards the Apostle John"—C. B. **Receiveth us not**—"virtually, by not receiving with love the brethren whom we recommended to be received"—P.

10. **He prateth against us**—"both them and me, thereby endeavouring to excuse himself"—WESLEY.

I will remember (R.V. "bring to remembrance"). Perhaps, will direct public attention to the matter. **Casteth them**—that would receive the brethren, by excommunication—**from the Church.**

11. **Follow not that which is evil**—"in Diotrephes—**but that which is good**—in Demetrius. **He hath not seen God**—is a stranger to Him"—WESLEY.

The doctrine, asserting the indissoluble connection of spiritual religion with practical obedience, and the phrases employed to express it, are familiar to every reader of S. John's writings. (Ps. 37. 27; Isa. 1. 16, 17; 1 Pet. 3. 11; 1 John 2. 29; 3. 6, 9.)

12. **And from the truth itself**—"that is, what they testify is the very truth. **Yea, we also bear testimony**—I and they that are with me"—WESLEY.

Demetrius hath the witness . . . of the truth itself (R.V.). The gospel standard of truth bears witness to him that he walks conformably to it. (1 Tim 3. 7; John 21. 24.)

Vers. 13, 14. THE CONCLUSION.—13. **I am unwilling to write them unto thee with ink and pen** (R.V.). The ink was make of soot and water, thickened with gum. The pen was a split reed. The paper was still made of Egyptian papyrus.

14. **Peace be to thee.** A common salutation with a Christian meaning thrown into it. "Peace inward of conscience, peace fraternal of friendship, peace supernal of glory"—LYRA. **Salute the friends by name**—"that is, in the same manner as if I had named them one by one. The word 'friend' does not often occur in the New Testament, being swallowed up in the more endearing one of brother"—WESLEY.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

THE first words of this Epistle inform us that its author was the "brother of James." There can be little doubt that the James referred to was the first Bishop or Superintendent of the Church at Jerusalem, and that he and Jude were the persons mentioned by S. Paul as the "brethren of the Lord" (1 Cor. 9. 5).

Nothing is known as to the place where the Epistle was written, or the special circumstances which may have given occasion to it. The resemblance to a part of the Second Epistle of Peter is far too minute to be regarded as accidental; it is impossible to resist the conclusion that one of the two writers had the work of the other before him; yet, strange as it may appear, it seems equally impossible to decide which had the priority. In spite of the fact that S. Peter appears to predict a state of affairs which S. Jude describes as actually existing, the general opinion of modern critics is that S. Jude's Epistle was written first. Another difference has been pointed out. S. Peter speaks of "false teachers," while S. Jude speaks only of "certain men crept in." Perhaps, however, this difference appears greater to us, accustomed to the orderly arrangements of modern Churches, than it did to the primitive Christians. Among them, at least at Corinth, there seems to have been great liberty of speech (1 Cor. 14. 26), and men who acted in the manner denounced by S. Jude would probably try to explain their views, and to justify their conduct, in the assemblies of the Church.

In this Epistle there are some things hard to be understood. The references to Jewish legends unauthenticated by Old Testament Scripture, and the quotation apparently made from the apocryphal "Book of Enoch," peculiarities which, for a while, stood in the way of its reception into the Canon of Scripture, still present difficult problems to the candid expositor. The general object, however, is perfectly clear. It is well characterised by Alford as an impassioned invective, in the impetuous whirlwind of which the writer is hurried along, collecting example after example of Divine vengeance on the ungodly; heaping epithet upon epithet, and piling image upon image, and, as it were, labouring for words and images strong enough to depict the polluted character of the licentious apostates against whom he is warning the Church; returning again and again to the subject, as though all language was insufficient to give an adequate idea of their profligacy, and to express his burning hatred of their perversion of the doctrines of the gospel.

Vers. 1, 2. THE INSCRIPTION.—1. **Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ**—"the highest glory which any, either angel or man, can aspire to. The word 'servant,' under the old covenant, was adapted to the spirit of fear and bondage that clave to that dispensation. But when the time appointed of the Father was come, for the sending of His Son to redeem them that were under the Law, the word 'servant' (used by the apostles concerning themselves and all the children of God) signified one that, having the Spirit of adoption, is made free by the Son of God. His being a servant is the fruit and perfection of His being a Son. And whenever the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the new Jerusalem, then will it be indeed that 'His servants shall serve Him' (Rev. 22. 3). **The brother of James**—S. James was the more eminent, usually styled, 'the brother of the Lord.' **To them that are beloved.** The conclusion (ver. 21) exactly answers the introduction. **And preserved through Jesus Christ**—so both the spring and the accomplishment of salvation are pointed out. This is premised, lest any of them should be discouraged by the terrible things which are afterwards mentioned. **And called**—to receive the whole blessing of God, in time and eternity"—WESLEY.

"When we ask what **James** is meant, the answer cannot be doubtful; it is James the brother of the Lord, one of the three 'pillars' of the Jewish Christian Church, and author of the Epistle which bears his name. If it be argued that, had S. Jude been the brother of the Lord, he would have mentioned the fact, we may securely answer that he would not have done so. Religious feeling would deter him, as it did his brother James, in his Epistle, from mentioning this. The Ascension had altered all Christ's human relationships, and His brethren would shrink from claiming kinship, after the flesh, with His glorified body. Nowhere in primitive Christian literature is any authority claimed on the basis of nearness of kin to the Redeemer. He Himself had taught Christians how the lowliest of them might rise above the closest of such earthly ties (Luke 11. 27, 28); to be spiritually **the servant of Jesus Christ** was much more than being His actual brother"—E. For **preserved in Jesus Christ**, R.V. has "kept *for* Jesus Christ," omitting **and called.** (Luke 6. 16; Acts 1. 13; John 17. 11, 12, 15; 1 Pet. 1. 5; Rom. 1. 7.)

2. **Mercy . . . be multiplied**—"from this, and from the benedictions in the two Epistles of S. Peter, we learn that the benedictions in S. Paul's Epistles may be completed by adding the word 'multiplied'"—B. (1 Pet. 1. 2; 2 Pet. 1. 2.)

Vers. 3–16.—A WARNING AGAINST UNGODLY MEN IN THE CHURCH.—3. **When I gave all diligence to write to you of the common salvation**—"designed for all, and enjoyed by all believers. Here the design of the Epistle is expressed; the end of which exactly answers the beginning. **It was needful to exhort you to contend earnestly**—yet humbly, meekly, and lovingly; otherwise your contention will only hurt your cause, if not destroy your soul. **For the faith**—all the fundamental truths—**once delivered**—by God, to remain unvaried for ever"—WESLEY.

Once delivered (R.V. "Once for all delivered"). "The faith does not mean any set formula of articles of belief, nor the internal reception of Christian doctrine, but the *substance* of it; it is equivalent to what S. Paul and the Evangelists call the 'gospel.' This faith, or this gospel, has been once for all delivered to Christians; it is complete and final, and admits of no successors and no supplements (Gal. 1. 6–9)"—E. (Tit. 1. 4; Phil. 1. 27; 1 Tim. 1. 18; 6. 12; 2 Tim. 1. 13; 4. 7.)

4. **There are certain men crept in, who were of old described before**—"even as early as Enoch; of whom it was foretold, that by their wilful sins they would incur **this condemnation—turning the grace of God**—revealed in the gospel—**into lasciviousness**—into an occasion of more abandoned wickedness"—WESLEY.

Of old ordained to this condemnation (R.V. "Of old set forth unto," etc.). "The

text, when rightly translated and understood, gives no support to extreme predestinarian views"—E. "**Who long ago were publicly marked out for this punishment**—that is, their characters, conduct, and end had been clearly described"—W. W. With this verse begins the marked resemblance between this Epistle and the central portion of the Second Epistle of S. Peter. On the question which writer was prior, there is very great diversity of opinion, and certainly much may be said on both sides; but the similarity, both in substance and in wording, is so great that it is evident one must have borrowed from the other. Probably some appearance in another scene of the same class of evils which one apostle had already described, led another apostle to repeat his warnings. "In all ages there have been men such as S. Jude here describes—nominal members of the Church who are nothing but a scandal to it, and professing Christians whose whole life is one flagrant denial of Christ. Such persons certainly trouble Christendom now"—E. **Denying the only Lord God** (R.V. "Denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ"). (Gal. 2. 4; 2 Pet. 2. 1; Rom. 9. 21, 22; 1 Pet. 2. 8; 2 Pet. 2. 10; Tit. 2. 11; Heb. 12. 15; Tit. 1. 16; 1 John 2. 22.)

5. "He **afterwards destroyed**—the far greater part of that very **people** whom He had once saved. Let none, therefore, presume upon past mercies, as if he was now out of danger"—WESLEY.

Though ye once knew this (R.V. "Though ye know all things once for all"). **Them that believed not.** "S. Jude does not mention the various sins committed by the Israelites in the wilderness, but sums up the whole in their unbelief, because it was the source of all their other sins"—B. So we read (Heb. 3. 19), "They were not able to enter in because of unbelief." (1 Cor. 10. 9; Num. 14. 29, 37; 26. 64; Ps. 106. 26.)

6. **And the angels, who kept not their first dignity**—"once assigned them under the Son of God—**but** voluntarily **left their own habitation**—then properly their own, by the free gift of God—**He reserved**—delivered to be kept—**in everlasting chains under darkness**—oh how unlike their own habitation! When these fallen angels came out of the hands of God, they were holy; else God made that which was evil: and, being holy, they were beloved of God; else He hated the image of His own spotless purity. But now He loves them no more; they are doomed to endless destruction (for if He loved them still, He would love what is sinful): and both His former love, and His present righteous and eternal displeasure towards the same work of His own hands, are because He changeth not; because He invariably loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity"—WESLEY.

Kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, He hath kept (R.V.). Recent commentators regard this passage as referring, not to the original rebellion of the angels, but to the rabbinical version of the event described (Gen. 6. 2). The story is in the Book of Enoch, also referred to in ver. 14. (See the note on the parallel passage, 2 Pet. 2. 4.) (John 8. 44; Rev. 20. 10.)

7. **The cities which gave themselves over to fornication.** "The word here means, 'unnatural lusts.' **Are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire**—that is, the vengeance which they suffered is an example or type of eternal fire"—WESLEY.

Having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication (R.V.). "In saying that this sin was like that of the angels, it is clearly implied that in the latter case also there was a degradation of nature, such as is emphasised in Gen. 6. 4"—C. B. (Gen. 19. 24; Deut. 29. 23; 2 Pet. 2. 6.)

8. **In like manner these dreamers**—"sleeping and dreaming all their lives—**despise authority**—those that are invested with it by Christ, and made by Him the overseers of His flock. **Rail at dignities**—the apostle does not seem to speak of worldly dignities. These they had 'in admiration for the sake of gain' (ver. 16); but those holy men, who for the purity of their lives, the soundness of their doctrine, and the greatness of their labours in the work of the ministry, were duly honourable before God and all good men; and who were grossly vilified by those who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. Probably they were the impure followers of Simon Magus, the same with the Gnostics and Nicolaitanes. (Rev. 2. 15)"—WESLEY.

These also in their dreamings defile the flesh, etc. "The participle represented by **in their dreamings** does not belong to **defile the flesh** exclusively, but to the other two clauses as well"—E. "The term aptly describes various kinds of mystics; many of whom, under the plea of spiritual perfection, have indulged in carnal pollutions, have held tenets subversive of all civil authority and constituted government, have formed degrading conceptions of heavenly glories or of glorified beings, as saints and angels, reducing the hope of the Church to the sensual delights of a Mohammedan paradise"—W. W. "The variety of interpretation as regards the two expressions **dominion** and **dignities** or 'glories' is remarkable. We may, with some hesitation, interpret 'dominion' or 'lordship,' of Christ or of God, and 'dignities' or 'glories,' of angels, remembering that either or both of these may include Christ's ministers and messengers on earth"—E. (2 Pet. 2. 10; Ex. 22. 28.)

9. **Yet Michael.** "It does not appear whether S. Jude learned this by any revelation or from ancient tradition. It suffices, that these things were not only true, but acknowledged as such by them to whom he wrote.

The archangel. This word occurs but once more in the sacred writings (1 Thess. 4. 16). So that whether there be one archangel only, or more, it is not possible for us to determine. **When he disputed with the devil**—at what time we know not—**concerning the body of Moses.** Possibly the devil would have discovered the place where it was buried, which God for wise reasons had concealed. **Durst not bring even against him a railing accusation**—though so far beneath him in every respect—**but** simply **said** (so great was his modesty!)—**The Lord rebuke thee**—I leave thee to the Judge of all"—WESLEY.

"Nothing is really known of the event alluded to, though reference has been made to Dan. 10. 13, 21; 12. 1. Others conclude that the reference is to Zech. 3. 1-3, and explain **the body of Moses** of the Jewish state under the dispensation of Moses, as 1 Cor. 12. 17, 'Ye are the body of Christ.' The fact stated in Deut. 34. 6 was either really or symbolically the topic of disputation. There are various Jewish legends on the subject, not worth mentioning"—W. W. (Dan. 10. 13; 12. 1; Rev. 12. 7; 2 Pet. 2. 11; Zech. 3. 2.)

10. **But these**—"without all shame—**rail at the things** of God **which they know not**—neither can know, having no spiritual senses. **And the natural things, which they know**—by their natural senses, they abuse into occasions of sin"—WESLEY.

Rail at whatsoever things they know not. (2 Pet. 2. 12.)

11. **Woe unto them.** "Of all the apostles S. Jude alone, and that in this single place, denounces a woe. S. Peter, to the same effect, pronounces them 'cursed children.' **For they have gone in the way of Cain**—the murderer—**and ran greedily**—*lit.* 'have been poured out,' like a torrent without banks—**after the error of Balaam**—the covetous false prophet—**and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.** Vengeance has overtaken them as it did Korah, rising up against those whom God had sent"—WESLEY.

The way of Cain—"living in hatred and malice while professing to worship God"—W. W. **Perished in the gainsaying**—"that is, 'the rebellion, and the principle from which it sprang.' Here, as in many passages of Scripture, a thing is said to have happened which was only to happen. This manner of speaking was employed to show the absolute certainty of the thing spoken of"—B. (Gen. 4. 5; 1 John 3. 12; Num. 22. 7, 21; 2 Pet. 2. 15; Num. 16. 1.)

12. **These are spots** — "blemishes — **in your feasts of love**—anciently observed in all the churches—**feeding themselves without fear**—without any fear of God, or jealousy over themselves. **Twice dead**—in sin, first by nature, and afterwards by apostasy. **Plucked up by the roots**—and so incapable of ever reviving"—WESLEY.

Hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves (R.V.). E. suggests, "These are they who are rocks in your love-feasts, feasting together without fear, pasturing their own selves." "There is no reason for assuming that these profligates set up as teachers or pastors. In this respect our Epistle differs from the Second Epistle of Peter, which refers to false teachers. We cannot doubt that when S. Jude wrote, the Eucharist was still part of the love-feast, as when S. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, and that S. Jude is here referring to a state of things very similar to that which S. Paul rebuked at Corinth. The love-feast symbolised the brotherhood of Christians. It was a simple meal, in which all met as equals, and the rich supplied the necessities of the poor. It would seem as if these profligates—(1) brought with them luxurious food, thus destroying the Christian simplicity of the meal; and (2) brought this, not for the benefit of all, but for their own private enjoyment, thus destroying the idea of Christian brotherhood and equality. The whole purpose of the love-feast was wrecked by these men. They were rocks in them"—E. **Trees whose fruits withereth** (R. V. "autumn trees"). "There is a striking climax in this description of the **false teachers** (professors); they were trees stripped of their leaves, and withering; they had no fruit, being barren that season; they were twice dead, having borne no fruit formerly; lastly, they were rooted out, as utterly barren"—B. (2 Pet. 2. 13; 1 Cor. 11. 21; Prov. 25. 14; 2 Pet. 2. 17; Eph. 4. 14; Matt. 15. 13.)

13. "**Wandering stars**—*lit.* 'planets,' which shine for a time, but have no light in themselves, and will be soon cast into utter darkness. Thus the apostle illustrates their desperate wickedness by comparisons drawn from the air, earth, sea, and heavens"—WESLEY.

"But planets and even comets have their orbits, to which they keep, so that they are symbols of Christian lives rather than of the course of the ungodly. More probably S. Jude means 'falling stars' or 'shooting stars,' which seem to leave their place in the heavens, where they are beautiful and useful, and to wander away into the darkness"—E. (Isa. 57. 20; Phil. 3. 19; 2 Pet. 2. 17.)

14. **And of these also**—"as well as these antediluvian sinners—**Enoch**—so early was the prophecy referred to (ver. 4)—**the seventh from Adam.** There were only five of the fathers between Adam and Enoch. (1 Chron. 1. 1.) The first coming of Christ was revealed to Adam; His second glorious coming to Enoch; and 'the seventh from Adam' foretold the things which will conclude the seventh age of the world. S. Jude might know this either from some ancient book or tradition, or immediate revelation. **Behold**—as if it

were already mentioned, **the Lord cometh!**"—WESLEY.

15. **To execute judgment.** "Enoch herein looked beyond the Flood—**upon all**—sinners, in general. **And to convict all the ungodly**, in particular, **of all the grievous things which ungodly sinners** (a 'sinner' is bad; but the 'ungodly' who sin without fear are worse) **have spoken against Him** (vers. 8, 10), though they might not think all those speeches were 'against Him'"—WESLEY.

The words of the apostle leave it doubtful whether he derived his quotation from tradition or from writing; though the wide spread of the 'Book of Enoch' in the second century seems almost decisive in favour of the latter supposition. This remarkable book, evidently of Jewish origin, is believed to have been written about the beginning of the first century before Christ, but large fragments of a much earlier date were undoubtedly incorporated into the work. It was long unknown as a whole to European Christianity, though numerous references to it were found in the writings of the fathers. Three MSS., containing an Æthiopic translation, were brought by Bruce from Abyssinia in the year 1773; and it has since been published in various forms in England and in Germany. See *Smith's Dictionary of Bible.* "Though Moses has said nothing concerning Enoch's prophesying, yet by telling us that he was a person of such piety as to be translated to heaven without dying, he has warranted us to believe Jude's account of him, viz. that God employed him, as He did Noah, in reforming the wicked of the age in which he lived, and that He inspired him to deliver the prophecy of which Jude speaks"—B. (Gen. 5. 18; Deut. 33. 2; Dan. 7. 10; Zech. 14. 5; Matt. 25. 31; 2 Thess. 1. 7; Rev. 1. 7; 1 Sam. 2. 3; Ps. 31. 18; 94. 4; Mal. 3. 13.)

16. **These are murmurers**—"against men. **Complainers**—*lit.* 'complainers of' their *fate*, against God. **Walking**—with regard to themselves—**after their own** foolish and mischievous **desires. Having men's persons in admiration for the sake of gain**—admiring and commending them only for what they can get"—WESLEY.

Murmurers, complainers. "This seems to have been suggested by the last words of the prophecy quoted from Enoch: 'the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.' The way in which the libertines spoke hard words against God was by murmuring against His decrees, and complaining of the dispensation of His providence. This is the exact meaning of the word translated 'complainers,' 'finding fault with their lot,' discontented with the condition of life which God had assigned to them, and not only blaming Him for this, but for the moral restrictions He has imposed upon mankind. Men who **walk after their own lusts**, and shape their course in accordance with these, cannot be contented; the lusts themselves are insatiable; even when gratification is possible, it is only temporary"—E. **Great swelling words.** "They set about getting rid of their duties and reconciling the service of God with the service of Satan, by roundly declaring that Christian liberty included freedom to gratify one's desires"—E. **Having men's persons in admiration** (R.V. "Showing respect of persons"). Rebelliously reject the plain commands of God, and yet servilely cringe to the humours and caprices of men—**for the sake of advantage.** (2 Pet. 28. 18; Prov. 28. 21; Jas. 2. 1, 9.)

Vers. 17-25. EXHORTATION TO THE FAITHFUL.—17. **By the apostles.** "He does not exempt himself from the number of apostles. For in the next verse he says, they told *you*, not *us*"—WESLEY.

"The resemblance between this text and 2 Pet. 3. 2 is very remarkable. It is such as would incline one to think that S. Jude had the text in S. Peter before him, and omitted what had peculiar reference to the former part of S. Peter's Epistle, and to which there was nothing in his own to answer. Though S. Jude only cites the words spoken by S. Peter, yet his exhortation being general, it includes the words spoken by other apostles concerning the coming of false teachers"—B. "The A.V. unfortunately obscures the close connection between the wording of 2 Pet. 3. 3 and this passage, by having **mockers** in the one, and **scoffers** in the other. But, in spite of the great similarity of wording, the meaning is very different. In the Second Epistle of Peter we are expressly told that they scoffed at the belief that Christ was coming to judge the world. There is no hint at such a notion here; on the contrary, it is implied that these libertines mocked at God's dealings with themselves, and at the belief that the gospel did not give them full liberty to gratify their sensual desires. They were among those of whom it is written that 'fools make a mock at sin.' By scoffing at things sacred, and ridiculing the notion that there is any harm in licentiousness, they created a moral atmosphere in which men sinned with a light heart, because sin was made to look as if it were a matter of no moment. It would be more reasonable and less reprehensible to make a mock at carnage or pestilence, and teach men to go with a light heart into a desolating war or a plague-stricken neighbourhood"—E. (2 Pet. 3. 2; 1 Tim. 4. 1; 2 Tim. 3. 1; 4. 3; 2 Pet. 2. 1; 3. 3.)

19. **These are they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit**—"having natural senses and understanding only, not the Spirit of God; otherwise they could not 'separate.' For that it is a sin, and a very heinous one, 'to separate from the Church,' is out of all question. But then it should be observed—(1) that by 'the Church' is meant a body of living Christians, who are

'an habitation of God through the Spirit'; (2) that by 'separating' is understood renouncing all religious intercourse with them; no longer joining with them in solemn prayer, or the other public offices of religion; and (3) that we have no more authority from Scripture to call even this schism, than to call it murder"—WESLEY.

These are they who make separations (R.V.), the word **themselves** being omitted in the best MSS. "They do not actually make a schism *from* the Church, for they frequent the love-feasts and profess membership, but they create a *faction* within it. Worst of all, they claim to be specially enlightened members of the Church, having a more comprehensive knowledge of the nature of Christian liberty, while they are turning the fundamental principles of Christian life upside down"—E. (Prov. 18. 1; Ezek. 14. 7; Hos. 4. 14; 9. 10; Heb. 10. 25; 1 Cor. 2. 14; Jas. 3. 15.)

20. "**But ye, beloved,** not separating, but **building yourselves up in your most holy faith**—than which none can be more holy in itself, or more conducive to the most refined and exalted holiness. **Praying through the Holy Spirit**—who alone is able to build you up, as He alone laid the foundation. In this and the following verse S. Jude mentions the Father, Son, and Spirit, together with faith, love, and hope"—WESLEY.

"**The faith** is not the internal grace or virtue, but, as both the participle and the adjective show, 'the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.' It is **most holy** in contrast to the vile and shifty doctrines which the libertines profess. **Praying in the Holy Ghost.** For in order that we may pray aright, He must move our hearts and direct our petitions"—E. (Col. 2. 7; 1 Tim. 1. 4; Rom. 8. 26; Eph. 6. 18.)

21. "By these means, through His grace, **keep yourselves in the love of God,** and in the confident expectation of that **eternal life** which is purchased for you, and conferred upon you, through the mere **mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ**"—WESLEY.

In the love of God—"that is, in love to God, arising from a sense of His love toward you"—B. "The concise statement of the relations of the Persons of the blessed Trinity to believers must not be overlooked. By prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit we are kept in the love of the Father, through the mercy of the Son"—E. (Tit. 2. 13; 2 Pet. 3. 12.)

22, 23. **And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear** (R.V.). In hardly any passage does the R.V. differ in so many particulars from A.V. Mr. Wesley's version agrees with R.V., excepting in the first clause, which he translates, **some, that are wavering, convince,** adopting a reading of the Greek which is advocated also by E. in our own day. His note, which follows, is characteristic in its force and terseness: "Meantime watch over others, as well as yourselves, and give them such help as their various needs require. For instance—(1) **Some, that are wavering** in judgment, staggered by others or by their own evil reasoning, endeavour more deeply to *convince* of the whole truth as it is in Jesus. (2) **Some snatch,** with a swift and strong hand, **out of the fire of** sin and temptation. (3) **On others** show **compassion** in a milder and gentler way; though still **with** a jealous *fear*, lest yourselves be infected with the disease you endeavour to cure. See, therefore, that while you love the sinners, ye retain the utmost abhorrence of their sins, and of any the least degree of, or approach to them"—WESLEY.

Hating even the garment. In dealing with evil so insidious and so infectious, we must take care that we are not contaminated ourselves. The garment mentioned is the *chiton*, which came in contact with the body; it therefore serves well as a symbol for that which has become perilous through being connected with evil. While the evil is to be hated, compassion is to be shown to those who have fallen victims to it; but in some cases this sympathy must be manifested in *fear*. (Rom. 11. 14; 1 Tim. 4. 16; Amos 4. 11; 1 Cor. 3. 15; Zech. 3. 2; 3. 4, 5; Rev. 3. 4.)

24. **Now to Him who** alone **is able to keep them from falling**—"into any of these errors or sins—**and to present them faultless in the presence of His glory**—that is, in His own presence, when He shall be revealed in all His glory"—WESLEY.

To guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish (R.V.). "To guard from stumbling" is much more than to keep from falling; and the word translated "without blemish" referred to the perfection of a sacrifice. **To the only God our Saviour** (R.V.). S. Paul, like S. Jude, speaks of God the Father as our Saviour. (1 Tim. 1. 1; 2. 3; Tit. 3. 4–6.) "The work of the Son is the work of the Father. God is our Saviour, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord.' **Before all time, and now, and for evermore**—evil men in their dreamings may 'set at nought dominion and rail at glories,' and their mouth may 'speak great swelling words' about their own superior knowledge and greater liberty, and may mock and scoff at those who will not follow them in 'walking after their own ungodly lusts.' Nevertheless, ages before they were born, and ages after they shall have vanished from the world which they are troubling by their presence, **glory, majesty, dominion,** and **power** belong to Him who saves us, and would save even them, through Jesus Christ our Lord"—E.

THE REVELATION OF S. JOHN THE DIVINE.

IT is not without diffidence that any candid student ventures to present even a series of notes on this remarkable book. So many commentaries have been written and forgotten; so many interpretations, more or less confidently advanced, have been discredited by the lapse of time, that the humblest attempt to follow in the same course appears to need apology. In fact, the reader will find before him in the present instance, not so much a scheme of interpretation, as an assemblage of material from various quarters, designed to illustrate the text, and to enable him, if he see fit, to form such a scheme for himself.

There appears no reasonable ground to doubt the well-nigh universal judgment of the Church from the earliest ages, that John, Apostle and Evangelist, was the author of this book; that, having for many years resided at Ephesus and exercised apostolic authority over the churches of Asia, he was banished for a time, in consequence of an outbreak of persecution in the reign of the Emperor Domitian, to the isle of Patmos; that in the comparative loneliness of that little island these wonderful visions were displayed to him, and, without needless delay, reduced to writing.

The general object of the book appears scarcely to admit of dispute. It was, in the first place, to admonish the churches, by suitable messages sent to the seven representative churches of Asia; and in the second place, and especially, to stimulate and encourage the churches by the assurance of the victorious advent of their Lord, and of the eternal happiness of His faithful people. This advent they are not taught to expect immediately, but at the close of a lengthened period of suffering and conflict, in which it might be their duty to resist unto blood, striving against sin. The whole teaching of the book suggests a patient faith in the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness, a faith which need not waver, even if falsehood and wrong seem to be enthroned like the harlot of the vision in the irresistible supremacy of the imperial power, and to be defended by eloquence and subtlety like that of the false prophet. The lesson was needed then, by the Christian subjects of the Roman empire, and it survives in its imperishable truth to cheer us in the conflicts of the present day.

The interpretation of the wonderful visions by which that period of conflict is described is the commentator's difficulty. He may well say with Mr. Wesley, "I by no means pretend to understand, or to explain, all that is contained in this mysterious book. I only offer what help I can to the serious inquirer," even if he does not add with the learned Clarke, 'This book is called a Revelation, but it is a revelation of symbols, an exhibition of enigmas, to which no particular solution is given, and to which God alone can give the solution." Whether the reader would prefer the theory of the *preterists*, who refer the whole of the visions to events long past; or of the *futurists*, who defer them to the final years of the present dispensation; or of the numerous *continuous historical* interpreters; or, finally, of those more modern commentators who regard them as descriptive, less of events that happen once and no more, than of principles in the Divine government, destined to find repeated illustration in the history of the Church and of the world, may depend upon his personal character and his intellectual training. To us it appears a matter of infinitely greater importance to recognise the truth which lies upon the surface of every chapter, that this world is a battlefield between awful powers of good and evil; that every one of us has a part in the conflict, and will ultimately share the results of victory or of defeat, and that Christ, the King of kings, is reigning now, and must reign for ever.

ABBREVIATIONS.—C. B. (*The Cambridge Bible*, Revelation, Rev. W. H. Simcox, M.A.), P. (*The Portable Commentary*, Rev. A. R. Fausset, A.M.), E. (*The Expositor's Bible*, Revelation,

Rev. Dr. Milligan), ELLICOTT (*Ellicott's Commentary*, Revelation, Rev. Dr. Boyd Carpenter), W. W. (*Greek Testament*, edited by Drs. Webster and Williamson).

I.	The appearance of Christ in His glory,	Chap. i.
II.	The Messages to the Churches,	,, ii., iii.
III.	Heaven displayed, and the Lamb appointed to unseal the Book of Prophecy,	,, iv., v.
IV.	The Seven Seals,	,, vi.-viii.
V.	The Seven Trumpets,	,, viii.-xi.
VI.	The Two Witnesses and the Woman and her Child,	,, xi., xii.
VII.	The Two Wild Beasts,	,, xiii.
VIII.	The Seven Vials,	,, xv., xvi.
IX.	The Overthrow of Babylon,	,, xvii.-xix.
X.	A thousand years of peace, followed by renewed conflict, and the complete and final victory,	,, xx.
XI.	The Church perfected and glorified,	,, xxi., xxii.
XII.	The Conclusion,	,, xxii. 6-21.

CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1-3. THE PREFACE.—1. **The Revelation**—"properly so called; for things covered before are here revealed, or unveiled. No prophecy in the Old Testament has this title; it was reserved for this alone in the New. It is, as it were, a manifesto, wherein the Heir of all things declares that all power is given Him in heaven and earth, and that He will in the end gloriously exercise that power, maugre all the opposition of all His enemies. **Of Jesus Christ**—not of 'John the Divine,' a title added in later ages. Certain it is, that appellation, the Divine, was not brought into the Church, much less was it affixed to John the Apostle, till long after the apostolic age. It was S. John, indeed, who wrote this book, but the author of it is Jesus Christ. **Which God gave unto Him**—according to His holy, glorified humanity, as the great Prophet of the Church. God gave the Revelation to Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ made it known to His servants. **To show.** This word recurs in ch. 22. 6, and in many places the parts of this book refer to each other. Indeed, the whole structure of it breathes the art of God, comprising, in the most finished compendium, things to come, many, various; near, intermediate, remote; the greatest, the least; terrible, comfortable; old, new; long, short; and these interwoven together, opposite, composite; relative to each other at a small, at a great distance; and therefore sometimes, as it were, disappearing, broken off, suspended, and afterwards unexpectedly and most seasonably appearing again. In all its parts it has an admirable variety, with the most exact harmony, beautifully illustrated by those very digressions which seem to interrupt it. In this manner does it display the manifold wisdom of God shining in the economy of the Church through so many ages. **His servants.** Much is comprehended in this appellation. It is a great thing to be a servant of Jesus Christ. This book is dedicated particularly to the servants of Christ in the seven churches in Asia; but not exclusive of all His other servants, in all nations and ages. It is one single revelation, and yet sufficient for them all, from the time it was written to the end of the world. Serve thou the Lord Jesus Christ in truth; so shalt thou learn His secret in this book; yea, and thou shalt feel in thy heart whether this book be Divine, or not. **The things which must shortly come to pass.** The things contained in this prophecy did begin to be accomplished shortly after it was given; and the whole might be said to come to pass shortly, in the same sense as S. Peter says, 'The end of all things is at hand,' and our Lord Himself, 'Behold, I come quickly.' There is in this book a rich treasure of all the doctrines pertaining to faith and holiness. But these are also delivered in other parts of Holy Writ; so that the Revelation need not to have been given for the sake of these. The peculiar design of this is, **to show the things which must come to pass.** And this we are specially to have before our eyes whenever we read or hear it. It is said afterward, 'Write what thou seest,' and again, 'Write what thou hast seen, and what is, and what shall be hereafter'; but here, where the scope of the book is shown, it is only said, **the things which must come to pass.** Accordingly, the showing things to come is the great point in view throughout the whole. And S. John writes what he has seen, and what is, only as it has an influence on, or gives light to, what shall be. **And He**—Jesus Christ—**sent and signified them**—showed them by signs or emblems; so the Greek word properly means. **By His angel**—peculiarly called, in

the sequel, 'the angel of God,' and particularly mentioned, ch. 17. 1; 21. 9; 22. 6, 16. **To His servant John**—a title given to no other single person throughout the book"—WESLEY.

Of Jesus Christ. "Jesus Christ is the author of the Apocalypse. He taught many things before His departure; but those which were unsuitable for announcement at that time He brought together into the Apocalypse"—BENGEL. (John 3. 32; 8. 26; 12. 49; 14. 1; ver. 3; 22. 16.)

2. **Who hath testified**—"in the following book. **The word of God**—given directly by God. **And the testimony of Jesus**—which He hath left us, as the faithful and true Witness. **Whatsoever things He saw**—in such a manner as was a full confirmation of the Divine original of this book"—WESLEY.

"It is observable that the historical books of the Old Testament have not always the name of the historian prefixed to them, but in the prophetical books the name is always prefixed. So in the New Testament, though S. John did not prefix his name to his First Epistle, yet he does to this prophecy, as ready to vouch and answer for the truth of it"—M. H. (1 Cor. 1. 6; 6. 9; 12. 17; ver. 9; 1 John 1. 1.)

3. **Happy is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy.** "Some have miserably handled this book. Hence others are afraid to touch it; and, while they desire to know all things else, reject only the knowledge of those which God hath shown. They inquire after anything rather than this, as if it were written, 'Happy is he that doth *not* read this prophecy.' Nay, but 'happy is he that readeth, and they that hear, and keep the words thereof'—especially at this time, when so considerable a part of them is on the point of being fulfilled. Nor are helps wanting whereby any sincere and diligent inquirer may understand what he reads therein. The book itself is written in the most accurate manner possible. It distinguishes the several things whereof it treats by seven epistles, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials; each of which sevens is divided into four and three. Many things the book itself explains—as the seven stars, the seven candlesticks, the Lamb, His seven horns and seven eyes; the incense, the dragon, the heads and horns of the beasts, the fine linen, the testimony of Jesus; and much light arises from comparing it with the ancient prophecies, and the predictions in the other books of the New Testament. In this book our Lord has comprised what was wanting in those prophecies touching the time which followed His ascension and the end of the Jewish polity. Accordingly, it reaches from the old Jerusalem to the new, reducing all things into one sum, in the exactest order, and with a near resemblance to the ancient prophets. The introduction and conclusion agree with Daniel; the description of the man child, and the promises to Sion, with Isaiah; the judgment of Babylon, with Jeremiah; again, the determination of times, with Daniel; the architecture of the holy city, with Ezekiel; the emblems of the horses, candlesticks, etc., with Zechariah. Many things largely described by the prophets are here summarily repeated; and frequently in the same words. To them we may then usefully have recourse. Yet the Revelation suffices for the explaining itself, even if we do not yet understand those prophecies; yea, it casts much light upon them. Frequently, likewise, where there is a resemblance between them, there is a difference also; the Revelation, as it were, taking a stock from one of the old prophets, and inserting a new graft into it. Thus Zechariah speaks of two olive trees; and so does S. John, but with a different meaning. Daniel has a beast with ten horns; so has S. John, but not with quite the same signification. And here the difference of words, emblems, things, times, ought studiously to be observed. Our Lord foretold many things before His passion; but not all things, for it was not yet seasonable. Many things, likewise, His Spirit foretold in the writings of the apostles, so far as the necessities of those times required: now He comprises them all in one short book; therein presupposing all the other prophecies, and at the same time explaining, continuing, and perfecting them in one thread. It is right, therefore, to compare them; but not to measure the fulness of these by the scantiness of those preceding. Christ, when on earth, foretold what would come to pass in a short time; adding a brief description of the last things. Here He foretells the intermediate things; so that both put together constitute one complete chain of prophecy. This book is therefore not only the sum and the key of all the prophecies which preceded, but likewise a supplement to all: the seals being closed before. Of consequence, it contains many particulars not revealed in any other part of Scripture. They have therefore little gratitude to God for such a revelation, reserved for the exaltation of Christ, who boldly reject whatever they find here which was not revealed, or not so clearly, in other parts of Scripture. **He that readeth and they that hear.** S. John probably sent this book by a single person into Asia, who read it in the churches, while many heard. But this, likewise, in a secondary sense, refers to all that shall duly read or hear it in all ages. **The words of this prophecy.** It is a revelation with regard to Christ who gives it; a prophecy, with regard to S. John who delivers it to the churches. **And keep the things which are written therein**—in such a manner as the nature of them requires—namely, with repentance, faith, patience, prayer, obedience, watchfulness, constancy. It behoves every Christian, at all opportunities, to read what is written in the oracles of God; and to read this precious book in particular, frequently, reverently, and attentively. **For**

the time — of its beginning to be accomplished—**is near**—even when S. John wrote. How much nearer to us is even the full accomplishment of this weighty prophecy"—WESLEY.

He that readeth and they that hear. "Plainly the author of the book, or of this endorsement of it, contemplates its being read publicly in the church. The apostolic Epistles were thus read, first by the churches to which they were addressed, and afterwards by others in the neighbourhood. (Col. 4. 16.) In the course of the second century, both the Gospels and the apostolic Epistles came to be read in churches generally, as the Law and the Prophets had been read in the synagogues. In the time of Justin Martyr (*Apol.* 1. 67), not to insist on 1 Tim. 5. 18; 2 Pet. 3. 16, it is plain that the New Testament Scriptures were thus recognised as sharing the authority and sanctity of the Old"—C. B. (Luke 11. 28; 22. 7, 10; Rom. 13. 11; 1 Pet. 4. 7.)

Vers. 4–6. THE DEDICATION. — 4. **John.** "The dedication of this book is contained in the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses; but the whole Revelation is a kind of letter. **To the seven churches which are in Asia**—that part of the Lesser Asia which was then a Roman province. There had been several other churches planted here; but it seems these were now the most eminent; and it was among these that S. John had laboured most during his abode in Asia. In these cities there were many Jews. Such of them as believed in each were joined with the Gentile believers in one church. **Grace be unto you, and peace**—the favour of God, with all temporal and eternal blessings—**from Him who is, and who was, and who cometh,** or, **who is to come**—a wonderful translation of the great name JEHOVAH: He 'was' of old, He 'is' now, He 'cometh,' that is, will be for ever. **And from the seven Spirits which are before His throne**—Christ is He who 'hath the seven Spirits of God.' 'The seven lamps which burn before the throne are the seven Spirits of God.' 'The Lamb hath seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.' 'Seven' was a sacred number in the Jewish Church; but it did not always imply a precise number. It sometimes is to be taken figuratively, to denote completeness or perfection. By these 'seven Spirits' not seven created angels, but the Holy Ghost, is to be understood. The angels are never termed 'spirits' in this book; and when all the angels stand up, while the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders worship Him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, 'the seven Spirits' neither stand up nor worship. To these 'seven Spirits of God,' the seven churches, to whom the Spirit speaks so many things, are subordinate; as are also their angels, yea, and 'the seven angels which stand before God.' He is called 'the seven Spirits,' not with regard to His essence, which is one, but with regard to His manifold operations"—WESLEY.

Seven churches. "The number of course is symbolical or representative; there were other churches in Asia, but the seven churches represent 'the holy Church throughout the world.' It was very early observed, that S. Paul also wrote to seven churches, the Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians"—C. B. **From Him which is.** This may be compared with the celebrated inscription in the temple of the Egyptian Isis, "I am all that has come into being, and that which is, and that which shall be; and no man hath lifted my veil." The heathen inscription identifies God with the universe, the Christian describes a personal, everlasting, and self-revealing God. (Ex. 3. 14; ver. 8; John 1. 1; Zech. 3. 9; 4. 10; ch. 3. 1; 4. 5; 5. 6.)

5. **And from Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, the First-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.** "Three glorious appellations are here given Him, and in their proper order. He was 'the faithful Witness' of the whole will of God before His death, and in death, and remains such in glory. He rose from the dead, as 'the first-fruits of them that slept,' and now hath all power both in heaven and earth. He is here styled a 'Prince'; but by and by He bears His title of King; yea, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.' This phrase, 'the kings of the earth,' signifies their power and multitude, and also the nature of their kingdom. It became the Divine Majesty to call them kings with a limitation; especially in this manifesto from His heavenly kingdom; for no creature, much less a sinful man, can bear the title of king in an absolute sense before the eyes of God"—WESLEY.

"He mentions Him after the Spirit, contrary to the usual order of the Persons in the Trinity, because he intends to enlarge more upon the Person of Christ, as God manifested in the flesh, whom he had seen dwelling on earth before, and now saw again in a glorious form"—M. H. (John 8. 14; 1 Tim. 6. 13; ch. 3. 14; 1 Cor. 15. 20; Col. 1. 18; Eph. 1. 20; ch. 17. 14; 19. 16; John 13. 34; ch. 15. 9; Gal. 2. 20.)

6. "**To Him that loveth us, and,** out of that free, abundant love, **hath washed us from** the guilt and power of **our sins with His own blood, and hath made us kings**—partakers of His present, and heirs of His eternal, kingdom—**and priests unto His God and Father**—to whom we continually offer ourselves an holy, living sacrifice. **To Him be the glory**—for His love and redemption. **And the might**—whereby He governs all things"—WESLEY.

Hath washed us. R.V. renders "loosed us," but gives the rendering "washed" in the *margin*. The difference is that of a single letter in the Greek word, found in some MSS., but not in

the best. The A.V. represents the blood of Christ as the cleansing fountain described in Zech. 13. 1; the R.V. represents it as the price of our redemption from the power and penalty of sin. **Kings and priests** (R.V. "A kingdom, to be priests"). The reference evidently is to Ex. 19. 6. **God and His Father** (R.V. "His God and Father"). So Christ while on earth said, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God" (John 20. 17), and in His exaltation He said, "I will write on him the name of My God" (ch. 3. 12). (Heb. 9. 14; 1 John 1. 7; 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9; ch. 5. 10; 20. 6; 1 Tim. 6. 16; Heb. 13. 21; 1 Pet. 4. 11; ch. 5. 11.)

Vers. 7–20. THE VISION OF CHRIST.—7. **Behold.** "In this and the next verse is the proposition and summary of the whole book. **He cometh**—Jesus Christ. Throughout this book, whenever it is said, 'He cometh,' it means His glorious coming. The preparation for this began at the destruction of Jerusalem, and more particularly at the time of writing this book; and goes on without any interruption, till that grand event is accomplished. Therefore it is never said in this book, He *will* come; but He *cometh*. And yet it is not said, He cometh *again*, for when He came before it was not like Himself, but in 'the form of a servant.' But His appearing in glory is properly His coming, namely, in a manner worthy of the Son of God. **And every eye**—of the Jews in particular — **shall see Him**—but with what different emotions, according as they had received or rejected Him! **And they who have pierced Him**—they, above all, who pierced His hands, or feet, or side. S. Thomas saw the print of these wounds even after His resurrection; and the same, undoubtedly, will be seen by all, when He cometh in the clouds of heaven. **And all the tribes of the earth.** The word 'tribes,' in the Revelation, always means the Israelites; but where another word, such as 'nations' or 'people,' is joined with it, it implies likewise (as here) all the rest of mankind. **Shall wail because of Him**—for terror and pain, if they did not wail before by true repentance. **Yea, Amen.** This refers to 'every eye shall see Him.' He that cometh saith, 'Yea'; He that testifies it, 'Amen.' The word translated 'yea' is Greek, 'Amen' is Hebrew; for what is here spoken respects both Jew and Gentile"—WESLEY.

With clouds (R.V. "With the clouds"). His coming again will be in like manner with the Ascension. (Acts 1. 11.) **They also that pierced Him.** S. John is the only Evangelist who records the piercing of Christ's side. The allusion identifies him as the author of this book. The incident was recorded, because it established the reality of Christ's humanity and His death. "While the *words* are taken from Zechariah (ch. 12. 10), the *thought* is rather that of Matt. 26. 64. **They which pierced Him** are thought of, not as looking to Him by faith, and mourning for Him in penitence, but as seeing Him whom they had not believed in, and mourning in despair"—C. B. (Dan 7. 13; Matt. 24. 30; ch. 26. 64; Acts 1. 11; John 19. 37.)

8. **I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God.** "'Alpha' is the first, 'Omega,' the last letter in the Greek alphabet. Let His enemies boast and rage ever so much in the intermediate time, yet the Lord God is both 'the Alpha,' or beginning, and 'the Omega,' or end, of all things. God is the beginning, as He is the Author and Creator of all things, and as He proposes, declares, and promises so great things; He is the end, as He brings all the things which are here revealed to a complete and glorious conclusion. Again, the beginning and end of a thing is in Scripture styled the whole thing. Therefore God is 'the Alpha and the Omega,' the beginning and the end; that is, one who is all things, and always the same"—WESLEY.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God (R.V.). "In Christ, Genesis the Alpha of the Old Testament and Revelation the Omega of the New Testament, meet together; the last book presenting to us man and God reconciled in paradise, as the first book presented man at the beginning innocent and in God's favour in paradise. Accomplishing *finally* what *I begin*. An anticipatory consolation to the saints in the coming trials of the Church"—P. (Isa. 41. 4; 44. 6; 48. 12; ver. 17; ch. 2. 8; 21. 6; 22. 13; ver. 11; ver. 4; ch. 4. 8; 11. 17; 16. 5.)

9. **I John.** "The instruction and preparation of the apostle for the work are described from the ninth to the twentieth verse. **Your brother**—in the common faith—**and companion in the affliction**—for the same persecution which carried him to Patmos drove them into Asia. This book peculiarly belongs to those who are under the cross. It was given to a banished man; and men in affliction understand and relish it most. Accordingly, it was little esteemed by the Asiatic church, after the time of Constantine; but highly valued by all the African churches, as it has been since by all the persecuted children of God. **In the affliction, and kingdom and patience of Jesus.** The kingdom stands in the midst. It is chiefly under various afflictions that faith obtains its part in the kingdom; and whosoever is a partaker of this kingdom is not afraid to suffer for Jesus. (2 Tim. 2. 12.) **I was in the island Patmos**—in the reign of Domitian and of Nerva. And there he saw and wrote all that follows. It was a place peculiarly proper for these visions. He had over against him, at a small distance, Asia and the seven churches; going on eastward, Jerusalem and the land of Canaan; and, beyond this, Antioch, yea, the whole continent of Asia. To the west, he had Rome, Italy, and all Europe, swimming, as it were, in the sea; to the south, Alexandria and

the Nile with its outlets, Egypt, and all Africa; and to the north, what was afterwards called Constantinople, on the straits between Europe and Asia. So he had all the three parts of the world which were then known, with all Christendom, as it were, before his eyes; a large theatre for all the various scenes which were to pass before him; as if this island had been made principally for this end, to serve as an observatory for the apostle. **For** preaching **the word of God** he was banished thither, and **for the testimony of Jesus**—for testifying that He is the Christ"—WESLEY.

"Patmos is one of the Sporades, the south-eastern group of the islands of the Ægean. According to the tradition, as given by Victorinus, he was condemned to work in the *mines* — which, if trustworthy, must mean marble quarries, as there are no mines, strictly speaking, in the island. The tradition is probably right: 'deportation,' confinement *without* hard labour on a lonely island, was then and afterwards reserved for offenders of higher secular rank"—C. B. (Phil. 1. 7; ch. 4. 14; 2 Tim. 1. 8; Rom. 8. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 12; ch. 6. 9; ver. 2.)

10. **I was in the Spirit**—"that is, in a trance, a prophetic vision; so overwhelmed with the power, and filled with the light of the Holy Spirit, as to be insensible of outward things, and wholly taken up with spiritual and Divine. What follows is one single, connected vision, which S. John saw in one day; and therefore he that would understand it should carry his thought straight on through the whole without interruption. The other prophetic books are collections of distinct prophecies, given upon various occasions; but here is one single treatise, whereof all the parts exactly depend on each other. Ch. 4. 1 is connected with ch. 1. 19; and what is delivered in the fourth chapter goes on directly to the twenty-second. **On the Lord's day.** On this our Lord rose from the dead; on this the ancients believed He will come to judgment. It was, therefore, with the utmost propriety that S. John on this day both saw and described His coming. **And I heard behind me**—S. John had his face to the east; our Lord, likewise, in this appearance looked eastward towards Asia, whither the apostle was to write —**a great voice, as of a trumpet**—which was peculiarly proper to proclaim the coming of the great King, and His victory over all His enemies"—WESLEY.

On the Lord's day. Though forcibly detained from communion with the brethren in the sanctuary on the Lord's Day, the weekly commemoration of the resurrection, S. John was holding spiritual communion with them. This is the first mention of the term, "the Lord's Day." But the consecration of the day to worship, almsgiving, and the Lord's Supper, is implied in Acts 20. 7; 1 Cor. 16. 2; the term corresponds to the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11. 20). (Acts 10. 10; 2 Cor. 12. 2; ch. 4. 2; 17. 3; 21. 10; John 20. 26; Acts 20. 7; 1 Cor. 16. 2.)

11. **Saying . . . What thou seest**—"and hearest. He both saw and heard. This command extends to the whole book. All the books of the New Testament were written by the will of God; but none were so expressly commanded to be written. **In a book.** So all the Revelation is but one book; nor did the letter to the angel of each church belong to him or his church only; but the whole book was sent to them all. **To the churches**—hereafter named; and through them to all churches, in all ages and nations. **To Ephesus.** Mr. Thomas Smith, who, in the year 1671, travelled through all these cities, observes that from Ephesus to **Smyrna** is forty-six English miles; from Smyrna to **Pergamos**, sixty-four; from Pergamos to **Thyatira**, forty-eight; from Thyatira to **Sardis**, thirty-three; from Sardis to **Philadelphia**, twenty-seven; from Philadelphia to **Laodicea**, about forty-two miles"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits the clause, **I am Alpha and Omega**, and gives the name Pergamum instead of Pergamos. These seven churches are representative churches, and as a complex whole, ideally complete, embody the chief spiritual characteristics of the Church, whether as faithful or unfaithful, in all ages. (Ch. 4. 1; 10. 8; vers. 8, 17.)

12, 13. **And I turned to see the voice**—"that is, to see Him whose voice it was. **And being turned, I saw.** It seems, the vision presented itself gradually. First, he heard a voice; and, upon looking behind, he saw the **golden candlesticks**, and then, in the midst of the candlesticks, which were placed in a circle, he saw **one like a Son of man**—that is, in a human form. As a man likewise our Lord doubtless appears in heaven; though not exactly in this symbolical manner, wherein He presents Himself as the Head of His Church. He next observed that our Lord was **clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt with a golden girdle.** Such the Jewish high priests wore. But both of them are here marks of royal dignity likewise. **Girt about at the breast.** He that is on a journey girds his loins. Girding the breast was an emblem of solemn rest. It seems that the apostle having seen all this, looked up to behold the face of our Lord; but was beat back by the appearance of His flaming eyes, which occasioned his more particularly observing His feet. Receiving strength to raise his eyes again, he saw the stars in His right hand, and the sword coming out of His mouth; but upon beholding the brightness of His glorious countenance, which probably was much increased since the first glance the apostle had of it, 'he fell at His feet as dead.' During the time that S. John was discovering these several particulars, our Lord seems to have been speaking. And doubtless even His voice, at the very first, bespoke the

God; though not so insupportably as His glorious appearance"—WESLEY.

Like a Son of man (R.V.), giving, however, "the Son of man" in the *margin*. "There is no article with either noun in the Greek; while in the title of our Lord, 'the Son of man' in the Gospels, it is expressed with both. The inference is, not that our Lord was not intended, but that the title is taken, not from His own use of it, but direct from the Greek of Dan. 7. 13, where also the article is absent. The words of themselves mean no more than 'I saw a human figure,' but their associations make it plain to any one acquainted with the Book of Daniel that it was a superhuman Being in human form; and to a Christian, of S. John's days as of our own, who that Being was"—C. B. **Down to the foot.** The garment and girdle seem to be emblems of His *priesthood*. His being in the midst of the candlesticks, seen only in the Temple, shows that it is as *King-Priest* He is so attired. This priesthood He has exercised ever since His ascension, and therefore He now wears its emblems. The ordinary girding for one actively engaged was at *the loins*, but Josephus expressly tells us that the Levitical priests were girt higher up, about the breasts or "paps," appropriate to calm, majestic movement. The high priest's girdle was interwoven with gold, but Christ's is all of gold; the Antitype exceeds the type. (Ex. 25. 37; Zech. 4. 2; ch. 2. 1; Ezek. 1. 26; Dan. 7. 13; ch. 10. 16; 14. 14; Dan. 10. 5; ch. 15. 6.)

14. **His head and** His **hair**—"that is, the hair of His head, not His whole head—**were white as white wool**—like the Ancient of Days represented in Daniel's vision. (Dan. 7. 9.) Wool is commonly supposed to be an emblem of eternity. **As snow**—betokening His spotless purity. **And His eyes as a flame of fire**—piercing through all things; a token of His omniscience"—WESLEY.

"Though the Person seen is the Son of Man, the description is that of the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7.). We need not wonder that their union was made plainer to the later prophet"—C. B. **Eyes as a flame of fire**—all searching and penetrating; at the same time, also, implying consuming indignation against sin (see ch. 19. 12). (Dan. 7. 9; 10. 6; ch. 2. 18.)

15. **And His feet like fine brass** — "denoting His stability and strength. **As if they burned in a furnace** — as if, having been melted and refined, they were still red hot. **And His voice**—to the comfort of His friends, and the terror of His enemies—**as the voice of many waters**—roaring aloud, and bearing down all before them"—WESLEY.

Burnished brass . . . refined in a furnace (R.V.). The feet of the priests were bare, in ministering in the sanctuary. So our great High Priest here. **His voice.** "He can and will make Himself heard, by those that are afar off as well as by those that are nigh"—M. H. (Ezek. 1. 7; Dan. 10. 6; ch. 2. 18; 14. 2; 19. 6; Ezek. 43. 2.)

16. **And He had in His right hand seven stars**—"in token of His favour and powerful protection. **And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword** — signifying His justice and righteous anger, continually pointed against His enemies as a sword; **sharp**, to stab; **two-edged**, to hew. **And His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength**—without any mist or cloud"—WESLEY.

Two-edged sword. "This is no doubt intended to point out the judgments about to be pronounced by Christ against the rebellious Jews and the persecuting Romans; God's judgments were just now going to fall on both"—C. Trench notices that this description, sublime as a purely mental conception, would be intolerable if we were to give it an outward form. With the Greeks, æsthetical taste was the first consideration, to which all others must give way. With the Hebrews, truth and the full ideal representation of the religious reality was the paramount consideration, that representation being designed not to be outwardly embodied, but to remain a purely mental conception. This exalting of the essence above the form marks their deeper religious earnestness. (Ver. 20; ch. 2. 1; 3. 1; Isa. 49. 2; Eph. 6. 17; Hab. 4. 12; ch. 2. 12, 16; 19. 15, 21; Acts 26. 13; ch. 10. 1.)

17. **And I fell at His feet as dead** — "human nature not being able to sustain so glorious an appearance. Thus was he prepared (like Daniel of old, whom he peculiarly resembles) for receiving so weighty a prophecy. A great sinking of nature usually precedes a large communication of heavenly things. S. John, before our Lord suffered, was so intimate with Him, as to lean on His breast, to lie in His bosom. Yet now, near seventy years after, the aged apostle is by one glance struck to the ground. What a glory must this be! Ye sinners, be afraid; cleanse your hands; purify your hearts. Ye saints, be humble; prepare; rejoice. But rejoice unto Him with reverence—an increase of reverence towards this awful majesty can be no prejudice to your faith. Let all petulancy, with all vain curiosity, be far away, while you are thinking or reading of these things. **And He laid His right hand upon me**—the same wherein He held the seven stars. What did S. John then feel in himself? **Saying, Fear not**—His look terrifies, His speech strengthens. He does not call John by his name (as the angels did Zechariah and others), but speaks as his well-known Master. What follows is also spoken to strengthen and encourage him. **I am.** When in His state of humiliation He spoke of His glory, He frequently spoke in the third person, as Matt. 26. 64. But He now speaks of His own glory, without any veil, in plain and direct terms, **The First and the Last**—that

is, the one eternal God, who is from everlasting to everlasting. (Isa. 41. 4)"—WESLEY.

Laid His right hand upon me. So the same Lord Jesus did at the Transfiguration to the three prostrate disciples, of whom S. John was one, saying, "Be not afraid." The touch of His hand, as of old, imparted strength. **The First and the Last.** In direct terms He claims one of the ancient titles, implying one of the incommunicable attributes of God. (Ezek. 1. 28; Dan. 8. 18; 10. 10; Isa. 41. 4; 44. 6; 48. 12; ch. 2. 18; 22. 13; ver. 11.)

18. **And He that liveth**—"another peculiar title of God. **And I have the keys of death and of Hades**—that is, the invisible world. In the intermediate state, the body abides in death, the soul in Hades. Christ hath the keys of, that is, the power over both; killing or quickening of the body, and disposing of the soul as it pleaseth Him. He gave S. Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven; but not the keys of death or of Hades. How comes, then, his supposed successor at Rome by the keys of purgatory?"—WESLEY.

I am the First and the Last, and the Living One, and I was dead (R.V.). **The Living One.** I have life in Myself, and am the source of it to My people. **Keys of hell** (Greek, "Hades"; Hebrew, "Sheol"). Hell as a place of torment is represented by entirely different words in both languages. "I can release from the unseen world of spirits, and from death whom I will." Keys are emblems of authority. "From the preceding description, mostly, are taken the titles given to Christ in the following letters, particularly the four first"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits the **Amen** in the middle of the verse. (Rom. 6. 9; ch. 4. 9; 5. 14; Ps. 68. 20; ch. 20. 1.)

19. **Write the things which thou hast seen** — "this day; which accordingly are written (ch. 1. 11–18). **And which are** — the instructions relating to the present state of the seven churches. These are written (ch. 1. 20; 3. 22). **And which shall be hereafter**—to the end of the world; written (ch. 4. 1, etc.)"—WESLEY.

"These visions and prophecies are for general instruction, and therefore every circumstance must be faithfully recorded. What he had seen was to be written; what he was about to see, relative to the seven churches, must be also written; and what he was to see afterwards, concerning other churches and states, must be recorded also"—C. (Ver. 12; ch. 2. 1; 4. 1.)

20. "Write first **the mystery**—the mysterious meaning **of the seven stars.** S. John knew, better than we do, in how many respects these stars were a popular emblem of those angels; how nearly they resembled each other, and how far they differed in magnitude, brightness, and other circumstances. **The seven stars are angels of the seven churches** — mentioned in ver. 11. In each church there was one pastor or ruling minister, to whom all the rest were subordinate. This pastor, bishop, or overseer, had the peculiar care over that flock; on him the prosperity of that congregation in a great measure depended, and he was to answer for all those souls at the judgment-seat of Christ. **And the seven candlesticks are seven churches.** How significant an emblem is this! for a candlestick, though of gold, has no light of itself; neither has any church, or child of man. But they receive from Christ the light of truth, holiness, comfort, that it may shine to all around them. As soon as this was spoken S. John wrote it down, even all that is contained in this first chapter. Afterwards what was contained in the second and third chapters was dictated to him in like manner"—WESLEY.

The mystery. "The use of this word in the New Testament is not very far removed from its primary meaning in classical Greek. We may paraphrase it, 'The hidden Divine truth now made known, but made known to God's favoured ones only.' (See Eph. 3. 3–12)"—C. B. **The angels.** "Not as some have imagined, the guardian angels of the churches, for how could heavenly angels be charged with the delinquencies laid here to the charge of these angels? The bishop, or superintendent pastor, the man responsible for the doctrine and discipline, must be the angel. And such a term is in full accordance with the enigmatic symbolism of this book; it is transferred from the heavenly to the earthly ministers of Jehovah, reminding them that, like the heavenly angels above, they should fulfil God's mission below, zealously, promptly, and efficiently"—P. (Ch. 16. 12; Mal. 2. 7; ch. 2. 1; Zech. 4. 2; Matt. 5. 15; Phil. 2. 15.)

CHAPTER II.

MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES. — "Of the following letters to the angels of the seven churches it may be necessary to speak first in general, and then particularly. In general we may observe, when the Israelites were to receive the Law at Mount Sinai they were first to be purified; and, when the kingdom of God was at hand, John the Baptist prepared men for it by repentance. In like manner we are prepared by these letters for the worthy reception of this glorious revelation. By following the directions given herein, by expelling incorrigibly wicked men, and putting away all wickedness, those churches were prepared to receive this precious *depositum*. And whoever in any age would profitably read or hear it, must observe the same admonitions. These letters are a kind of sevenfold preface to the book. Christ now appears in the form of a man (not yet under the emblem of a lamb), and speaks mostly in proper, not in figurative,

words. It is not till ch. 4. 1, that S. John enters upon that grand vision which takes up the residue of the book.

"There is in each of these letters—

> "1. A command to write to the angel of the church; 2. A glorious title of Christ; 3. An address to the angel of that church, containing a testimony of his mixed, or good, or bad state; an exhortation to repentance or steadfastness; a declaration of what will be: generally, of the Lord's coming: 4. A promise to him that overcometh, together with the exhortation, 'He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.'

'The address in each letter is expressed in plain words; the promise, in figurative. In the address our Lord speaks to the angel of each church which then was, and to the members thereof directly; whereas in the promise He speaks of all that should overcome, in whatever church or age, and deals out to them one of the precious promises (by way of anticipation) from the last chapters of the book"—WESLEY.

Vers. 1-7. EPHESUS.—1. **Write**—"so Christ dictated to him every word. **These things saith He who holdeth the seven stars in His right hand**—such is His mighty power! such His favour to them and care over them, that they may indeed shine as stars, both by purity of doctrine and holiness of life! **Who walketh**—according to His promise, 'I am with you always, even to the end of the world'—**in the midst of the golden candlesticks**—beholding all their works and thoughts, and ready to 'remove the candlestick out of its place,' if any, being warned, will not repent. Perhaps here is likewise an allusion to the office of the priests in dressing the lamps, which was to keep them always burning before the Lord"—WESLEY.

"Ephesus being the chief city, and, to some extent, the mother church of the district, the Lord addresses the church there in the character of Lord of all the churches, **holding the seven stars**"—C. B. **Walking** expresses His unwearied activity in the Church, guarding her from external and internal evils, as the high priest moved to and fro in the sanctuary. (Ch. 1. 16; 20. 13.)

2. **I know**—"Jesus knows all the good and all the evil which His servants and His enemies suffer and do. Weighty word, 'I know,' how dreadful will it one day sound to the wicked, how sweet to the righteous! The churches and their angels must have been astonished, to find their several states so exactly described, even in the absence of the apostle, and could not but acknowledge the all-seeing eye of Christ and of His Spirit. With regard to us, to every one of us also He saith, 'I know thy works.' Happy is he that conceives less good of himself than Christ knows concerning him. **And thy labour.** After the general, three particulars are named, and then more largely described in an inverted order:—

> "1. Thy labour; 2. Thy patience; 3. Thou canst not bear evil men; 4. Thou hast tried those who say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars; 5. Thou hast patience; 6. Thou hast borne for My name's sake, and hast not fainted.

"**And thy patience**—notwithstanding which **thou canst not bear** that incorrigibly wicked men should remain in the flock of Christ. **And thou hast tried those who say they are apostles, and are not**—for the Lord hath not sent them"—WESLEY.

Tried them which say they are apostles. (Comp. 2 Cor. 11. 13.) The church at Ephesus had been warned of this danger (Acts 20. 28–30), and had remembered it. **Canst not bear them that are evil.** We are to bear one another's burdens in the case of "weak" brethren (Gal. 6. 2), but not to bear "false" brethren's. It is said that S. John would not remain under the same roof with Cerinthus the heretic. (Ps. 1. 6; vers. 9, 13, 19; ch. 3. 1, 8, 15; 1 John 4. 1; 2 Cor. 11. 13; 2 Pet. 2. 1.)

3. **And thou hast patience and didst bear for My name's sake, and hast not grown weary.** Thou hast borne My reproach, though thou canst not bear the evil (ver. 2). The antithesis should be noted. (Gal. 6. 9; Heb. 12. 3, 5.)

4. **But I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love**—"that love for which all that church was so eminent when S. Paul wrote his Epistle to them. He need not have *left* this. He might have retained it entire to the end. And he did retain it in part, or there could not have remained so much of what was commendable in him. But he had not kept, as he might have done, the first tender love in its vigour and warmth. Reader, hast thou?"—WESLEY.

"Some have understood the word of **love** to the brethren, because we have 'the first works' in the next verse; but the argument is a bad one. Of course those good works, whether of charity in the narrower sense of the word or not, proceeded from love to Christ"—C. B. How characteristic of our gracious Lord, that He puts foremost all He can find to approve, and only after this notes the shortcomings. **I have this against thee** (R.V.). It was not a trifling defect, as the "somewhat" of the A.V. would appear to imply.

5. "It is not possible for any to recover the first love, but by taking these three steps—(1) **Remember**; (2) **Repent**; (3) **Do the first works. Remember from whence thou art fallen**—from what degree of faith, love, holiness, though perhaps insensibly. **And repent**—which in the very lowest sense implies a deep and lively conviction of thy fall. Of the seven angels, two, at Ephesus and at Pergamos, were in a mixed state; two, at Sardis

and at Laodicea, were greatly corrupted; all these are exhorted to repent, as are the followers of Jezebel at Thyatira; two, at Smyrna and Philadelphia, were in a flourishing state, and are therefore only exhorted to steadfastness. There can be no state, either of any pastor, church, or single person, which has not here suitable instructions. All, whether ministers or hearers, together with their secret or open enemies, in all places and all ages, may draw hence necessary self-knowledge, reproof, commendation, warning, or confirmation. Whether any be as dead as the angel at Sardis, or as much alive as the angel at Philadelphia, this book is sent to him, and the Lord Jesus hath something to say to him therein. For the seven churches with their angels represent the whole Christian Church, dispersed throughout the whole world, as it subsists, not, as some have imagined, in one age after another, but in every age. This is a point of deep importance, and always necessary to be remembered: that these seven churches are, as it were, a sample of the whole Church of Christ, as it was then, as it is now, and as it will be in all ages. **Do the first works**—outwardly and inwardly, or thou canst never regain the first love. **But if not**—by this word is the warning sharpened to those five churches which are called to repent; for if Ephesus was threatened, how much more shall Sardis and Laodicea be afraid! And according as they obey the call or not, there is a promise or a threatening. (Ch. 2. 5, 16, 22; 3. 3, 20.) But even in the threatening the promise is implied, in case of true repentance. **I come to thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place**—I will remove, unless thou repent, the flock now under thy care to another place, where they shall be better taken care of. But from the flourishing state of the church of Ephesus after this, there is reason to believe he did repent"—WESLEY.

Repent. "Neither this word, nor the cognate word *repentance*, is used in S. John's Gospel or Epistles. **Do the first works.** This is like an echo of John the Baptist's teaching; these works are 'works meet for repentance.' He does not say, 'Feel the first feelings'; but He says, Do the first works, for that is in thy power. Do again what love made thee do, and so learn to love again. **Remove thy candlestick.** I will take away the gospel light from Ephesus, and remove it elsewhere. It is removal of the candlestick, not extinction of the candle, judgment for some, but that very judgment the occasion of mercy for others. So it has been. The seat of the Church has been changed, but the Church itself survives. What the East has lost, the West has gained. One who lately visited Ephesus found only three Christians there, and those so ignorant as scarcely to have heard the names of S. Paul or S. John"—TRENCH. (Matt. 21. 41, 43.)

6. **But thou hast this**—"Divine grace seeks whatever may help him that is fallen to recover his standing—**that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitanes**—probably so called from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons. (Acts 6. 5.) Their doctrines and lives were equally corrupt. They allowed the most abominable lewdness and adulteries, as well as sacrificing to idols; all which they placed among things indifferent, and pleaded for as branches of Christian liberty"—WESLEY.

Nicolaitanes. "Michaelis' view is probable. Nicolaus (conqueror of the people) is the Greek version of Balaam. The Book of Revelation abounds in such duplicate Hebrew and Greek names, as Apollyon, Abaddon; Devil, Satan; Yea, Amen. The name, like other names, Egypt, Babylon, Sodom, is emblematic. See vers. 14, 15, for the character of the Nicolaitanes; they were not an outside sect, but professing Christians, who, like Balaam of old, tried to introduce into the Church a false freedom, a reaction in the opposite direction from Judaism. They abused S. Paul's doctrine of the grace of God into a plea for lasciviousness"—P. (See 2 Pet. 2. 15, 16, 19, and Jude 4, 11, where the same sort of seducers are described followers of Balaam.) **Hatest the deeds.** We may "hate the sin with all our heart, but still the sinner love." (Ver. 15.)

7. **He that hath an ear, let him hear.** "Every man, whoever can hear at all, ought carefully to hear this. **What the Spirit saith**—in these great and precious promises—**to the churches**—and in them to everyone that overcometh; that goeth on from faith, and by faith to full victory over the world, and the flesh, and the devil. In these seven letters twelve promises are contained, which are an extract of all the promises of God. Some of them are not expressly mentioned again in this book, as 'the hidden manna,' the inscription of 'the name of the new Jerusalem,' the 'sitting upon the throne.' Some resemble what is afterwards mentioned, as 'the hidden name' (ch. 14. 12); 'the ruling the nations' (ch. 19. 15); 'the morning star' (ch. 22. 16). And some are expressly mentioned, as 'the tree of life' (ch. 22. 2); freedom from 'the second death' (ch. 20. 6); the name in 'the book of life' (ch. 20. 12; 21. 27); the remaining 'in the Temple of God' (ch. 7. 15); the inscription of 'the name of God and of the Lamb' (ch. 14. 1; 22. 4). In these promises sometimes the enjoyment of the highest goods, sometimes deliverance from the greatest evils, is mentioned. And each implies the other, so that where either part is expressed, the whole is to be understood. That part is expressed which has most resemblance to the virtues or works of him that was spoken to in the letter preceding. **To eat of the tree of life.** The first thing promised in these letters is the last and highest in the accomplishment. (Ch. 22. 2, 14, 19.) 'The

tree of life' and 'the water of life' go together (ch. 22. 1, 2); both implying the living with God eternally. **In the paradise of My God.** The word 'paradise' means a garden of pleasure. In the earthly paradise there was one tree of life; there are no other trees in the paradise of God"—WESLEY.

What the Spirit saith. "What Christ saith, the Spirit saith—**unto the churches**—not to Ephesus only, but to the universal Church. **Eat of the tree of life.** The thing promised corresponds to the kind of faithfulness exhibited. They who refrained from Nicolaitane indulgences and from idol-meats (vers. 14, 15) shall eat of the tree of life, and the hidden manna"—P. (Matt. 11. 15; 13. 9, 43; vers. 11, 17, 29; ch. 3. 6, 13, 22; 13. 9; 22. 2, 14; Gen. 2. 9.)

Vers. 8–12. SMYRNA.—8. **These things saith the First and the Last, who was dead and is alive.** "How directly does this description tend to confirm him against the fear of death! (vers. 10, 11). Even with the comfort wherewith S. John himself was comforted (ch. 1. 17, 18), shall the angel of this church be comforted"—WESLEY.

The attributes ascribed to Christ are especially appropriate to the message to Smyrna, which was a promise of the crown of life to the faithful unto death. (Ch. 1. 8, 17, 18.)

9. **I know thy affliction and poverty**—"a poor prerogative in the eyes of the world! The angel at Philadelphia likewise had in their sight but 'a little strength.' And yet these two were the most honourable of all in the eyes of the Lord. **But thou art rich**—in faith and love, of more value than all the kingdoms of the earth. **Who say they are Jews**—God's own people. **And are not**—they are not Jews inwardly, not circumcised in heart. **But a synagogue of Satan**—who, like them, was a liar and a murderer from the beginning"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits **thy works. Tribulation**—owing to persecution. **Poverty**—owing to the spoiling of their goods. **But thou art rich.** Contrast Laodicea, "rich" in the world's eyes and her own, poor before God. "There are rich poor-men, and poor rich-men, in God's sight"—TRENCH. **Synagogue of Satan.** The Jews, who might have been the Church of God, had now by their opposition and unbelief, become the "synagogue of Satan." (Ver. 2; Luke 12. 21; 1 Tim. 6. 18; Jas. 2. 5; Rom. 2. 17, 18, 29; 9. 6; ch. 3. 9.)

10. "The first and last words of this verse are particularly directed to the minister; whence we may gather that his suffering and the affliction of the Church were at the same time, and of the same continuance. **Fear none of those things which thou art about to suffer**—probably by means of the false Jews. **Behold**—this intimates the nearness of the affliction. Perhaps the **ten days** began on the very day that the Revelation was read at Smyrna, or at least very soon after. **The devil**—who sets all persecutors to work, and these more particularly—**is about to cast some of you**—Christians at Smyrna, where in the first ages the blood of many martyrs was shed—**into prison, that ye may be tried**—to your unspeakable advantage. (1 Pet. 4. 12, 14.) **And ye shall have affliction**—either in your own persons, or by sympathising with your brethren. **Ten days**—(literally taken) in the end of Domitian's persecution, which was stopped by the edict of the Emperor Nerva. **Be thou faithful.** Our Lord does not say, 'till I come,' as in the other letters, but **unto death**—signifying that the angel of this church should quickly after seal his testimony with his blood; fifty years before the martyrdom of Polycarp, for whom some have mistaken him. **And I will give thee the crown of life**—the peculiar reward of them who are 'faithful unto death'"—WESLEY.

"Polycarp, bishop of the church at Smyrna, suffered death by martyrdom, A.D. 155, when he was a very aged man. Whether it is possible that he was the person to whom this verse was addressed, depends upon the date assigned to the book, or rather to the vision which the book records. The question is more curious than important. **Ten days.** The numbers of the Apocalypse which refer to future times represent certain ideas, and not precise qualities"—WORDSWORTH. Hence the ten days denote a considerable but limited time. Many have applied it to the ten years of Domitian's persecution. (Matt. 10. 22; 24. 13; Jas. 1. 12; ch. 3. 11.)

11. **The second death**—"the lake of fire, the portion of the fearful, who do not overcome. (Ch. 21. 8)"—WESLEY.

The second death. "The phrase is peculiar to the Apocalypse. It seems that they who die that death shall be hurt by it, whereas if it were annihilation, and so a conclusion of their torments, it would be no way hurtful, but highly beneficial to them"—BISHOP PEARSON. "What matter about that first death, which must soon or late pass over us, if we escape the **second death**? Polycarp's noble words to the heathen judges who wished him to recant are well known, 'Fourscore and six years have I served the Lord, and He never wronged me; how then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?'"—P. (Ver. 7; ch. 13. 9; 20. 14; 21. 8.)

Vers. 12-17. PERGAMOS.—12. **The sword**—"with which I will cut off the impenitent (ver. 16)"—WESLEY.

The reference is to ch. 1. 16; the description is again appropriate to the nature of the message.

13. **Where the throne of Satan is.** "Pergamos was above measure given to idolatry; so Satan had his throne and full residence there. **Thou holdest fast My name**—openly and

resolutely confessing Me before men. **Even in the days wherein Antipas**—martyred under Domitian—**was My faithful witness.** Happy is he to whom Jesus, the faithful and true Witness, giveth such a testimony!"—WESLEY.

Satan's throne (R.V.). "Why Satan's throne was localised at Pergamum is uncertain. Two explanations have been given—that it was a seat of the worship of Æsculapius, whose image held a serpent; and since recent excavations it has been suggested that the phrase referred to the great altar of Zeus Soter, which Attalus set up to commemorate his victory over the Gauls. More probably the meaning is only, that Pergamum was in a special sense a home of the Satanic spirit of persecution. **Antipas.** It is more than doubtful whether anything authentic is known of Antipas except from this passage. **My witness, My faithful one** (R.V.). The word, in Greek, 'martyr,' was already used in its technical sense"—C. B. (Vers. 2, 9.)

14. **But thou hast there**—"whom thou oughtest to have immediately cast out from the flock—**them that hold the doctrine of Balaam**—doctrine nearly resembling his—**who taught Balak**—and the rest of the Moabites—**to cast a stumblingblock before the sons of Israel.** They are generally termed 'the children,' but here 'the sons of Israel,' in opposition to the 'daughters' of Moab, by whom Balaam enticed them to fornication and idolatry. **To eat things sacrificed to idols**—which, in so idolatrous a city as Pergamos, was in the highest degree hurtful to Christianity. **And to commit fornication**—which was constantly joined with the idol-worship of the heathens"—WESLEY.

Eat things sacrificed to idols—"the act charged upon the Israelites (Num. 25. 2) as well as upon the Nicolaitanes in S. John's days. The temptation to eat idol-meats was a peculiarly strong one to the Gentile converts; for not to do so involved almost a withdrawal from partaking of any social meal with the heathen around. For idol-meats, after a part had been offered in sacrifice, were nearly sure to be on the heathen entertainer's table. Hence arose the decree of the Council at Jerusalem forbidding to eat such meats; subsequently some at Corinth ate unscrupulously and *knowingly* of such meats, on the ground that the idol is nothing; others needlessly tortured themselves with scruples, lest *unknowingly* they should eat of them, when they got meat from the market, or in a heathen friend's house. S. Paul handles the question, 1 Cor. (ch. 8. and ch. 10. 14–33")—P. (Num. 24. 14; 25. 1; 31. 16; 2 Pet. 2. 15; Jude 11; ver. 20; Acts 15. 29; 1 Cor. 6. 13; 8. 9, 10; 10. 19, 20.)

15. **In like manner thou also**—"as well as the angel at Ephesus—**hast them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes**—and thou sufferest them to remain in the flock"—WESLEY.

So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitanes in like manner (R.V.)—omitting **which I hate.** "This correction makes it certain that we are not to suppose two immoral sects at Pergamum, but one sect, holding the doctrine taught by Balaam of old and the Nicolaitanes now. The sense is, 'Thou hast with thee followers of Balaam; he taught God's people to fornicate and to communicate in idol-worship, and the Nicolaitanes with thee teach the same'"—C. B. (Ver. 6.)

16. **If not, I come to thee**—"who wilt not wholly escape when I punish them—**and will fight with them**—not with the Nicolaitanes, who are mentioned only by the by, but the followers of Balaam. **With the sword of My mouth**—with My just and fierce displeasure. Balaam himself was first withstood by the angel of the Lord with 'his sword drawn' (Num. 22. 23), and afterwards 'slain with the sword' (Num. 31. 8)"—WESLEY.

"The angel of the church is bidden to **repent.** The whole church, and especially its bishop, is more or less guilty for having extended to the Nicolaitanes the toleration which the church at Ephesus was praised for refusing"—C. B. **Fight with them**—with the Nicolaitanes, or followers of Balaam primarily, but including also the chastisement of the whole church. (Isa. 11. 4; 2 Thess. 2. 8; ch. 1. 16; 19. 15, 21.)

17. **To him that overcometh**—"and eateth not of those sacrifices—**will I give of the hidden manna**—described in John 6. The new name answers to this: it is now 'hid with Christ in God.' The Jewish manna was kept in the ancient ark of the covenant. The heavenly ark of the covenant appears under the trumpet of the seventh angel (ch. 11. 19), where also the hidden manna is mentioned again. It seems probably to mean the full, glorious, everlasting fruition of God. **And I will give him a white stone.** The ancients, on many occasions, gave their votes in judgment by small stones; by black, they condemned; by white ones they acquitted. Sometimes also they wrote on small smooth stones. Here may be an allusion to both. **And a new name.** So Jacob, after his victory, gained the new name of Israel. Wouldest thou know what thy new name will be? The way to this is plain—overcome. Till then all thy inquiries are vain. Thou wilt then read it on the white stone"—WESLEY.

Hidden manna. "Christ Himself is the Manna, hidden from the world, but revealed to the believer, so that he has already a foretaste of His preciousness. The full manifestation shall be at His coming"—P. **White stone and new name**—"evidently closely connected. The white stone is a gift in itself, not merely a vehicle of the new name. The stone and the name are the separate possession of each to whom they are given. Most likely both are a token entitling the bearer to some further

benefit. The Greeks had feasts to which every feaster brought a token as a pledge that he would pay his share of the cost. Such a token might also prove his right to join the company. If so, it may be meant that when they who are worthy are called to the Marriage Supper, each is called by the new name which he only knows, and as each hears and answers, the white stone with the new name is his passport at the door"—C. B. Ellicott's Commentary, with Clarke and others, compares the **white stone** with the Roman *tessera hospitalis*, the token of friendship, and with the tokens admitting to the Temple feasts. He also reminds us that the gift of a **new name** is not uncommon in Scripture, and that it appears always to imply a step taken into a higher life. It will be remembered that Christ Himself speaks of His new name (ch. 3. 12), which is perhaps that spoken of (ch. 19. 12), "which no man knew but He Himself." On the other hand, Trench suggests, the white stone is a glistering diamond, the Urim (lights) borne by the high priest within the breastplate of judgment, next the heart. None but the high priest knew the name written upon it, probably the incommunicable name of God. Believers, as spiritual priests to God, shall enjoy the heavenly antitypes to the hidden manna and the Urim stone. As Phinehas was rewarded with an everlasting priesthood for his zeal against the sin to which the Old Testament Balaam seduced Israel, so the heavenly priesthood is the reward promised here to those who overcome the New Testament Balaamites, tempting Christ's people to the same sin. (Vers. 7, 11; ch. 3. 12; 19. 12.)

Vers. 18–29. THYATIRA.—18. **And to the angel of the church at Thyatira**—"where the faithful were but a little flock—**these things saith the Son of God.** See how great He is, who appeared 'like a son of man'! (Ch. 1. 13.) **Who hath eyes as a flame of fire**—'searching the reins and the heart' (ver. 23). **And feet like fine brass**—denoting His immense strength. Job comprises both these, His wisdom to discern whatever is amiss, and His power to avenge it, in one sentence (Job 42. 2), 'No thought is hidden from Him, and He can do all things'"—WESLEY.

Again the attributes of the Speaker agree with the address. The title "Son of God" is from Ps. 2. 7, 9, which is referred to in ver. 27. (Ch. 1. 14, 15.)

19. **I know thy love.** "How different a character is this from that of the angel of the church at Ephesus! The latter could not bear the wicked, and hated the works of the Nicolaitanes, but had left his first love and first works. The former retained his first love, and had more and more works, but did bear the wicked, did not withstand them with becoming vehemence. Mixed characters both; yet the latter, not the former, is reproved for his fall, and commanded to repent. **And faith, and thy service, and patience.** Love is shown, exercised, and improved by serving God and our neighbour; so is faith by patience and good works"—WESLEY.

And that thy last works are more than the first—in contrast with Ephesus (ver. 4). "Thyatira was just the reverse of Ephesus. There, much zeal for orthodoxy, but little love; here, activity of faith and love, but insufficient zeal for godly discipline and doctrine, a patience (suffering) of error, even where there was not a participation in it"—TRENCH. (Ver. 2.)

20. **But thou sufferest that woman Jezebel**—"who ought not to teach at all (1 Tim. 2. 12)—**to teach and seduce My servants.** At Pergamos were many followers of Balaam; at Thyatira, one grand deceiver. Many of the ancients have delivered, that this was the wife of the pastor himself. Jezebel of old led the people of God to open idolatry. This Jezebel, fitly called by her name, from the resemblance between their works, led them to partake in the idolatry of the heathens. This she seems to have done by first enticing them to fornication, just as Balaam did; whereas at Pergamos they were first enticed to idolatry, and afterwards to fornication"—WESLEY.

"Jezebel, with her strong will, seduced the weak Ahab and his people beyond the calf-worship (which was the worship of the true God under the cherub-ox form, *i.e.* a violation of the second commandment), to that of Baal and Ashtaroth (a violation of the first). Impurity was part of the worship of the Phœnician Astarte. Hence we read of the 'whoredoms' of Jezebel (2 Kings 9. 22). Her spiritual counterpart at Thyatira lured God's servants by utterances of pretended inspiration to libertinism, fornication, and the eating of idol-meats. By a false spiritualism these seducers led their victims into the grossest carnality, as though things done in the flesh were outside the true man, and were, therefore, indifferent"—P. (1 Kings 16. 31; 21. 25; 2 Kings 9. 7; Ex. 34. 15; Acts 15. 20, 29; ver. 14.)

21. **And I gave her time to repent**—"so great is the power of Christ! **But she will not repent.** So, though repentance is the gift of God, man may refuse it; God will not compel"—WESLEY.

22. "**I will cast her into a bed—into great affliction—and them that commit** either carnal or spiritual **adultery with her, unless they repent**—she had her time before—**of her works**—those to which she had enticed them, and which she had committed with them. It is observable, the angel of the church at Thyatira was only blamed for suffering her. This fault ceased when God took vengeance on her. Therefore he is not expressly exhorted to repent, though it is implied"—WESLEY.

"There is evidently a transition from *literal* to *spiritual* fornication. The idea arose from

Jehovah's relation to the Old Testament Church being regarded as a marriage, any transgression against which was fornication or adultery. **With her**—implies participation with her in her adulteries, viz. by *suffering* her (ver. 20), or letting her alone, and so virtually encouraging her. Her punishment is distinct from theirs; she is to be cast into a bed (perhaps of sickness and anguish), and her children to be killed; while those who make themselves partakers of her sin by tolerating her, are to be cast into great tribulation"—P. (Rom. 2. 4; ch. 9. 20.)

23. **And I will kill her children**—"those which she hath borne in adultery, and them whom she hath seduced—**with death.** This expression denotes death by the plague, or by some manifest stroke of God's hand. Probably the remarkable vengeance taken on her children was the token of the certainty of all the rest. **And all the churches**—to which thou now writest—**shall know that I search the reins**—the desires—**and hearts**—thoughts"—WESLEY.

Her children—"her proper adherents; not those who suffer her, but those who are begotten of her. A distinct class from the last, whose sin was only that of connivance. **I am He**—the 'I' is strongly emphatical. **Searcheth the reins.** The word searcheth expresses an accurate following up of all tracks and windings. God's peculiar attribute is given to Christ"—P. (1 Sam. 16. 7; 1 Chron. 28. 9; 29. 17; 2 Chron. 6. 30; Ps. 7. 9; Jer. 11. 20; 17. 10; 20. 12; John 2. 24, 25; Acts 1. 24; Rom. 8. 27; Ps. 62. 12; Matt. 16, 27; Rom. 2. 6; 14. 12; 2 Cor. 5. 10; Gal. 6. 5; ch. 20. 12.)

24. **But I say to you who do not hold this doctrine**—"of Jezebel—**who have not known the depths of Satan.** O happy ignorance! **As they speak**—that were continually boasting of the deep things which they taught. Our Lord owns they were deep, even deep as hell; for they were the very 'depths of Satan.' **I will lay upon you no other burden**—than that you have already suffered from Jezebel and her adherents"—WESLEY.

"The heretics condemned were doubtless a sect of those who called themselves Gnostics, probably at this time, certainly in the next generation. They contrasted their *knowledge* of **the depths** or 'deep things of God' with the faith of the orthodox in the plain, simple doctrines that were openly preached to the world; the Lord answers, that the depths of knowledge that they attained were depths, not of God, but of Satan. **None other burden**—namely, than abstinence from fornication and things offered to idols. (Acts 15. 28.) Yet it is a question whether we may not understand the sentence thus: 'I will lay on you no other burden than to hold fast that ye have till I come'"—C. B.

25. **What ye**—"both the angel and the Church—**have**"—WESLEY.

"What ye have received through My gospel, as essential to true religion—**hold fast**—in principle and practice, in faith, love, and obedience, till I come, to bring to an end your time of trial, and to receive you to the heavenly paradise"—B. (Ch. 3. 11.)

26. **My works**—"those which I have commanded—**to him will I give power over the nations**—that is, I will give him to share with Me in that glorious victory which the Father hath promised Me over all the nations who as yet resist Me. (Ps. 2. 8, 9)"—WESLEY.

My works in contrast to "her works" (ver. 22.) A.V. power (R.V. "authority"). (John 6. 29; 1 John 3. 23; Matt. 19. 28; Luke 22. 29, 30; 1 Cor. 6. 3; ch. 3. 21; 20. 4.)

27. **And he shall rule them**—"that is, shall share with Me when I do this—**with a rod of iron**—with irresistible power, employed on those only who will not otherwise submit; who will hereby **be dashed in pieces**—totally conquered"—WESLEY.

"This appears to be intended of that final triumph of Christ over His enemies in the last day, when He shall crush them to utter and irrevocable ruin, and when all His saints, raised from the dead, and clothed with robes of glory, shall sit down with Him on His throne"—B. **Vessels of a potter . . . broken to shivers**—"because of their failing to answer the design of their Maker; the image to depict God's irresistible sovereign power to give reprobates to destruction, not by caprice, but in the exercise of righteous judgment"—P. **As I received.** Ps. 2. 9 is assumed to be the promise of the Father to the Son; as is plain from ver. 8. (Ps. 2. 8, 9; 49. 14; Dan. 7. 22; ch. 12. 5; 19. 15.)

28. **I will give him the morning star.** "Thou, O Jesus, art the Morning Star! Oh give Thyself to me! Then will I desire no sun, only Thee, who art the sun also. He whom this star enlightens has always morning and no evening. The duties and promises here answer each other; the valiant conqueror has power over the stubborn nations. And he that, after having conquered his enemies, keeps the works of Christ to the end, shall have the morning star—an unspeakable brightness and peaceable dominion in him"—WESLEY.

"I will give him Myself, who am **the Morning Star.** (Comp. ver. 17, 'I will give him the hidden manna,' that is Myself, who am that manna). (John 6. 31)"—P. "The pledge of the coming day, both for the waiting witnesses and for the ungodly"—ELLICOTT. (2 Pet. 1. 19; ch. 22. 16.)

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1–8. MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES, *continued*—SARDIS.—1. **The seven Spirits of God**—"the Holy Spirit from whom alone all spiritual life and strength proceed. **And the seven stars**—which are subordinate to Him. **Thou hast a name that thou livest**—a fair reputation, a goodly outside appearance. But

that Spirit seeth through all things, and every empty appearance vanishes before Him"—WESLEY.

"This Epistle being sent to a languishing ministry and church, they are very fitly reminded that Christ has the seven Spirits, the Spirit without measure and in perfection, to whom they may apply themselves for the reviving of His work among them"—M. H. In the other Epistles Christ begins with commending what was good in the churches, and then proceeds to tell them what was amiss; in this, and in the Epistle to Laodicea, He begins with severe reproof. (Ch. 1. 4, 16; 4. 5; 5. 6; 2. 2; Eph. 2. 1, 5; 1 Tim. 5. 6.)

2. **The things which remain**—"in thy soul; knowledge of the truth, good desires, and convictions—**which were ready to die**—wherever pride, indolence, or levity revives, all the fruits of the Spirit are 'ready to die'"—WESLEY.

I have not found thy works perfect before God (R.V. "no works of thine fulfilled")—"weighed in the balance of Him who requires living faith as the motive, and found wanting. **Before God.** Christ's judgment is God's judgment. In the sight of men, Sardis had a name that she lived"—P. "So many and so great are the obligations of pastors, that he who would in reality fulfil even a third of them, would be esteemed holy by men, whereas, if content with that alone, he would be sure not to escape hell"—D'AVILA.

3. **Remember how**—"humbly, zealously, seriously—**thou** didst **receive** the grace of God once, **and hear**—His word—**and hold fast**—the grace thou hast received. **And repent**—according to the word thou hast heard"—WESLEY.

Thou hast received, and didst hear (R.V.). The meaning is that the doctrine of the gospel has been committed to them, and *they have it still.* They are exhorted to **hold it fast** (R.V. 'keep it'), and repent. **As a thief.** "Twice in the days of His flesh Christ spake the same words (*see* references), and so deeply had they impressed the apostles that they are often repeated in their writings. The Greek proverb was that 'the feet of the avenging deities are shod with wool,' expressing the noiseless approach of the Divine judgments"—P. (1 Tim. 6. 20; 2 Tim. 1. 13; vers. 11, 19; Matt. 24. 42, 43; 25. 13; Mark 13. 33; Luke 12. 39, 40; 1 Thess. 5. 2, 6; 2 Pet. 3. 10; ch. 16. 15.)

4. **Yet thou hast a few names**—"that is, persons. But though few, they had not separated themselves from the rest; otherwise, the angel of Sardis would not have had them. Yet it was no virtue of his, that they were unspotted; whereas it was his fault that they were but few. **Who have not defiled their garments**—either by spotting themselves, or by partaking of other men's sins. **They shall walk with Me in white**—in joy; in perfect holiness; in glory. **They are worthy.** A few good among many bad are doubly acceptable to God. Oh how much happier is this worthiness than that mentioned in Rev. 16. 6!"—WESLEY.

Names. "Some understand from the similar use of the word in Acts 1. 15, that it was usual for every church to keep a register of its members. It is possible indeed that the names are spoken of as entered in the book of life (see next verse); but the use of that image would be more forcible, if the readers of the Revelation were familiar with an approximate counterpart on earth"—C. B. **Walk in white.** The reward accords with the character of the rewarder; keeping their garments undefiled through the blood of the Lamb, they shall walk with Him in white hereafter. "Walk" implies spiritual life and liberty. **With Me.** So Jesus promised the dying thief; for this He prayed for all His people. This was the hope of S. Paul, to be with Christ. (Acts 1. 15; Jude 23; ch. 4. 4; 6. 11; 7. 9, 13.)

5. **He shall be clothed in white raiment**—"the colour of victory, joy, and triumph—**and I will not blot his name out of the book of life**—like that of the angel of the church at Sardis: but he shall live for ever. **I will confess his name**—as one of My faithful servants and soldiers"—WESLEY.

Shall thus be arrayed (R.V.). He that overcometh is to have the same reward as those who have not defiled their garments. C. B., however, suggests that the allusion may be to the priestly robe which the speaker wore, **Thus as I am now. Blot his name.** Then the book of life is not an eternal and unchangeable document. "There is a process of erasure going on, besides that of entering; when the soul has finally taken its choice for evil; when the defilement of sin has become inveterate and indelible, then the pen is drawn through the name, the inverted stylus smears the wax over the unworthy characters, and when the owner of that name applies afterwards for admission, the answer must be, *I know thee not*"—ELLICOTT. **I will confess his name.** "Compare, with the same promise made when Christ was on earth, Matt. 10. 32, 33; Luke 12. 8, 9. He omits 'in heaven' after **My Father,** now that He is Himself in heaven. These undesigned coincidences prove that these Epistles are, as they profess, Christ's own addresses, not even tinged with the colour of S. John's style, as it appears in his Gospel and Epistles. The coincidence is not with John's own Gospel, so much as with the other three. So the clause, 'He that hath an ear' is not repeated from S. John, but from all three Synoptics"—P. (Ch. 19. 8; Ex. 32. 32; Ps. 69. 28; Phil. 4. 3; ch. 13. 8; 17. 8; 20. 12; 21. 27; Matt. 10. 32; Luke 12. 8.)

Vers. 7–13. PHILADELPHIA.—7. "**The holy One . . . the true One**—two great and glorious names. **He that hath the key of David**—a master of a family, or a prince, has one or more keys, wherewith he can open and shut all

the doors of his house or palace. So had David a key, a token of right and sovereignty, which was afterwards adjudged to Eliakim. (Isa. 22. 22.) Much more has Christ, the Son of David, the key of the spiritual city of David, the New Jerusalem; the supreme right, power, and authority, as in His own house. He **openeth** this to all that overcome, **and none shutteth**: He 'shutteth' it against all the fearful, **and none openeth.** Likewise when He openeth a door on earth for His works or His servants, none can shut; and when He shutteth against whatever would hurt or defile, none can open"—WESLEY.

"The power of the keys, intrusted even to apostles, gave them no right to alter the essentials of the gospel, or the fundamental principles of morality. Absolution given by any of them could only be conditional, unless the giver possess the infallible discerning of spirits"—ELLICOTT. Evidently the Redeemer claims this power here, being about to exercise it, as supreme Head of the Church, in defence of the faithful in Philadelphia. (Acts 3. 14; 1 John 5. 20; ver. 14; ch. 1. 5; 6. 10; 19. 11; Isa. 22. 22; Luke 1. 32; ch. 1. 18; Matt. 16. 19; Job 12. 14.)

8. **I have given before thee an opened door**—"to enter into the joy of thy Lord; and meantime to go on unhindered in every good work. **Thou hast a little strength**—but little outward human strength; a little, poor, mean, despicable company. Yet thou **hast kept My word**—both in judgment and practice"—WESLEY.

An open door—"through which thou mayest enter into the kingdom, into the house of David, **and no man can shut it.** Probably the false Jews mentioned in the next verse denied the title of the Christians in Philadelphia to the privileges of brotherhood"—C. B. "Christ is to be acknowledged as the author of all the liberty and opportunity His churches enjoy, and He takes notice, and keeps account, how long He has preserved their spiritual liberties and privileges for them"—M. H. (Ver. 1; 1 Cor. 16. 9; 2 Cor. 2. 12.)

9. **Behold, I**—"who have all power; and they must then comply—**I will make them come and bow down before thy feet**—pay thee the lowest homage. **And know**—at length, that all depends on My love, and that thou hast a place therein. Oh, how often does the judgment of the people turn quite round, when the Lord looketh upon them! (Job 42. 7, etc.)"—WESLEY.

I give of the synagogue of Satan (R.V.). "That is, some of them. The promise to Philadelphia is larger than that to Smyrna. To Smyrna the promise was that the synagogue of Satan should not prevail against the faithful in her; to Philadelphia, that she should even win over some of the 'synagogue of Satan' to **fall on their faces, and confess God is in her of a truth.** Their **worshipping before her feet** expresses the converts' willingness to take the lowest place in the Church, doing servile honour to those whom once they persecuted, rather than dwell with the ungodly"—P. (Ch. 2. 9; Isa. 49. 23; 60. 14.)

10. **Because thou hast kept the word of My patience.** "The word of Christ is indeed a 'word of patience.' **I also will keep thee**—Oh happy exemption from that spreading calamity!—**from the hour of temptation**—so that thou shalt not enter into temptation; but it shall pass over thee. 'The hour' denotes the short time of its continuance; that is, at any one place. At every one it was very sharp, though short; wherein the great tempter was not idle. (Ch. 2. 10.) **Which** hour **shall come upon the whole earth**—the whole Roman empire. It went over the Christians, and over the Jews and heathens; though in a very different manner. This was the time of the persecution under the seemingly virtuous Emperor Trajan. The two preceding persecutions were under those monsters, Nero and Domitian; but Trajan was so admired for his goodness, and his persecution was of such a nature, that it was a temptation indeed, and did thoroughly **try them that dwelt upon the earth**"—WESLEY.

The word of My patience—"the word which inculcates and communicates patience; or equivalent to the 'word of promise,' of promise concerning Me, the gospel testimony to things invisible and future in Christ, which are the subject of the believer's patient expectation and hope"—W. W. (2 Pet. 2. 9; Luke 2. 1; Isa. 24. 17.)

11. **I come quickly**—"to put an end to those trials which for the present are so painful"—B. "A potential rather than a personal advent"—W. W. **Thy crown**—"which is ready for thee, if thou endure to the end"—WESLEY. (Phil. 4. 5; ch. 1. 3; 22. 7, 12, 20; ver. 3; ch. 2. 10, 25.)

12. **I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God**—"I will fix him as beautiful, as useful, and as immovable as a pillar in the Church of God. **And he shall go out no more**—but shall be holy and happy for ever. **And I will write upon him the name of My God**—so that the nature and image of God shall appear visibly upon him. **And the name of the city of My God**—giving him a title to dwell in the **New Jerusalem. And My new name**—a share in that joy which I entered into, after overcoming all My enemies"—WESLEY.

"In a sense there shall be 'no temple' in the heavenly city, for all things and persons shall be holy unto the Lord. The city shall be all one temple, in which the saints shall not merely be *stones*, as in the spiritual temple now on earth, but eminent as pillars"—P. **Go no more out.** "Who would not yearn for that city out of which no friend departs, and into which no enemy enters?"—S. AUGUSTINE. **The name of**

My God—as belonging to God in a peculiar sense, and therefore secure. (Ch. 7. 3; 9. 4; 14. 1; 22. 4.) **The name of the city of My God**—as one of its citizens—alluded to here by anticipation, described more fully in the closing chapters. This was the city that Abraham looked for. **My new name**—as wholly belonging to Christ. The "new name" of Christ intimates His assuming a new character and position as the Conqueror and King. (1 Kings 7. 21; Gal. 2. 9; ch. 2. 17; 14. 1; 22. 4; Gal. 4. 26; Heb. 12. 22; ch. 21. 2, 10; 22. 4.)

Vers. 14-22. LAODICEA.—14. **To the angel of the church at Laodicea**—"for these S. Paul had had a great concern. (Col. 2. 1.) **These things saith the Amen**—that is, the True One, the God of Truth. **The Beginning**—the Author, Prince, and Ruler. **Of the creation of God**—of all creatures; 'the Beginning,' or Author, by whom God made them all"—WESLEY.

The Amen. "The title happily harmonises with the address. His unchanging faithfulness contrasts with Laodicea's wavering of purpose. **Faithful** — trustworthy — *true* — not simply 'truth-speaking'—the Greek word means real, genuine, 'perfectly realising all that is comprehended in the name witness.' Three things are necessary for this—(1) To have seen with his own eyes what he attests; (2) To be competent to relate it to others; (3) To be willing truthfully to do so. In Christ all these conditions meet"—TRENCH. **The Beginning of the creation**—"as in Col. 1. 15, the Beginning of all creation"—P. (Isa. 65. 16; ch. 1. 5; 19. 11; 22. 6; ver. 7; Col. 1. 15.)

15. **I know thy works**—"thy disposition and behaviour, though thou knowest it not thyself—**that thou art neither cold**—an utter stranger to the things of God, having no care or thought about them—**nor hot**—as boiling water; so ought we to be penetrated and heated by the fire of love. **O that thou wert.** This wish of our Lord plainly implies that He does not work on us irresistibly, as the fire does on the water which it heats. **Cold or hot**—even if thou wert 'cold,' without any thought or profession of religion, there would be more hope of thy recovery"—WESLEY.

"The lukewarm state is desirable, if it be transitional to a warmer; for a little religion, if real, is better than none at all; but it is most fatal when, as here, it is an abiding condition, for it is mistaken for a safe state"—P. "Best described as those who take an interest in religion, but the worship of the idol of good taste or good form leads them to regard enthusiasm as ill-bred; who have never put themselves to any inconvenience, braved any reproach, or abandoned any comfort for Christ's sake; but hoped to keep well with the world, while they flattered themselves they stood well with God. Compare the exhortation to Archippus of Laodicea, calling him to greater ministerial earnestness. (Col. 4. 17)"—ELLICOTT. (Ver. 1.)

16. **So because thou art lukewarm.** "The effect of lukewarm water is well known. **I am about to spue thee out of My mouth**—I will utterly cast thee from Me; that is, unless thou repent"—WESLEY.

"The image is *intended* to be an offensive one, interfering with the self-satisfied refinement to which it is addressed"—C. B.

17. **Because thou sayest.** "Therefore 'I counsel thee,' etc. **I am rich**—in gifts and grace, as well as worldly goods—**and knowest not that thou art**—in God's account, **wretched and pitiable**"—WESLEY.

(Comp. Hos. 12. 8.) "It is not necessary to interpret the words either of material wealth, or of fancied spiritual wealth, to the exclusion of the other. S. James (ch. 2. 1-6) shows that in the first century, as in the nineteenth, the respectable classes found it easiest to be religious, to their own satisfaction"—C. B. "Observe what a difference there was between the thoughts they had of themselves, and those Christ had of them"—M'K. (Hos. 12. 8; 1 Cor. 4. 8.)

18. **I counsel thee**—"who art poor, and blind, and naked—**to buy of Me**—without money or price—**gold purified in the fire**—true, living faith, which is purified in the furnace of affliction—**and white raiment**—true holiness—**and eyesalve**—spiritual illumination; the 'unction of the Holy One,' which teacheth all things"—WESLEY.

"Gentle and loving irony. 'Take My advice, thou who fanciest thyself in need of nothing. **Buy of Me.** Buy at the cost of thine own self-sufficiency (Phil. 3. 7, 8), and the giving up of all things, however dear, that would prevent us receiving Christ's grace as *a free gift*. **Gold tried in the fire** — faith tested by fiery trials—**white raiment.** Laodicea's wools were famous, but Christ offers whiter raiment, even the righteousness of saints. **Eyesalve.** The eye is here the conscience, or inner light of the mind. The Holy Spirit's unction, like the ancient eyesalves, first smarts with conviction of sin, then heals. Trench notices that the most sunken churches of the seven, viz. Sardis and Laodicea, are the ones in which alone are specified no opponents from without, or heresies from within. The Church owes much to God's overruling providence, which has so often made both external and internal foes, in spite of themselves, to promote His cause, by calling forth the energies of His people in contending for the faith"—P. (Isa. 55. 1; Matt. 13. 44; 25. 9; 2 Cor. 5. 3; ch. 7. 13; 16. 15; 19. 8.)

19. **Whomsoever I love**—"even thee, thou poor Laodicean! Oh how much has His unwearied love to do!—**I rebuke**—for what is past—**and chasten**—that they may amend for the time to come"—WESLEY.

This is the encouragement to Laodicea not to despair, but to regard the rebuke as a token for good, if she profit by it. **Be zealous**—the opposite of "lukewarm"—only thus can that church obey the command to **repent.** (Job 5. 17; Prov. 3. 11, 12; Heb. 12. 5, 6; Jas. 1. 12.)

20. **I stand at the door, and knock**—"even at this instant; while He is speaking this word. **If any man open**—willingly receive Me—**I will sup with him**—refreshing him with My graces and gifts, and delighting myself in what I have given. **And he with Me**—in life everlasting"—WESLEY.

If any man hear My voice. "Man is not compelled by irresistible force; Christ knocks, but does not break open the door; whoever does hear, does so not of himself, but by the drawings of God's grace; but He *draws*, not *drags*"—P. **I will sup with him.** "He will accept of what is good in them; He will eat His pleasant fruit, and He will bring the best part of the entertainment with Him; if what He finds would make but a poor feast, what He brings will make up the deficiency; He will give fresh supplies of graces and comforts, and thereby stir up fresh actings of faith and love and delight; and in all this Christ and His repenting people will enjoy pleasant communion with each other"—M. H. (Cant. 5. 2; Luke 12. 37; John 14. 23.)

21. **I will give him to sit with Me on My throne**—"in unspeakable happiness and glory. Elsewhere, heaven itself is termed the throne of God: but this throne is in heaven"—WESLEY.

"'The highest place is within reach of the lowest; the faintest spark of grace may be fanned into the mightiest flame of love.' The same whom Christ had threatened to spue out of His mouth is now offered a seat with Him on His throne. The antithesis **with Me** and **with My Father,** and of **My throne** and **His throne,** points out a distinction between the glory which the saved shall share with Christ, and that in which He is united to the Father. **Even as I overcame.** This imports—(1) The greatness of the glory; they shall partake, according to their capacity, of the heavenly glory of the Son of Man; (2) The certainty of it; (3) The method of its attainment"—W. W. TRENCH notices: "The order of the promises in the seven epistles corresponds to that of the unfolding of the kingdom of God from its first beginnings on earth to its consummation in heaven. To the faithful at Ephesus—(1) 'The tree of life in the paradise of God' is promised, answering to Gen. 2; (2) Sin entered the world, and death by sin; but to the faithful at Smyrna it is promised, 'they shall not be hurt by the second death'; (3) The promise to Pergamos of the 'hidden manna' brings us to the Mosaic period, the Church in the wilderness; (4) That to Thyatira, 'triumph over the nations,' forms the consummation of the kingdom in prophetic type, the period of David and Solomon characterised by this power over the nations. Here there is a division, the seven falling into two groups, four and three; and the scenery of the last three passes from earth to heaven; (5) Christ promises to the believer at Sardis 'not to blot out his name from the Book of Life, but to confess him before His Father and the angels at the judgment'; (6) To the faithful at Philadelphia He promises that they shall be 'citizens of the New Jerusalem, fixed as immovable pillars there'; not only individual salvation, as in the case of Sardis, but the blessed communion of the Church triumphant; (7) Lastly, to the faithful of Laodicea is given the crowning promise, not only the two former blessings, but 'a seat with Christ on His throne.'" (Matt. 19. 28; Luke 22. 30; 1 Cor. 6. 2; 2 Tim. 2. 12; ch. 2. 26, 27.)

22. **He that hath an ear, let him hear,** etc. "This stands in the three former letters before the promise; in the four latter, after it; clearly dividing the seven into two parts; the first containing three, the last, four letters. The titles given our Lord in the three former letters peculiarly respect His power after His resurrection and ascension, particularly over His Church; those in the four latter, His Divine glory, and unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Again, this word being placed before the promises in the three former letters, excludes the false apostles at Ephesus, the false Jews at Smyrna, and the partakers with the heathens at Pergamos, from having any share therein. In the four latter, being placed after them, it leaves the promises immediately joined with Christ's address to the angel of the church, to show that the fulfilling of these was near; whereas the others reach beyond the end of the world. It should be observed, that the overcoming, or victory (to which alone these peculiar promises are annexed), is not the ordinary victory obtained by every believer, but a special victory over great and peculiar temptations by those that are strong in faith"—WESLEY.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VISION OF THE ETERNAL THRONE.—1. **After these things.** "As if he had said, After I had written these letters from the mouth of the Lord. By the particle **and,** the several parts of this prophecy are usually connected; by the expression, 'after these things,' they are distinguished from each other. (Ch. 7. 9; 19. 1.) By that expression, 'and after these things,' they are distinguished, and yet connected. (Ch. 7. 1; 15. 5; 18. 1.) S. John always saw and heard, and then immediately wrote down one part after another; and one part is constantly divided from another by some one of these expressions. **I saw.** Here begins the relation of the main vision, which is connected throughout; as it appears from 'the

throne, and Him that sitteth thereon'; 'the Lamb' (who hitherto has appeared in the form of a man); 'the four living creatures'; and 'the four and twenty elders,' represented from this place to the end. **A door opened in heaven**—several of these openings are successively mentioned. Here 'a door is opened'; afterward, 'the temple of God in heaven' (ch. 11. 19; 15. 5); and, at last, 'heaven' itself. (Ch. 19. 11.) By each of these S. John gains a new and more extended prospect. **And the first voice which I had heard**—namely, that of Christ; afterward, he heard the voices of many others—**said, Come up hither**—not in body, but in spirit; which was immediately done"—WESLEY.

"Chaps. 4 and 5 set before us the heavenly scenery of the succeeding visions, and God on His throne, as *the Covenant God of His Church,* revealing them to the apostle through Jesus Christ. As the communication respecting the seven churches opened with a vision of the Lord Jesus as the Head of the Church, so this second part opens with a vision suitable to the matter to be revealed"—P. (Ch. 1. 10, 19; 11. 12; 22. 6.)

2. **And immediately I was in the Spirit**—"even in an higher degree than before. (Ch. 1. 10.) **And, behold, a throne was set in heaven.** S. John is to write 'things which shall be'; and, in order thereto, he is here shown, after an heavenly manner, how whatever 'shall be,' whether good or bad, flows out of invisible fountains; and how, after it is done on the visible theatre of the world and the Church, it flows back again into the invisible world, as its proper and final scope. **And One sat on the throne**—as a King, Governor, and Judge. Here is described God, the Almighty, the Father of heaven, in His majesty, glory, and dominion"—WESLEY.

"It is implied that he was caught up through the opened door into heaven, and saw what was going on above. **Was set**—was there already—not that he saw it put in its place"—C. B. **One sat on the throne**—"the great world-drama is to move forward under the eyes of the ruling One"—ELLICOTT. (Ch. 1. 10; 17. 3; 21. 10; Isa. 6. 1; Jer. 17. 12; Ezek. 1. 26; 10. 1; Dan. 7. 9.)

3. **And He that sat was in appearance**—"shone with a visible lustre, like that of sparkling precious stones, such as those which were of old on the high priest's breastplate, and those placed on the foundations of the New Jerusalem. (Ch. 21. 19, 20.) If there is anything emblematical in the colours of these stones, possibly the **jasper**, which is transparent and of a glittering white, with an intermixture of beautiful colours, may be a symbol of God's purity, with various other perfections, which shine in all His dispensations. The **sardine stone**, of a blood-red colour, may be an emblem of His justice, and the vengeance He was about to execute on His enemies. **An emerald**, being green, may betoken favour to the good; **a rainbow**, the everlasting covenant. (See Gen. 9. 9.) And this being **round about the** whole breadth of the **throne,** fixed the distance of those who stood or sat round it"—WESLEY.

"The rainbow was the appointed token of God's covenant with all flesh, and His people in particular. Hereby God in type renewed to man the grant originally made to the first Adam. The antitype will be the 'new heavens and new earth' restored to redeemed man, just as the earth, after destruction by the Flood, was restored to Noah"—P. (Ezek. 1. 28.)

4. **And round about the throne**—"in a circle, **are four and twenty thrones, and on the thrones four and twenty elders**—the most holy of all the former ages (Isa. 24. 23; Heb. 12. 1), representing the whole body of the saints. **Sitting**—in general; but falling down when they worship—**clothed in white raiment.** This and their **golden crowns** show, that they had already finished their course and taken their place among the citizens of heaven. They are never termed 'souls,' and hence it is probable that they had glorified bodies already. Comp. Matt. 27. 52)"—WESLEY.

R.V. also **four and twenty thrones.** "There are substantially two views as to the signification of these elders, both leading to the same result—(1) That they are the twelve patriarchs, the heads of the tribes of Israel, together with the twelve apostles, the heads of the new people of God; (2) That they answer to the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priests. (1 Chron. 24.) Either way of explaining their *number* points to the same explanation of their *office;* they are the glorified embodiment and representatives of the people of God"—C. B. The same view is taken, substantially, by many others. (Ch. 11. 16; 3. 4, 5; 6. 11; 7. 9, 13, 14; 19. 14; ver. 10.)

5. **And out of the throne go forth lightnings**—"which affect the sight. **Voices**—which affect the hearing. **Thunderings**—which cause the whole body to tremble. Weak men account all this terrible; but, to the inhabitants of heaven, it is a mere source of joy and pleasure, mixed with reverence to the Divine majesty. Even to the saints on earth these convey light and protection, but to their enemies terror and destruction"—WESLEY.

Comp. the giving of the Law on Sinai. (Ex. 19. 16.) **Thunderings**—expressing God's threat against the ungodly. **Seven lamps . . . seven Spirits**—the Holy Spirit in His sevenfold operation, as the light and life-giver, the purifier of the godly, and the consumer of the ungodly. (Matt. 3. 11; ch. 8. 5; 16. 18; Ex. 37. 23; 2 Chron. 4. 20; Ezek. 1. 13; Zech. 4. 2; ch. 1. 4; 3. 1; ver. 6.)

6. **A sea of glass like unto crystal**—not imperfectly transparent, like ancient glass in

general, but clear as rock crystal. "The tabernacle of Israel was a 'pattern'; the holy place a figure of heaven itself. The throne was represented by the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies, with the Shekinah cloud over it. The 'seven lamps of fire before the throne' are antitypical to the seven-branched candlestick; the **sea of glass** corresponds with the molten sea before the sanctuary; the **four living creatures** answer to the cherubim over the mercy-seat"—P. **Sea of glass.** "The woman in purple (ch. 17) sits on 'many waters,' the fickle and stormy sea of world-opinion, fashion, and passion, the unguided and unprincipled thoughts of men. The sea of glass represents the counsels of God, purposes of righteousness and love, which are often fathomless, but never obscure, and always the same, though sometimes (as ch. 15. 2) 'mingled with fire'"—ELLICOTT. **Four beasts** (R.V. "living creatures"). The "beasts" in ch. 13 are "wild beasts," altogether a different word. What these "living ones" are intended to represent, commentators are by no means agreed. The fathers in general explain them of the four Gospels. **The lion,** the emblem of courage, is thought to symbolise the earliest Gospel, which sets forth the kingly authority of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. **The young ox,** emblem of strength and endurance, represents S. Mark, who unfolds the minute details of our Lord's ministerial labours. **The face of a man,** indicating prudence and benevolence, is the symbol of S. Luke, whose Gospel embodies the richest manifestation of the compassion of Jesus. **The flying eagle**—penetration soaring beyond earthly things, clearness in discerning the deepest mysteries of Divine love, are characteristic of the Gospel according to S. John. It is needless to add that these interpretations are purely fanciful, although the four Evangelists are still sometimes represented by these symbols. Mr. WESLEY says: "These seem to be taken from the cherubim in the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and in the holy of holies. They are doubtless some of the principal powers of heaven, but of what order it is not easy to determine. It is very probable that the twenty-four elders may represent the Jewish Church; their harps seem to intimate their having belonged to the ancient tabernacle service, where they were wont to be used. If so, the **living creatures** may represent the Christian Church. Their number is symbolic of universality; and the new song which they all sing (ch. 5. 9), could not possibly suit the Jewish without the Christian Church." On the other hand, Dr. CLARKE quotes from *Shemoth Rabba*, "There are four which have principality in this world; among intellectual creatures, **man**; among birds, **the eagle**; among cattle, **the ox**; and among wild beasts, **the lion.** Each of these has a kingdom, and a certain magnificence; and they are placed under the throne of glory (Ezek. 1. 10), to show that no creature is to exalt itself in this world, and that the kingdom of God is over all." From this Jewish interpretation of the meaning of the cherubim, he concludes, "These creatures may be considered as representatives of the whole creation." As a contrast we may present an interpretation we find in MATTHEW HENRY, and which is suggested by W. W.: "In the vision of Ezekiel each living creature had the four forms which were presented in S. John's vision separately. Hence may be derived some support for the opinion that they symbolise the gospel ministry, presenting four qualities or attributes of God-sent ministers—courage, laboriousness, sympathy, and activity, or perhaps heavenly-mindedness. This opinion is, however, chiefly recommended by the fact that they had a position nearer to the throne than the rest of the representatives of the redeemed, by their taking the lead in the offering of praise and thanksgiving, and also by their acting as heralds, inviting to the disclosures consequent upon the unsealing of the apocalyptic volume by the Lamb." On the whole, the editor leans to the interpretation of Dr. MILLIGAN in the *Expositor's Bible:* "Taking the **living creatures** together in all their parts, they are an emblem of man, associated on the one hand with material creation, on the other with the various tribes of animals by which it is inhabited, but all redeemed, transfigured, perfected, delivered from the bondage of corruption, and brought into 'the liberty of the glory of the children of God.' They have a still wider and more comprehensive meaning than the 'twenty-four elders,' the latter setting forth only the Church, the former all creation, glorified." (Ex. 38. 8; ch. 15. 2; Ezek. 1. 5; ver. 8.)

7, 8. **And the first**—"just such were the four cherubim in Ezekiel, who supported the moving throne of God; whereas each of those that overshadowed the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies had all these four faces; whence a late great man supposes them to have been emblematic of the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Second Person. **A flying eagle**—that is, with wings expanded"—WESLEY.

Full of eyes. "The force of nature is no blind force; it is employed in the service of God's providence, and all over it is the stamp of supreme wisdom. Also, the force of nature is observant of God's will. Its myriad eyes are fixed on Him"—E. **Having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within.** "The statement of ver. 6, that 'they are full of eyes before and behind,' is extended to tell us that they are covered with eyes, not only on the parts ordinarily visible, but when they spread their wings (and the eagle at least was in the attitude of flight) it is seen that the inside of the wings, and the parts beneath it, are full of eyes also"—C. B.

Each of them hath six wings—"as had each of the seraphim in Isaiah's vision. 'Two

covered his face,' in token of humility and reverence; 'two his feet,' perhaps in token of readiness and diligence for executing Divine commissions. **Round about and within they are full of eyes.** 'Round about'—to see everything which is farther off from the throne than they are themselves. 'And within'—on the inner part of the circle which they make with one another. First they look from the centre to the circumference, then from the circumference to the centre. **And they rest not**—oh happy unrest!—**day and night**—as we speak on earth (but there is no night in heaven)—**and say, Holy, holy, holy,** is the Three-One God. There are two words in the original, very different from each other, both which we translate 'holy.' The one means properly 'merciful,' but the other, which occurs here, implies much more. This holiness is the sum of all praise, which is given to the almighty Creator, for all that He does and reveals concerning Himself, till the new song brings with it new matter of glory. This word properly signifies 'separated,' both in Hebrew and other languages. And when God is termed holy, it denotes that excellence which is altogether peculiar to Himself; and the glory flowing from all His attributes conjoined, shining forth from all His works, and darkening all things besides itself, whereby He is, and eternally remains, in an incomprehensible manner separate and at a distance, not only from all that is impure, but likewise from all that is created. God is separate from all things. He is, and works from Himself, out of Himself, in Himself, through Himself, for Himself. Therefore, He is the First and the Last, the only One and the Eternal, living and happy, endless and unchangeable, almighty, omniscient, wise and true, just and faithful, gracious and merciful. Hence it is that 'holy' and 'holiness' mean the same as 'God' and 'Godhead'; and as we say of a king, 'His Majesty,' so the Scripture says of God, 'His HOLINESS.' (Heb. 12. 10.) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. When God is spoken of, He is often named 'the Holy One,' and as God swears by His name, so He does also by His holiness; that is, by Himself. This holiness is often styled 'glory'; often His holiness and glory are celebrated together. (Lev. 10. 3; Isa. 6. 3.) For holiness is covered glory, and glory is uncovered holiness. The Scripture speaks abundantly of the holiness and glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And hereby is the mystery of the Holy Trinity eminently confirmed. That is also termed 'holy' which is consecrated to Him, and for that end separated from other things; and so is that wherein we may be like God, or united to Him. In the hymn resembling this, recorded by Isaiah (ch. 6. 3) is added, 'The whole earth is full of His glory.' But this is deferred in the Revelation, till the glory of the Lord (His enemies being destroyed) fills the earth"—WESLEY. (Num. 2. 2; Ezek. 1. 10; 10. 4; Isa. 6. 2; ver. 6; Isa. 6. 3; ch. 1. 8; ch. 4.)

9, 10. **And when the living creatures give glory—the elders fall down**—"that is, as often as the living creatures give glory, immediately the elders fall down. The expression implies that they did so at the same instant, and that they both did this frequently"—WESLEY.

When the living creatures shall give . . . elders shall fall down (R.V.). The four living creatures take the lead of these four and twenty elders, both in this anthem and in the "new song" (ch. 5. 9). The future tenses faithfully rendered in R.V. probably imply that this description of praise shall be repeated onward to eternity. **Cast their crowns.** Alford compares the story told by Tacitus, how Tiridates laid down his crown before the image of Nero, as a token of homage for his kingdom. It is by no means certain, however, that the crowns of the elders are intended as royal crowns; they may be the crowns of conquerors, cast at His feet to acknowledge that their victory is due to Him. (Ch. 1. 18; 4.; 5. 8, 14; 15 7; ver. 9.)

11. **Worthy art Thou to receive.** "This He receives not only when He is thus praised, but also when He destroys His enemies and glorifies Himself anew. **The glory, and the honour, and the power**—answering the thrice-holy of the living creatures (ver. 9). **For Thou hast created all things.** Creation is the ground of all the works of God; therefore, for this, as well as for His other works, will He be praised to all eternity. **And through Thy will they were**—they began to be. It is to the free, gracious, and powerfully-working will of Him who cannot possibly need anything that all things owe their first existence. **And are created**—that is, continue in being ever since they were created"—WESLEY.

Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created (R.V.). "Here we have the praise of God the Creator by His creatures as such; in the next chapter we have the praise of the Redeemer"—C. B. "To God all creatures owe their origin. In Him they live and move and have their being. Because of His will they were—let the reading be considered and remembered; 'were,' not 'are'—because of His will they were in His idea from eternity; and when the appointed moment came they were created. Wherefore let them praise"—E. (Ch. 5. 12; Gen. 1. 1; Acts 17. 24; Eph. 3. 9; Col. 1. 16; ch. 10. 6.)

CHAPTER V.

THE LAMB COMMISSIONED TO OPEN THE PROPHETIC BOOK.—1. **And I saw.** "This is a continuation of the same vision—**in the right**

hand—the emblem of His all-ruling power. He held it openly, in order to give it to him that was worthy. It is scarce needful to observe that there is not in heaven any real book of parchment or paper, or that Christ does not really stand there in the shape of a lion or a lamb. But there are in heaven Divine counsels and transactions answerable to these figurative expressions. **A book written within and without**—that is, no part of it blank, full of matter. **Sealed with seven seals**—according to the seven principal parts contained in it, one on the outside of each. The usual books of the ancients were not like ours, but were volumes or long pieces of parchment, rolled upon a long stick, as we frequently roll silks. Such was this represented, which was 'sealed with seven seals.' Not as if the apostle saw all the seals at once; for there were seven volumes wrapped up one within another, each of which was sealed; so that upon opening and unrolling the first, the second appeared to be sealed up till that was opened, and so on to the seventh"—WESLEY.

A book. "The book which unfolds the principles of God's government; in a wide sense, the book of salvation, the interpretation of life, contains and interprets human history"—E. "Most modern commentators generalise, and suppose that it is the book of God's counsels. Some insist on the fact that though the seals are all broken, 'no portion of the roll is unfolded, nor is anything read out of the book.' They suppose it to stand for the *complete* counsel of God, which will not become intelligible till it has all been fulfilled, and therefore not before the end of time"—C. B. **Seven seals.** "The number 'seven' (divided into 'four,' the world-wide number, and 'three' the Divine) abounds in Revelation, and signifies *completeness*"—P. (Ezek. 2. 9, 10; Isa. 29. 11; Dan 12. 4.)

2. **And I saw a strong angel.** "This proclamation to every creature was too great for a man to make, and yet not becoming the Lamb Himself. It was therefore made by an angel, and one of uncommon eminence"—WESLEY.

A strong angel. His voice penetrated through heaven and earth, and under the earth (Hades).

3. **And none**—"no creature; no, not Mary herself—**in heaven, or in earth, neither under the earth**—that is, none in the universe. For these are the three great regions into which the whole creation is divided. **Was able to open the book**—to declare the counsels of God—**nor to look therein**—so as to understand any part of it"—WESLEY.

"The word **worthy** implies *moral* fitness; it was not lack of intellectual capacity which hindered. The worthiness of Christ was established in conflict and temptation. **To look thereon**—which would have enabled him to read some portion of its contents, viz. as much as was written on the outer fold of the back of the roll"—C. B. (Ver. 13.)

4. **And I wept much**—"a weeping which sprang from greatness of mind. The tenderness of heart which he always had appeared more clearly now he was out of his own power. The Revelation was not written without tears; neither without tears will it be understood. How far are they from the temper of S. John, who inquire after anything rather than the contents of this book! yea, who applaud their own clemency if they excuse those that do inquire into them!"—WESLEY.

R.V. omits **to read.** S. John has been promised a revelation of "things which must be hereafter," and now he weeps because his expectation appears to be frustrated. He is a pattern for us to imitate, in a careful and devout study of the Revelation.

5. **One of the elders.** There has been a hopeless attempt to identify this elder. "Some think," says Mr. WESLEY, quoting Bengel, "it was Jacob, from whose prophecy the name of *Lion* is given him (Gen. 49. 9)." And some have thought it was the Evangelist Matthew, and have assigned a still more fanciful reason. It appears certain that "the elders" did not represent individuals, but the redeemed Church. M. HENRY suggests that "God can make His people to instruct their teachers, when He pleases." **The Lion of the tribe of Judah**—"the victorious Prince, who is, like a lion, able to tear all His enemies to pieces"—WESLEY.

It will not be forgotten that the lion was the standard emblem of the tribe, and to call Christ the Lion of Judah is to represent Him as the victorious King. **The root of David**—not merely "a sucker come up from David's ancient root" (as Alford limits it), but also including the idea of His being Himself, as God, the root and origin of David. **Hath prevailed to open the book**—"hath overcome all obstructions, and obtained the honour to disclose the Divine counsels"—WESLEY.

Christ's victory, in His atonement, has this consequence, that He can open the book. (Gen. 49. 9; Heb. 7. 14; Isa. 11. 1, 10; Rom. 15. 12; ch. 22. 16; ver. 1; ch. 6. 1.)

6. **And I saw**—"first, Christ **in** or on **the midst of the throne**; secondly, **the four living creatures** making the inner circle round Him; and, thirdly, **the four and twenty elders** making a larger circle round Him and them. **Standing**—He lieth no more; He no more falls on His face; the days of His weakness and mourning are ended. He is now in a posture of readiness to execute all His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King—**as if He had been slain**—doubtless with the prints of the wounds which He once received. And because 'He was slain,' He is worthy to open the book (ver. 9), to the joy of His own people, and the terror of His enemies. **Having seven horns**—as a king, the emblem of perfect strength—**and seven eyes**—the emblem of perfect know-

ledge and wisdom. By these He accomplishes what is contained in the book, namely, by His almighty and all-wise Spirit. To these seven horns and seven eyes answer the seven seals and the sevenfold song of praise (ver. 12). In Zechariah, likewise (ch. 3. 9; 4. 10), mention is made of 'the seven eyes of the Lord, which go forth over all the earth.' **Which**—both the horns and the eyes—**are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth**—for the effectual working of the Spirit of God goes through the whole creation; and that in the natural, as well as the spiritual, world. For could mere matter act or move? Could it gravitate or attract? Just as much as it can think or speak"—WESLEY.

"He had been told of a lion, and he beholds a lamb, nay, not only a lamb, the emblem of patience and of innocence, but, as we learn from the use of the word *slaughtered* (not merely 'slain,' as in both A.V. and R.V.), a lamb for sacrifice and that had been sacrificed. Nor can we doubt for a moment, when we call to mind the Gospel of S. John and its many points of analogy with the Apocalypse, what particular lamb it was. It was the Paschal Lamb, the Lamb beheld in our Lord by John the Baptist, when he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' and again beheld by John the Evangelist on the cross, when in the fact that the soldiers brake not the legs of Jesus he traced the fulfilment of the Scripture, 'A bone of Him shall not be broken.' This, therefore, was the true Lamb, 'that taketh away the sin of the world,' the Lamb that gives us His flesh to eat, so that in Him we may have eternal life"—E. **Which are the seven Spirits.** "For the seven eyes see Zech. 4. 10. The seven lamps of ch. 4. 5 represent the Spirit as eternally proceeding from the Father, and belonging to the Father; these represent Him as proceeding from the Son and belonging to Him"—C. B. (Isa. 53. 7; John 1. 29, 36; 1 Pet. 1. 19; ch. 13. 8; vers. 9, 12; Zech. 3. 9; 4. 10; ch. 4. 5.)

7. **And He came.** "Here was 'Ask of Me' (Ps. 2. 8), fulfilled in the most glorious manner. **And took.** It is one state of exaltation that reaches from our Lord's ascension to His coming in glory. Yet this state admits of various degrees. At His ascension, 'angels and principalities and powers were subjected to Him.' Ten days after, He received from the Father and sent the Holy Ghost. And now He **took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne**—who gave it Him as a signal of His delivering to Him all power in heaven and earth. He received it, in token of His being both able and willing to fulfil all that was written therein"—WESLEY.

"The Lamb takes it from the Father in token of formal investiture with His universal dominion as Son of Man. This introductory vision presents to us in summary the consummation to which all the events in the seals, trumpets, and vials converge, viz. the setting up of Christ's kingdom. Prophecy ever hurries on to the grand crisis or end, and dwells in intermediate events only in their typical relation to, and representation of, the end"—P. (Ch. 4. 2.)

8. **And when He took the book, the four living creatures fell down.** "Now is homage done to the Lamb by every creature. These, together with the elders, make the beginning; and afterward (ver. 14), the conclusion. They are together surrounded with a multitude of angels (ver. 11), and together sing the new song, as they had before praised God together (ch. 4. 8), etc. **Having every one**—the elders, not the living creatures—**an harp**—which was one of the chief instruments used for thanksgiving in the Temple service, a fit emblem of the melody of their hearts. **And golden vials**—cups or censers—**full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints**—not of the elders themselves, but of the other saints still upon earth, whose prayers were thus emblematically represented in heaven"—WESLEY.

Golden bowls full of incense (R.V.). "Here representing the acceptableness of the prayers of the saints through the intercession of Christ. These were offered by the living creatures and elders, as the prayers of Israel were offered while the priests were burning incense in the sanctuary. **Of the saints**—not presented by them as mediators, but as *representatives of the actual offerers*"—W. W. (Ch. 4. 8, 10; 14. 2; 15. 2; Ps. 141. 2; ch. 8. 3, 4.)

9. **And they sing a new song**—"one which neither they nor any other had sung before. **Thou hast redeemed us**—so the living creatures also were of the number redeemed. This does not so much refer to the act of redemption, which was long before, as to the fruit of it; and so more directly to those who had finished their course, 'who were redeemed from the earth' (ch. 14. 1) **out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation**—that is, out of all mankind"—WESLEY.

And didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation (R.V.). **Unto God.** "Notice that the phrase is the exact reverse of some lax modern language upon the Atonement, which speaks as if the Son redeemed men *from* the Father. **Out of every kindred**—the first of many indications in this book of the catholicity of the Church; of course a complete refutation of the theories which ascribe to this Book a controversial anti-Pauline purpose, and a spirit of Jewish exclusiveness. There is really hardly anything in S. Paul so strong as this or ch. 7. 9"—C. B. R.V. "They **sing** a new song." It is their blessed occupation continually, and yet it is ever new. (Ps. 40. 3; ch. 14. 3; 4. 11; ver. 6; Acts 20. 28; Rom. 3. 24; 1 Cor. 6. 20; ch. 7. 23; Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14; Heb. 9. 12; 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19; 2 Pet. 2. 1;

1 John 1. 7; ch. 14. 4; Dan. 4. 1; ch. 6. 25; 7. 9; 11. 9; 14. 6.)

10. **And hast made them**—"the redeemed. So they speak of themselves also in the third person, out of deep self-abasement. **They shall reign over the earth**—the new earth; herewith agree the golden crowns of the elders. The reign of the saints in general follows, under the trumpet of the seventh angel; particularly after the first resurrection, as also in eternity. (Ch. 11. 18; 15. 7; 20. 4; 22. 5; Dan. 7. 27; Ps. 49. 14)"—WESLEY.

And makest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth (R.V.). **A kingdom.** (See note on ch. 1. 6.) **They reign.** Alford takes this reading and explains of the Church *even now*, in Christ her Head, reigning on the earth. Others argue that if the reading be correct it must be the prophetic *present* for the *future;* the seer being transported into the future when the full number of the redeemed shall be complete, and the visible kingdom begins. C. B. says the readings are about equal in authority, and that the R.V. must be preferred, as being more difficult to interpret. The *future* might be referred to the millennial reign (ch. 20. 4); but "if we adopt the *present*, it can hardly be used *for* a future." "Their cause would finally triumph on earth; the principles they espoused would prevail over all opposition. The infant Church here anticipates as her own such triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom as are described in succeeding chapters"—W. W. "The Christian cause shall prevail through all ages, while those happy persons who have passed courageously through their trials on earth shall, at the appointed season, share the honours of Thy triumphant kingdom in the new heavens and earth"—B. (Ex. 19. 6; 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9; ch. 1. 6; 20. 6; 22. 5.)

11. **And I saw**—"the many angels—**and heard**—the voice and the number of them—**round about the elders**—so forming the third circle. It is remarkable that men are represented through this whole vision as nearer to God than any of the angels. **And the number of them was**—at least two hundred millions, and two millions over. And yet these were but a part of the holy angels. Afterward (ch. 7. 11) S. John heard them all"—WESLEY.

Lit. **Myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands.** (Comp. Dan. 7. 10.) "Their place is not so near the throne, so near the Lamb. 'For not unto angels did He subject the inhabited earth to come, whereof we speak.' He subjected it to man, to Him first of all who, having taken upon Him our human nature and in that nature conquered, was 'crowned with glory and honour,' but then also to the members of His body, who shall in due time *reign over the earth.* Yet angels rejoice with man, and, with creation redeemed and purified, their voices swell out into louder praise, while the manifold wisdom of God is made known 'to them in their heavenly places'"—E. (Ch. 4. 4, 6; Ps. 68. 17; Dan. 7. 10; Heb. 12. 22.)

12, 13. "We have in ver. 13 a kind of chorus, responsive to the new song sung by the elders. In ver. 12 *seven* principal perfections are mentioned as belonging to the Lamb; in ver. 13, *four* of them are again enumerated, and ascribed to the Lamb conjointly with Him that sitteth upon the throne. 'Such as the Father is, such is the Son.' **Every creature**—every order of being—**under the earth**—it seems harsh to understand the words of an unwilling co-operation of the devils in glorifying God and His Son. It is more possible to suppose the dead, even the holy dead, described as under the earth"—C. B. **On the sea**—those in ships, and marine animals. "All His works, in all places of His dominion."

And every creature—"in the whole universe, good or bad. **In the heaven, on the earth, under the earth, on the sea**—with these four regions of the world agrees the fourfold word of praise. What is 'in heaven' says **blessing**; what is 'on earth,' **honour**; what is 'under the earth,' **glory**; what is 'on the sea,' **strength, is unto Him.** This praise from all creatures begins before the opening of the first seal; but it continues from that time to eternity, according to the capacity of each. His enemies must acknowledge His 'glory'; but those in heaven say, **Blessed** be God and the Lamb. This royal manifesto is, as it were, a proclamation showing how Christ fulfils all things, and 'every knee bows to Him,' not only 'on earth,' but also 'in heaven, and under the earth.' This book exhausts all things (1 Cor. 15. 27, 28), and is suitable to a heart enlarged as the sand of the sea. It inspires the attentive and intelligent reader with such a magnanimity that he accounts nothing in this world great; no, not the whole frame of visible nature, compared to the immense greatness of what he is here called to behold, yea, and in part to inherit. S. John has in view, through the whole following vision, what he has been now describing, namely, the four living creatures, the elders, the angels, and all creatures, looking together at the opening of the seven seals"—WESLEY. (Ch. 4. 11; Phil. 2. 10; ver. 3; 1 Chron. 29. 11; Rom. 9. 5; ch. 16. 27; 1 Tim. 6. 16; 1 Pet. 4. 11; 5. 11; ch. 1. 6; 6. 16; 7. 10.)

14. **And the four and twenty.** We should read with R.V. simply, "And the elders fell down and worshipped." The brevity of the phrase, indicating their silent adoration, is far grander than the complete sentence in A.V. (Ch. 19. 4; 4. 9, 10.)

Only brief notes will be found on the chapters which follow. The interpretation of prophecy, it has been well said, is itself prophecy. The scope of this Commentary will not even allow an adequate representation of the various ways in which the predictions of this

book have been, and still are, understood. It must suffice to give a general idea of the principles of interpretation adopted by many Christian students in the present day.

1. The object of the book is to cheer the Church, in the time of persecution and of conflict, with the assurance of the advent of the Lord; to warn her that there must be long years of trouble, and of conflict with gigantic powers of evil, that the patience and faith of the saints must be tested to the uttermost, but to assure her that nevertheless the Lord shall come, and every enemy shall fall before Him.

At the same time it is to be remembered that certain great culminating events in history are scripturally described as being "His coming." Such an event was the destruction of Jerusalem, and the overthrow of paganism in the Roman empire may have been another. Such partial fulfilments of prophecy have constantly anticipated its complete and final accomplishment.

2. The style of the book is symbolic, not with a Greek but with an Oriental symbolism. Much of its imagery comes direct from the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, but it has a symbolic language of its own also. The neglect of this fact, the treating of a symbolic expression as having only its literal and obvious meaning, has been the origin of many errors.

The object of the brief Notes which follow is simply to assist the devout student, not by presenting any system of interpretation, but by pointing out the origin of some of the imagery, and the spiritual lessons from time to time suggested.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPENING OF SIX OF THE SEVEN SEALS OF THE BOOK.—1. **Come and see** (R.V. "Come"). "The words 'and see' are almost certainly spurious here, and in vers. 3, 5, 7"—C. B. Here begins the divergence of interpretation. Some have supposed the summons to be addressed to S. John, claiming his attention; some that it was "the cry of the redeemed creation to its Redeemer"; some that it is simply "a summons to the Horseman, who does in fact come." The general meaning of the vision of the seals is obvious. "Judgments are foretold as accompanying the preaching of the gospel to all nations. (Matt. 24. 6–14.) The opening of the first four seals is followed by judgments preparatory to His coming, and arranged in the same order as in S. Matthew, *wars, famines, pestilences.* At the opening of the fifth seal the martyrs above express their longing for the advent; at the sixth, the Lord's coming is ushered in with terrors to the ungodly; at the seventh (ch. 11. 15), the consummation is fully attained"—P.

2. **White horse.** "Not one of the four riders is a person. Each is rather a cause, a manifestation of certain truths connected with the kingdom of Christ, when that kingdom is seen to be, in its own nature, the judgment of the world. Even war, famine, death, and Hades, which follow, are not really these things. They are simply used, as scourges of mankind, to give general expression to the judgments of God. Thus, under the first rider, the cause rather than the person of Christ is introduced to us, in the earliest stage of its victorious progress, and with the promise of its future triumph"—E.

3. **Red horse**—symbol of war.

5, 6. **Black horse**—symbol of famine. **A measure of wheat**—ordinarily from twelve to sixteen measures were given for a denarius or penny. **Hurt not the oil and the wine**—spared for the refreshment of the sufferers, or symbolic of the comfort provided for the people of God amid the troubles of the world.

7, 8. **A pale horse . . . Death and Hades**—the personification of pestilence. (Comp. Ezek. 14. 21 with the four judgments here, the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts.) "These four seals are marked off from the three last, by the four living creatures introducing them with the cry of 'Come.' They are not restricted to one time, but extend through the whole period of Church history to the coming of Christ"—P. The "historical" interpreters have seen the fulfilment of these four seals in Roman history, when Trajan carried imperial conquest to its utmost height, in the civil wars and mutinies during and after the age of the Severi, in the famines that followed, and in the general distress which made the barbarian conquest possible. Modern commentators recognise that these events may fairly be regarded as the first interpretation, but do not think the meaning of the symbols exhausted thereby.

9–11. The three last seals relate to the invisible world. "The scene changes from earth to heaven, so that interpretations which make the three last consecutive to the first four seals are very doubtful"—P. **The souls of them that were slain.** This passage need not be restricted to some particular martyrdoms, but receives fulfilment all along the course of the history of the Church. **Avenge our blood.** "It has been argued from this that the temper of the martyrs' souls is less than Christian. But no one can surely imagine that the spirit of this passage is a selfish desire for personal vengeance. As we meet with the germ of the thought in Ps. 94. 3, so we have a development of it, substantially identical with this, from the lips of the Master Himself. (Luke 17. 2–10.) Faith looks on evil with a hatred like God's own, shares God's will that it shall not triumph. Therefore, the Church on earth (the probable meaning of the widow in the parable), and the saints in heaven, cry alike to God to execute His own purpose, and bring the reign of evil to an end; and He does not yet, but He surely will"—E. **White**

robes—indicative of purity, and joy, and victory. "Conscious bliss, as accepted and holy."

12-17. "As vers. 4, 6–8, the sword, famine, and pestilence, answer to Matt. 24. 6, 7, and vers. 9, 10, as to martyrdoms, answer to Matt. 24. 9, 10, so this passage answers to Matt. 24. 29, 30. The imagery describes the *portents* of the immediate coming of the day of the Lord, not the coming itself"—P. "The description is marked by almost unparalleled magnificence and sublimity. The real question is, To what does it apply? The destruction of Jerusalem, or the final judgment, or even every great calamity by which a sinful world is overtaken? In each of these senses, and in each with a certain degree of truth, has the passage been understood"—E. It will be remembered that language similar to that before us was employed by Joel (Joel 3. 30, 31), and was interpreted by S. Peter as finding a fulfilment in the founding of the Church on the day of Pentecost; that Malachi described the time of the Messiah's first coming as "the great and terrible day of the Lord." (Matt. 4. 5.) Many passages of similar character may be quoted from the Old Testament. (Isa. 2. 19; 13. 9, 10; 34. 2, 4; Hagg. 2. 6, 7.) "Whenever the Jew, animated by the spirit of the Old Testament, thought of the Judge of the earth as manifesting Himself in a greater than ordinary degree, in that truth and righteousness which are the glorious distinction of His character, he took advantage of such figures as we have before us. To the fall of Jerusalem, to the overthrow of idolatry in Rome, to every great crisis of human history, and to the close of all, they may be fittingly applied"—E. **The wrath of the Lamb.** It is hardly necessary to point out the terrible significance of the paradox. **Who shall be able to stand?** So Malachi asked, when he wrote of the first coming of Christ, and its issue in the judgment of the Jewish nation. (Mal. 3. 1.)

CHAPTER VII.

Vers. 1–8. Sealing of the Hundred and Forty-four Thousand.—1. **The winds** were emblems of days of trouble and of judgment. The tempests were restrained a while that S. John might see the security of the people of God. (Dan. 7. 2.)

2. **The seal of the living God.** "S. Paul tells us this seal has two legends (2 Tim. 2. 19): on the one side dependence upon God and union with Him, on the other side holiness of life"—Ellicott.

3. **Sealed the servants of our God**—"marked them out as such, and secured them from the impending calamities"—B.

4. **An hundred and forty and four thousand.** "We are to observe in the *numbers* of the Revelation a certain figurative proportion. As there were twelve patriarchs and twelve apostles, twelve became a sacred number in the synagogue and in the Christian Church. The number twelve, multiplied by itself, and then by one thousand, makes one hundred and forty-four thousand. This single passage may show the mistake of supposing the numbers in this book to be precise and exact; it cannot be intended that there should be in each tribe twelve thousand believers, neither more nor less, to make up the total sum. As the Church of Christ was first formed out of the Jewish Church and nation, the spiritual **Israel** is first mentioned. But the twelve tribes are not enumerated in the usual order. **Judah** has the precedence, because from him descended the Messiah, and in this tribe the kingdom was established. **Dan** is omitted, as it is in the Book of Chronicles in the recital of the posterity of the patriarchs. The Levitical ceremonies being abolished, **Levi** was again on a level with his brethren"—B. Opinions differ as to the meaning. Some modern commentators regard these as representing only Jewish believers; others, the entire Church of God. "The Christian Church absorbs the Jewish, inherits her privileges, and adopts her phraseology with a wider and nobler meaning. The twelve tribes were the appointed witnesses of pure theology and morals; the twelve apostles inherited a similar, though higher, spiritual work. The number *twelve* stands for a world-witness to Divine truth; the **hundred and forty-four thousand** represents the growth into full numbers. The omission of one tribe, and the changed name of another, are designed to show that in the Church as in Israel the most splendid opportunities may be lost"—Ellicott.

Vers. 9–17. The Innumerable Multitude.—9–12. **A great multitude which no man could number.** "The vision of a certain number of Israelites, and the next of an innumerable multitude of all nations, are certainly correlative to each other; and the most obvious way of understanding them is, that among God's elect there will be many faithful Israelites, and yet few compared to the number of faithful Gentiles. Others, however, regard the 'hundred and forty-four thousand,' and the 'innumerable multitude,' to represent the same persons, regarded in two different aspects. To God, they are all His own people, all duly numbered and marshalled and organised as His army, and every one known to Him by name; on the other hand, from a human point of view, they belong to all nations, and are too many to be counted"—C. B. **Palms in their hands**—"tokens of joy and victory"—Wesley.

More recent commentators suggest that the imagery is taken from the feast of tabernacles, the most joyous festival of the Jewish year. **Amen. The blessing.** "Before the Lamb began to open the *seven* seals, a *sevenfold* hymn of praise was brought Him by many angels. (Ch. 5. 12.)

Now He is upon opening the *seventh* seal, and the *seven* angels are going to receive *seven* trumpets, in order to make the kingdoms of the world subject to God. All the angels give *sevenfold* praise to God"—WESLEY.

13–17. **Answered**—namely, to S. John's thoughts, asked the question which might have been expected to arise in his mind. **Great tribulation** (R.V. "Which come out of the great tribulation"). The "historic" interpreters refer this to the persecution under the Pagan emperors; but it doubtless includes also all the tribulation which the saints of all ages have had to pass through. **Washed their robes . . . the blood of the Lamb.** "The language is in perfect accordance with the doctrine of the atonement by the death of Christ as a sacrifice, and is inexplicable in any other way. The idea of garments being washed in blood, and becoming white by such a process, could never have entered the mind apart from the efficacy of that atonement to cleanse the soul from sin"—W. W. (Isa. 1. 18; Heb. 9. 14; 1 John 1. 7; ch. 1. 5; see Zech. 3. 3–5.)

15. **Shall dwell among them** (R.V. "Shall spread His tabernacle over them—the Lamb shall be their Shepherd"). "(1) They are happy in their station, for they are before the throne of God night and day; (2) They are happy in their employment, for they serve God continually; (3) They are happy in their freedom from the inconveniences of this present life—want and pain; (4) They are happy in the love and conduct of the Lord Jesus; (5) They are happy in being delivered from all sorrow, or occasion of it"—M. H. The language is from the Old Testament. It has been maintained that this entire chapter refers to the Church on earth, describing its absolute security and happiness in the midst of the judgments coming on the world. Probably the old interpretation will hold its ground, which refers it to the heavenly rest and reward. (Isa. 4. 5, 6; 21. 3; 49. 10; Ps. 23. 1; 36. 8; John 10. 11, 14; Isa. 25. 8.)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEVENTH SEAL—THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS.—1. **Silence in heaven**—"implying the solemn introduction to the eternal Sabbatism which is to follow the seventh seal, and on the other hand the silence which continued during the incense-accompanied prayers which usher in the first of the seven trumpets. In the Jewish temple, during the offering of incense, solemn silence was kept. It implies, too, the adoring expectation with which the blessed spirits and the angels await the unfolding of God's judgments"—P.

3. **Another angel**—"a created angel. Such are all that are here spoken of. In this part of the Revelation, Christ is never termed 'an angel,' but 'the Lamb.' **Much incense was given.** Incense generally signifies prayer; here it signifies the longing desire of the angels, that the holy counsel of God might be fulfilled. And there was 'much incense,' for as the prayers of all the saints in heaven and earth are here joined together, so are the desires of all the angels which are brought by this angel. **That he might place it**—it is not said, 'offer it'; for he was discharging the office of an angel, not a priest. **With the prayers of all the saints**—at the same time; but not *for* the saints. The angels are fellow-servants with the saints, not mediators for them"—WESLEY.

There was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints (R.V.). "Thus disappears the supposed theological necessity of identifying this angel with the Lord Jesus; the prayers of all saints are presented by Him and no one else (ch. 5. 8, 9); but here the angels offer their own worship, as it is 'given to them,' in union, perhaps in subordination, to that of the redeemed"—C. B.

5. **Cast it to the earth.** "The meaning must be, to represent the same instrument as obtaining God's mercy on His people, and executing vengeance on His enemies"—C. B. **Voices and thunderings**—emblems of the breaking forth of the Divine wrath.

7–13. "The common feature of the first four trumpets is, that the judgments under them affect natural objects; the last three, the *woe-trumpets*, affect men's life with pain, death, and hell. The language is evidently drawn from the plagues of Egypt, five or six out of the ten exactly corresponding"—P. **The third part of trees**—"desolation extensive yet partial. This proportion runs through all the visions of the first six trumpets, indicating more widely extended troubles than those under the fourth seal, where the extent is 'over the fourth part of the earth'"—W. W. **There fell a great star from heaven.** Some have thought some false teacher, such as Arius, to be pointed out. **Wormwood.** Contrast the converse change of bitter water into sweet. (Ex. 15. 23.) **Men died of the waters.** Alford gives as an illustration in a physical point of view, the conversion of water into *fire-water* or ardent spirits, of which certainly **many men** have died. **An angel flying through the midst of heaven** (R.V. "An eagle flying in mid-heaven"). **Woe, woe, woe.** We see by ch. 9. 12; 11. 14, that three distinct woes are meant, one for each of the three trumpets.

CHAPTER IX.

Vers. 1–12. FIFTH TRUMPET—FIRST WOE.—1. **I saw a star fall** (R.V. "A star from heaven fallen to the earth"). **The bottomless pit** (R.V. "The pit of the abyss"). "We have here one of those contrasts of S. John a due attention to which is of such importance to the interpreter. This fallen star is the counter-

part of Him who is 'the bright and morning star,' and who has 'the keys of Death and of Hades'"—E.

2–12. The army of locusts, described in terms evidently suggested by the description of the Egyptian plague in Ex. 10. 12, 15, and by the prediction of Joel 2. 3–10, has been variously interpreted. In ver. 4 we find that, whatever the plague is, it cannot hurt God's children. "It has characteristics partly human, partly diabolical, partly civilised, partly barbarous; the historic interpreters have seen the Saracens under Mahomet, whose religion was essentially a military system; others are inclined to refer them to the hordes of Goths whose unkempt locks and savage ferocity resemble this locust host. There are good grounds for taking the vision to prefigure a fierce invading army. But these may themselves be types of future scourges"—ELLICOTT. **Five months.** "It has been conjectured that this period is named, as being the time for which a plague of the literal locusts is likely to last"—C. B. **A king over them**—whereas "the locusts have no king." (Prov. 30. 27.) "It may signify the royalty assumed by the Mohammedan caliphs; but it is better to understand by this personage Satan, as the genius of destruction, bodily and spiritual"—W. W. For **Abaddon** see Job 26. 6 (R.V.). "A decided majority of orthodox commentators understand this vision as foretelling the Mahometan conquests, some taking the 'fallen star' of ver. 1 for Mahomet himself. Perhaps the Mahometan conquest is to be regarded as at least a partial fulfilment of this prophecy, but the attempts to show that it is in every detail an exact fulfilment have not been very successful"—C. B.

Vers. 13–21. SIXTH TRUMPET—SECOND WOE. —13. **Voice from the four horns of the golden altar.** Taken in connection with previous visions, this voice shows that the judgments continue to be the answer of the Almighty to His people's prayers.

14. **At the river Euphrates**—"the river whereat Babylon, the ancient foe of God's people, was situated. Once again, four angel ministers of God's vengeance shall go forth, four, to show that a world-wide judgment is intended, and assemble an army of horsemen to slay the third part of men"—P. **Prepared for an hour** (R.V. "for the hour")—for the definite time when this judgment should take place.

16. **Two hundred thousand thousand.** "The hosts here, from their numbers and their appearance, do not represent merely human hosts. To the Israelite the horse presented an object of terror rather than admiration, and an army of horsemen awakened the deepest feelings of alarm. (See Hab. 1. 5–10.) Like the locusts of the previous vision, the horses now spoken of are clothed with preternatural attributes, but the explanation is the same. Ordinary horses could not convey images of sufficient terror"—E.

20. **And the rest of the men repented not**—like Pharaoh hardening his heart, in spite of all the plagues. **That they should not worship devils.** Repentance demands amendment of life. Doubtless they were terrified, but they did not repent. "Some explain this vision of horsemen with breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone (R.V. 'as of fire, hyacinth, and brimstone'), as referring to the myriads of the Turkish cavalry, clothed in red, blue, and yellow; and in the fire, smoke, and brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths some see a reference to the newly-invented artillery used in the siege and capture of Constantinople, A.D. 1453. In that case the judgment would come chiefly on the professed Christians of the Eastern and Greek Churches. Others have inferred, from vers. 20, 21, that the sins of the heathen are especially meant. The whole passage bears a more obvious and natural interpretation as referring to the world at large, than to the nominally Christian portion of it alone. And, so understood, it will mean that the present visitation left idolatry and moral corruption still prevalent in the world"—E.

CHAPTER X.

THE ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK.—"We are not told yet, as we might expect, that the second woe is past, nor does the seventh trumpet and the third woe immediately follow; but, just as in ch. 7, the two descriptions of the sealed Israelites and the palm-bearing multitude come after the sixth seal, so here the vision of the mighty angel, and the prophecy (passing insensibly into a vision) of the two witnesses, follow the sixth trumpet"—C. B.

1. **Another mighty angel**—"another from that mighty angel mentioned in Rev. 5. 2; yet he was a created angel, for he did not swear by himself (ver. 6). **Clothed with a cloud**—in token of his high dignity. **And a rainbow upon his head**—a lovely token of the Divine favour, and yet it is not too glorious for a creature: the woman (Rev. 12. 1) is described more glorious still. **And his face as the sun.** Nor is this too much for a creature; for all the righteous 'shall shine forth as the sun.' (Matt. 13. 43.) **And his feet as pillars of fire**—bright as flame"—WESLEY.

On the other hand, many have thought the description strikingly appropriate to the Angel of the Covenant. "**The** rainbow" (R.V.) gives some support to this idea (ch. 4. 3).

2. **A little book open**—"a roll little in comparison with the great book (ch. 5. 1) which contained the whole vast scheme of the Divine purposes. This smaller book contained only a portion, which S. John was now to make his own (vers. 9, 11), and then to use in prophesying to others"—P. **Right foot on the sea, and left foot upon the earth**—claiming both

for God, soon to be cleared of the usurper and his followers.

3. **Seven thunders** (R.V. "**The** seven thunders"). Prophetic use of the article; "the thunders" of which more hereafter.

4. **Seal up the things.** "(Comp. Dan. 12. 4, 9.) There the use of the words is more logical: Daniel is to write the vision, but not let it be read; contrast in this book ch. 22. 10. Here the word is suggested by the passage in Daniel, but the sealing must be on the apostle's mind and lips. Why the voices of the thunders were not to be written it is idle to guess; it is worse than idle to guess what they were, when the Holy Spirit has purposely concealed them"—C. B.

5, 6, 7. **Lifted up his hand to heaven** (R.V. "his right hand"). In Dan. 12. 7 the angel lifts up both hands, but here one hand holds the little book. **There shall be time no longer.** In Daniel, the angel clothed in linen and standing upon the waters sware that "a time, times, and a half" were to interpose before the consummation; here, on the contrary, the angel swears that "there shall be time no longer." Not as the English versions seem to imply, that time shall end and eternity begin; "**there shall be time no longer**" (R.V. *margin*, "delay"), **but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which He declared to His servants the prophets** (R.V.). The words point out the happy issue of the dark period which has been described. The office of the prophets is to receive the good tidings from God and to declare them to others.

9. **Take it and eat it up**—"thoroughly consider and digest it. Appropriate its contents so entirely as to become part of thyself. This is a repetition, with a difference, of one of Ezekiel's visions. (Ezek. 2. 8; 3. 3.) **It will make thy belly bitter**—this Ezekiel's roll did not do. We may presume that this little book, like the Old Testament one, contained 'lamentations and mourning and woe.' To both prophets, the first result of absorbing the words of God and making them their own (Jer. 15. 16) is delight at communion with Him and enlightenment by Him; but the priest of Jehovah did not feel, as the disciple of Jesus did, the afterthought of bitterness, the Christ-like sorrow for those against whom God's wrath is revealed, who knew not the time of their visitation"—C. B.

11. **And he said** (R.V. "And they say")—an indefinite expression for "it was said unto me." **Before many peoples** (R.V. "**over** many peoples," *margin*, "concerning"). Probably a personal warning to the apostle himself; he was to see the end of all things in vision, but his own earthly work and duties were not at an end.

CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 1–14. MEASURING THE TEMPLE—THE TWO WITNESSES.—The Temple is measured, to mark off and secure the shrine, the true Church of God; the outer court is left to the Gentiles, indicating that practical heathenism and corruption have invaded the Church. Against these things witnesses are raised up; their power is great, though their testimony is disregarded; their influence outlasts their lives, and their words avenge them on their adversaries. Whatever corruptions invade the Church, the kernel of the Church will never be destroyed, but out of it will arise those who will be true, and whose words will have power.

1. **A reed like unto a rod**—measuring reed. (Ezek. 40. 3; Rev. 21. 15.) Possibly the canon or rule of Scripture, completed by S. John. **A rod**—"of iron which cannot be bent or broken, but will break its foes in pieces"—W. W. **The Temple.** The word used is not that for the whole Temple precinct, but the Temple in its narrowest sense, what in the Old Testament is called "the house" or "the palace."

2. **Tread under foot.** (So Luke 21. 24, which is doubtless referred to.) "Hitherto the correspondences in this book with that prophecy of our Lord have been closest with S. Matthew's version of it. Varying parallels like these authenticate the reports of His words in the different Gospels, showing that they are to be taken as mutually supplementary. Of course S. John did not *use* our Gospels (though S. Matthew's at least was in existence), but wrote independently from his own recollection"—C. B. **Forty and two months.** "The period of time here mentioned is the same as the 'one thousand two hundred and threescore days' during which the woman fled into the wilderness, ch. 12. 6. Both visions refer, doubtless, to the same event"—W. W. The same period as Daniel's "time, times, and a half." (Dan. 12. 14.) "The incorporation of the expressions used by Daniel remind us that the principles of God's government are the same in all ages, that the principles illustrated in one series of historical events are likely to receive similar illustration in after times. The words of Daniel were not exhausted in the age of Antiochus, nor the visions of the Apocalypse in the overthrow of any one nation or the corruption of any one church. The future may bring further light; for the present the period of forty-two months, the equivalent of three years and a half (the half of seven, the perfect number), is the symbol of a period limited in length; it is the time of the world's power, during which it seems to triumph, but it will not last for ever"—ELLICOTT.

3. **My two witnesses**—"a small and yet a competent number. As God raised up prophets in the ancient Church to witness against the

idolatrous corruptions of religion, so there shall be some in every age to testify against the iniquity and idolatry of their times"—C. B. **A thousand two hundred and threescore days**—the same period as the forty-two months, or three years and a half, the year being reckoned only as three hundred and sixty days. **In sackcloth**—evidently referring to the "rough garments" of the prophets. (2 Kings 1. 8; Zech. 13. 4.)

4. **The two olive trees**—referring to the vision of Zechariah. (Ch. 4. 3, 11, 12.) "That is, as Zerubbabel and Joshua were then the chosen instruments in God's hand, even so shall these be in their season. Being full themselves of the unction of the Holy One, they shall continually transmit the same to others. **And the two candlesticks**—burning and shining lights—**standing before the Lord**—always waiting on God, without the help of man"—WESLEY.

5, 6. **Fire proceedeth out of their mouth. Power to shut heaven . . . over waters.** The references are to the history of Elijah (1 Kings 17. 1; 2 Kings 1. 10) and to the miracles of Moses (Ex. 4. 9; 7. 17-20).

7. **The Beast**—here first mentioned. "This Beast will meet us again in chaps 13 and 17, where we shall see it is the concentrated power of a world material and visible, in opposition to a world spiritual and invisible"—E.

9, 10. "Their corpses remain unburied; there are congratulations and rejoicings, but the forms of the witnesses, though silent, witness still. Even in an age of religious and social anarchy, silent tokens of a better order remain"—ELLICOTT. **The great city . . . Sodom—Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.** It has been argued that the "great city" must be Rome. "The characteristic of **Sodom** is impurity; of **Egypt**, tyranny; of **Jerusalem**, apostasy. Hence Rome is called Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem, as having the three characteristics united"—W. W. Others argue that Jerusalem is clearly pointed out as the city. So E., adding, however, "If this city be Jerusalem, what does it represent? We have the degenerate Church before us, the Church that has conformed to the world. Christ was crucified in the midst of the then existing professing Church of God; His witnesses were martyred in the midst of the nominal Christian Church. This interpretation appears to harmonise the best with the symbolism of the vision."

11. **Three days and a half.** "Like her Lord, the Church will have her dark passion week, followed by the bright resurrection morn. It is a curious historical coincidence that, at the fifth Lateran Council, May 5, 1514, no witness (not even the Moravians who were summoned) testified for the truth, as Huss and Jerome did at Constance; an orator ascended the tribunal before the representatives of Papal Christendom, and said, 'There is no reclaimant, no opponent.' Exactly three years and a half after, on October 31, 1517, Luther posted up his famous theses on the church-door at Wittenberg. If this prophecy be allowed other fulfilments, beside the final and literal one under the last Antichrist, this may fairly be regarded as one"—P.

12. **In a cloud** (R.V. "In *the* cloud")—the same, perhaps, which received their Lord out of His disciples' sight.

13. **The tenth part of the city**—a considerable part of the powers of the idolatrous Church. **Seven thousand**—uniting the two mystical and perfect numbers, to indicate the complete destruction of the impenitent. **Gave glory.** Expressive of gratitude (Luke 17. 18); of humility (Acts 12. 23); but here the reference is more probably to the Old Testament (Josh. 7. 19), confession of sin. Good is effected even through fear; unlike those who repented not (ch. 9. 21), they give glory to the God of heaven.

14. **The second woe**—including the punishment of those who rejected the two witnesses, as well as the invasion of the horsemen (ch. 9).

Vers. 15-19. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.—15. "Whatever view we adopt concerning the interpretation of the Apocalypse must be governed by the declared fact that the seventh trumpet brings us to the very end (ch. 10. 7)"—ELLICOTT. **The kingdoms of this world** (R.V. "The kingdom of the world"). **His Christ.** (See Luke 2. 26; Acts 4. 26.) Of course the language originates in the Old Testament, "The Lord's Anointed." **He shall reign for ever and ever.** "There is no contradiction between this statement of S. John and that of S. Paul, when, speaking of the Son, the latter apostle says, 'And when all things have been subjected under Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected unto Him that did subject all things under Him, that God may be all in all' (1 Cor. 15. 28). The kingdom spoken of by S. Paul is that exercised by our Lord in subduing His enemies, and it must necessarily come to an end when there are no more enemies to subdue. The kingdom here is Christ's dominion as Head and King of His Church, and of that dominion there is no end"—E.

16. **Elders which sit before God on their thrones** (R.V.). "Christ's servants crowned with Him, and sharing His sovereignty"—ELLICOTT.

18. **The time of the dead to be judged, and to give their reward**—rewards of various degree, according to the character and the service—**prophets, saints, them that fear Thy name.** And so punishment proportioned to the nature and degree of the offence. Here is the last and greatest woe. The overthrow of the evil kingdom brings ruin to those who have obstinately supported it.

19. **There was opened the temple of God.** "More open discoveries were made to the Seer, a clearer revelation of the innermost and most

spiritual truths of the gospel"—W. W. **Lightnings and voices.** "So ch. 8. 5; 16. 8: in all three places they mark the end of the series of seven signs"—C. B.

CHAPTER XII.

Vers. 1–6. THE WOMAN WITH THE MAN CHILD.—1. **A great wonder** (R.V. "A great sign"). **A woman clothed with the sun**—"the Jewish Church, the ideal Israel"—C. B. "The Old Testament congregation of God"—P. "The Church invested with the light of Divine truth, of spiritual life"—W. W.

2. **Being with child.** "The woman's travail pains represent the Old Testament believers' ardent longings for the promised Redeemer"—P. "The Church fulfilling her destiny even in pain. Her work is to bring forth Christ to men, and not to be satisfied till Christ be formed in them"—ELLICOTT. (Isa. 66. 7; Gal. 4. 19.)

3. **A great red dragon**—the emblem of the evil spirit, the devil. "The word 'dragon' in classical Greek means simply 'serpent,' though perhaps it was always specially applied to the larger or more formidable kinds"—C. B. **Seven heads and ten horns**—"implying vast wisdom, and mighty power and strength. **Seven diadems on his heads**—such as kings anciently wore; for, though fallen, he was a great potentate still, even the prince of this world"—WESLEY.

4. **The third part of the stars**—"the light-bearers, the illustrious, to whom God gave high place that they might be burning lights for Him"—ELLICOTT. **Devour the child.** So the dragon, Egypt, was ready to devour Israel's males at the birth of the nation; so Herod slew the male children, seeking to destroy the infant Christ. (Dan. 8. 10; Ex. 1. 16.)

5. **And she brought forth a man child**—"even Christ, considered not in His person, but in His kingdom"—WESLEY.

To rule all nations with a rod of iron—identifying Him with the King predicted in Ps. 2. 9. **Child caught up to God**—"taken utterly out of his reach"—WESLEY.

6. **The woman fled into the wilderness.** "Mary's flight with Jesus into Egypt was a type of this"—P. **That they may feed her there**—indefinite for "that she may be fed." **A thousand two hundred and threescore days.** "This wilderness life of the Church continues during the whole Christian era, during the whole period of witnessing. (Ch. 11. 3.) Always in the wilderness, so long as her Lord is personally absent, she eats heavenly food and drinks living water"—E.

Vers. 7–12. THE WAR IN HEAVEN.—7. **There was war in heaven.** "This must refer to an event subsequent to the Incarnation, not therefore to the 'fall of the angels,' as readers of *Paradise Lost* are apt to assume"—C. B. "It is the overthrow of the evil spirit by Christ, the victory of Bethlehem, Calvary, and Olivet, which is commemorated, and the effects of which transcend the sphere of things seen"—ELLICOTT. **Michael.** See Dan. 10. 13, 21; 12. 1, where he is represented as the guardian angel of Israel. See also Jude 9, where he is called "the archangel," and is evidently a created being. "It may be a kind of type name, and so employed in this passage to denote Him who is the Captain of our salvation"—ELLICOTT.

9. **That old serpent.** "This is justly understood to be an allusion to the temptation and fall of man (Gen. 3. 1), and a proof that 'the serpent' was the evil one under the form of that reptile"—W. W. **Was cast out** (R.V. "down"). "This war describes the conflict between Christianity and heathenism, represented as carried on between the spiritual powers which rule the contending systems, and decided in favour of the former before the actual agents in the warfare come into conflict. The overthrow and downcasting of Satan and his angels is *probably* a figure taken from a reality, of which there are elsewhere similar intimations. (Luke 10. 18; John 12. 31)"—W. W.

11. **By the blood of the Lamb** (R.V. "Because of the blood"). **They loved not their lives unto the death.** "The spirit of such devotion has breathed in thousands who have not died the martyr's death. The martyr spirit needs not death to show itself"—ELLICOTT.

12, 13. **Rejoice, O heavens . . . Woe for the earth and for the sea! for the devil is gone down unto you.** "Although the fall of the angels from their first estate may be remotely hinted at, the vision refers to the spiritual contest begun after the resurrection of Jesus; and we ask our readers to pay particular attention to the double relation of Satan to mankind referred to in it; his subjection to the righteous; and the subjection of the wicked (the earth, the men of the world), to him"—E.

Vers. 13–17. THE PRESERVATION OF THE WOMAN.—13. **Dragon persecuted the woman.** The discourse, interrupted by the episode in vers. 7–12, is here resumed.

14. **The two wings of the great eagle** (R.V.), **that she might fly into the wilderness.** "There can be little doubt as to the allusion. The great eagle is that of which God Himself spake to Moses. (Ex. 19. 3, 4.) 'I bear you on eagle's wings.' (See also Deut. 32. 11, 12)"—E. In the manifold symbolism of this book it is quite possible that we may also recognise here the wing of the great eagle of the Roman standard, which protected S. Paul and many more in the infancy of the Church.

15. **Earth helped the woman.** "As Persia was raised up to release Israel from Babylon, so does help come to the persecuted Church from the cultured Roman world. But the

passage demands a wider interpretation. By the flood we understand all popular movements against Christianity. They diffuse themselves for a time, but mother earth absorbs them all. The eternal laws of truth and right ultimately prove the strongest. It is not one nation only, or one age, that is represented here; it is an eternal law"—ELLICOTT.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERS. 1-10. THE BEAST FROM THE SEA.—The way in which the Dragon carries out his plan of war is described. Two monsters rise at his bidding, one from the sea, one from the earth, one distinguished by mere brutal, the other by more subtle power.

1. **I stood** (R.V. "He stood")—that is, the Dragon. **A beast coming out of the sea**—not the same word for "beast" as in ch. 4. 7; this means "wild beast." "The sea" is described (ch. 17. 15) as "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues." **Seven heads, ten horns, ten crowns.** "The description carries us back to Dan 7. 2-8. In both cases there is the same origin, the sea swept by strong winds; in both cases the same animals are referred to, though in the vision of Daniel they are separated; in that of John, combined; in both cases mention is made of ten horns; so far, therefore, we can have little hesitation in affirming the conclusion arrived at by most commentators, that in this 'beast coming out of the sea' we have an emblem of that power of the world, which, under the guidance of the prince of the world, opposes and persecutes the Church of Christ"—E.

2. **The dragon gave him his power.** "It is the devil's interest and policy to disguise his working under the forms of the world; at present he has actually persuaded many to disbelieve his existence"—C. B.

3. **One of his heads wounded . . . healed** (R.V. "Smitten to death, and his death-stroke was healed"). "A comparison of ch. 17. 8-11 shows that it is to the sixth, or Roman, head that S. John intends his language to refer. It is upon the Beast in his *resurrection state* that we are to dwell. In that condition he is not described as raging only in the Roman Empire, his influence is universal; 'authority over every tribe and people, and tongue and nation,' in fact, all save the godly, whose names are written in the book of life; and that influence is to continue through all the history of the Church, the 'forty and two months' so often referred to in this prophecy. What, then, can this first Beast be? Not simply Rome, either pagan or papal; not any single form of earthly government, however strong; not any Roman emperor, however vicious and cruel, but the general influence of the world, in so far as it is opposed to God"—E. "It has been thought that this indicates the *death of Nero*, and his expected reappearance as Antichrist"—C. B. "Considered by most as representing the subversion of the imperial authority in the time of Augustulus, A.D. 476, and the re-establishment of a great secular, as well as ecclesiastical dominion at Rome under the popes"—W. W. "More than one wound seems to be meant, for instance, that under Constantine, when the pagan worship gave way to Christianity, followed by the healing, when image worship and other papal errors were introduced into the Church; and again, that at the Reformation, followed by the lethargic 'form of godliness without the power'"—P.

10. **He that leadeth into captivity** (R.V. "If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goeth"). The Greek text, as R.V. notes, is uncertain. The most probable meaning is that the "patience and faith" of the saints will be shown by the submission to captivity or to death for the sake of Christ.

Vers. 11-16. THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH.—11. **Another Beast**—"afterwards called the false prophet (chaps. 16. 13; 19. 20; 20. 10). **Two horns like a lamb.** No doubt the obvious view is right, that he *looks* like Christ, and *is* like Satan"—C. B. "The first beast is physical and political, the second a spiritual power, the power of knowledge, ideas, and scientific cultivation. Both alike are beasts, from below, not from above; faithful allies, worldly anti-Christian wisdom standing in the service of the worldly anti-Christian power"—P. **Out of the earth.** "The sea represents the tumultuous impulses and passions of mankind; the earth, society consolidated and disciplined by culture. But the wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish"—ELLICOTT.

13. **Doeth great wonders, maketh fire to come down.** (See Matt. 24. 24; 2 Thess. 2. 9; also 1 Kings 18. and 2 Kings 1.) Here is the false prophet, imitating the wonders wrought by God's faithful servant in a distant and darker age.

15. **The image of the Beast.** "It is certainly relevant to remember how the refusal of worship to the Emperor's image was made the test of Christianity in the primitive persecutions, perhaps especially by humane and reluctant persecutors like Pliny (see his famous letter to Trajan), who acted not from fanaticism, but from supposed political necessity"—C. B.

16. **A mark in their right hand**—"such a brand as masters stamp on their slaves; soldiers voluntarily punctured their arms with the mark of the general under whom they served; votaries of idols branded themselves with the idol's symbol"—P.

18. **Here is wisdom.** "The terms of the challenge serve at once to show that the feat proposed is possible, and that it is difficult"—ALFORD. **Six hundred threescore and six.** "In Hebrew and in Greek letters were used for numerals, every letter having its own proper significance as a number. There are an indefinite

number of proper names whose letters will amount to six hundred and sixty-six, either in Hebrew or Greek. Neither *Lateinos*, that is, Latinus, nor *Nerôn Kesâr*, that is, Nero Cæsar, adopted by many modern interpreters, is convincing. The letters of 'Lateinos' must be taken with their numeral value in Greek, those of 'Nerôn Késar' as Hebrew"—C. B. "We must not look upon the second Beast as a successor, but rather as a supporter of the first. (See ver. 12, R.V. 'in his sight.') Some see in it the pagan priesthood aiding the imperial power; others the papal sacerdotal power, heir of pagan rites; others would combine the two, and describe the second Beast as the sacerdotal persecutor, pagan or Christian. I believe, that though there is truth in these views, the stretch of the vision embraces more than these. All who use their culture, their knowledge, their wisdom, to teach men that there is nothing worthy of worship save what they see and touch and taste, are acting the part of the second Beast"—ELLICOTT.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERS. 1-5. VISION OF THE LAMB AND HIS SERVANTS. — 1. **His Father's name** (R.V. "His name and the name of His Father"). "Notice that it is assumed as understood, that the Lamb is the Son of God"—C. B. (Ch. 3. 12; 7. 3.) **A hundred forty and four thousand.** "Introductory to the announcement of judgments about to descend upon the ungodly world (vers. 8-11, anticipatory of ch. 18. 2-6) stand here the redeemed, the Divine kernel of humanity"—P. (See ch. 7. 4.) **On Mount Zion.** "They are in full possession of their Christian privileges and joys. Not in heaven, in the ordinary sense of the term"—E.

2. **A voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters.** "The harpers and song are in heaven, but the hundred and forty-four thousand are on earth"—ALFORD.

3. **As it were a new song.** "In truth, as old as God's eternal purpose"—P.

4, 5. **These are they.** "The characteristics of the servants of the Lamb. The first is *purity*—**they are virgins** (not led astray by the tempters who jointly constitute the spiritual 'harlot'); the next is *implicit obedience*—they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; the third is *separation or unworldliness*—**redeemed from among men**; the fourth, *utter truthfulness*—**no guile**"—ELLICOTT. **Firstfruits unto God.** (See Jas. 1. 18.) "Not simply as the first portion of the Church on earth, to be followed by a larger portion, but as the first portion of a kingdom of God wider and larger than the Church. The whole Church is God's firstfruits; when she is laid upon the altar we have the promise that a time is coming when creation shall follow in her train, when it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God"—E.

Vers. 6-11. PREPARATION FOR JUDGMENT. —6, 7. **The everlasting Gospel** (R.V. "An eternal Gospel"). "A remarkable contrast to the great city vaunting herself 'eternal,' in contrast also to the doctrines of the Beast and the false prophet"—W. W. "The preaching of the Gospel here stands in the same relation to God's judgment as in Matt. 24. 4. But notice that the name is applied to the whole truth of God, not to what was revealed by Christ only; for the substance of the angel's message is pure natural Theism"—C. B. "The designation of God, as the one Creator of all things, shows that this proclamation of the Gospel is made especially to the heathen, to idolaters, to worshippers of gods many and lords many"—W. W. (Acts 14. 15; 17. 24.)

8. **Babylon is fallen** (R.V. "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great"). "The proclamation of the fall of Babylon follows the flight of the angel with the everlasting gospel. The sequence is not merely chronological, but that of cause and effect"—W. W. "The principles of Christ's gospel must undermine the world-power; the fall of some Babylon principle has almost always followed the age of spiritual revival"—ELLICOTT.

9, 10, 11. **The wine of the wrath of God.** "She makes them drink of the cup of her fornication (ch. 17. 2), and she is made, and they with her, to drink of the cup of God's wrath (ver. 10; ch. 16. 9). In ver. 8, 18. 6, as in Jer. 51. 7, from which the image is taken, there is a combination of the two"—C. B. **Without mixture.** Wine was seldom drunk "without mixture," that is "undiluted." "Babylon has given all nations to drink of deadly wine, emblem of some principles which have been more or less accepted by all nations, and which will involve them in the consequences of her fall"—ELLICOTT. **In the presence.** "It is impossible to translate these words otherwise; they prove that the holy angels, and the Lamb Himself, acquiesce, or something more, in the justice and necessity of God's awful judgments"—C. B.

Ver. 13. THE HAPPINESS OF THE FAITHFUL DEAD.—13. **From henceforth.** The reason for these words is to be found in the state of trouble the last verse describes; the righteous are happy in being taken away from the evil to come. **Their works follow them** (R.V. "Follow with them"). "Their works are specified because respect is had to the coming judgment, when every man shall be judged according to his works. His works do not go before the believer, nor even by his side, but follow him, at the same time that they go with him as a proof that he is Christ's"—P.

Vers. 14-20. THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE. — 14. **Like unto the Son of Man.** The Son of Man speaks of the harvest, Matt. 9. 37, 38; 13. 29, 30. **A golden crown**—"a

garland of victory, not His diadem as a King"—P.

15. **Another angel came out of the temple**—"the 'shrine'; the word shows that he comes from the immediate presence of God, and is a messenger from Him. Therefore it is that he can say, **Thrust in thy sickle.** The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son"—E. "What harvest is this? It is the gathering of the good seed, the full corn in the ear, into the heavenly garner"—ELLICOTT.

17, 18. **Angel came out from the altar.** The two scenes, one in ch. 6. 9, 10, the other in ch. 8. 5, must be remembered in connection with this angel who has **power over fire** (Greek, "the fire"). **The vine of the earth**—"a vintage, not a harvest of grain, is here before us; it is impossible to doubt that the seer draws a broad line of distinction. The latter is the harvest of the good, the former is the vintage of the evil. The grapes are gathered to be trodden in the winefat, and the juice trodden out had the colour of blood"—E. (Joel 3. 12, 13; Isa. 63. 2. 4.)

20. **Unto the horse bridles.** "Probably the A.V. is right, that it is meant as a mere measure, that any horseman riding there would find his horse bridle-deep in blood"—C. B. **One thousand six hundred furlongs.** Four is the numerical symbol of the earth; "four by four, multiplied again by one hundred, is symbolical of a judgment complete and full, and reaching to all corners of the world"—ELLICOTT. *N.B.*—"The harvest of the good is gathered in by the Lord Himself, that of the wicked by His angel. Is there not a beauty and tenderness in this contrast? It is as though that Son of Man and Son of God who is judge of quick and dead, Judge alike of the righteous and the wicked, loved one half of His office and loved not the other. It is as though He cherished as His own prerogative the harvest of the earth, and were glad to delegate to other hands the vintage. It is as though the ministry of mercy were His chosen office, and the ministry of wrath His stern necessity"—VAUGHAN.

CHAPTER XV.

VERS. 1-4. PREPARATION FOR THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES — TRIUMPH OF THE CONQUERORS. — 1. **Seven last plagues** (R.V. "Seven plagues which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God").

2. "Again, as in chaps. 7 and 11. 16-18, and 14. 1-5, a vision of the blessedness of the faithful is interposed in the represented progress of events, forming a pause which may be compared to the choral ode in the Greek drama"—W. W. **Sea of glass mingled with fire**—"the calm translucent sea of God's counsels of righteousness and love, now clear as crystal, now ruddy with the fire of righteous indignation"—ELLICOTT. "The visible utterance of His holiness will be clear and transparent to all at the last; **mingled with fire**, as in the history of the world the wrath and indignation of God against sin find their utterance no less than His love"—TRENCH.

4. **The song of Moses.** "The song of Moses was a pæan of victory over Pharaoh and his hosts. Israel stood on the margin of the Red Sea, and saw the overthrow of the great world-power of the day; so these saints stand by the sea of glass, and sing the song of triumph over the great world-powers of every age. The cases are parallel, and the songs are alike"—ELLICOTT. **Thou King of saints** (R.V. "King of the ages"). **Thou only art holy**—"not the same word as is applied to God in ch. 4. 8, etc.; but ordinarily used of human piety or holiness, and in that sense applied to our Lord in His human character in Heb. 7. 26. It is only used of God here, and in ch. 16. 5; in both cases the sense is that God is justified in His saying, and clear when He is judged"—C. B.

Vers. 5-8. THE ANGELS OF THE PLAGUES—5. **The temple of the tabernacle.** "We need to get a glimpse within the holy place to understand the secret spring and the end of God's righteous dealings"—P.

6. **Clothed in pure and white linen** (R.V. "with *precious* stone, pure *and* bright"). The difference in the Greek between "linen" and "stone" is only in one letter. In vindication of the reading adopted by R.V. see Ezek. 29. 13. **Their breasts girded.** The angels are about to engage in priestly work, and are girded as the Lord Himself was in the vision of the first chapter. (See ch. 1. 13, and note.)

7. **Golden vials** (R.V. "golden bowls"). A broad shallow cup or bowl. "The breadth of the vials in their upper part would tend to cause their contents to pour our *all at once*, implying the overwhelming suddenness of the plagues"—P. **Full of the wrath of God.** The vials full of odours contrast with these; on the other hand, the censer filled with fire from the altar and cast into the earth conveys a similar idea. (Ch. 5. 8; 8. 5.)

8. **Smoke from the glory of God.** (See Isa. 6. 4.) **No man able to enter**—because of God's presence in manifested glory and power during the execution of these judgments (Ex. 40. 35; 1 Kings 8. 11; 2 Chron. 5. 14.)

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEVEN VIALS.—1. **Great voice out of the temple**—"from the midst of the smoke or cloud. It was the voice of God. (Ex. 24. 16.) The first four vials are distinguished from the last three, just as in the case of the seven seals and the seven trumpets. The first four are more general, affecting the earth, the sea, the springs, and the sun; and not merely a portion of these natural bodies, as in the case of the trumpets, but the whole of them, the last three are more particular"—P.

2. **A noisome and grievous sore.** "The plagues that accompany these vials have a close analogy to those of the trumpets in ch. 8, and, like them, have some to the plagues of Egypt"—C. B. (See *Ex.* 9. 9.)

5. **The angel of the waters**—"presiding over the waters. The energy of the material universe seems, like the giving of the Law, to be committed to the disposition of angels"—C. B. **Thou art righteous** (R.V. "Righteous art Thou, which art and which wast, Thou Holy One"). **Judged thus**—*lit.* "these things," didst inflict this judgment.

7. **Another out of the altar** (R.V. "I heard the altar saying"). On it the prayers of saints are presented before God; beneath it are the souls of the martyrs crying for vengeance on the enemies of God.

8, 9. **Upon the sun.** Whereas by the fourth trumpet the sun is darkened (ch. 8. 12) in a third part, here by the fourth vial the sun's scorching power is intensified. **Repented not to give Him glory.** Affliction, if it does not melt, hardens the sinner. Compare the better result on others, ch. 11. 13.

10. **The seat of the Beast** (R.V. "the throne")—set up in mimicry of God's throne; the dragon gave his throne to the beast (ch. 13. 2). **Gnawed their tongues for pain**—"through rage at the baffling of their hopes and the overthrow of their kingdom"—GROTIUS.

11. **Their pains and their sores**—resulting from the former plagues, were aggravated by the darkness; there was an accumulation, not a mere succession, of plagues.

12. **The river Euphrates . . . the kings of the East.** Perhaps no passage, even in this difficult book, has been more variously interpreted. The two following are examples of the different conclusions arrived at by comparatively recent writers:—(1) "The waters of the Euphrates are the spiritual and temporal powers of the spiritual Babylon, the apostate church, of which Rome is the chief, though not the exclusive representative. The phrase **way may be prepared for** is that applied to the *Lord's coming.* (Isa. 40. 3; Matt. 3. 3; Luke 1. 76.) He shall come **from the East** (Matt. 24. 27; Ezek. 43. 2), not alone, for His elect transfigured saints, of Israel and the Gentiles, shall accompany Him, who are 'kings and priests unto God.' As the anti-Christian ten *kings* accompany the beasts, so the saints as kings accompany the King of kings to the final decisive conflict"—P. (2) "The Euphrates was the natural boundary, dividing and protecting the Jewish people from the great empires of the East. In the great struggle between the kingdoms of Christ and the world, the Euphrates represents the great separating boundary, the great impediment to war. There is a great interposed boundary of public opinion which prevents evil from breaking forth in its ruder and more violent forms. There may come a time when public sentiment loses all sense of shame, and the decorums of life are swept away. Then is the Euphrates dried. The **kings of the East** represent the forces of rude and open evil which have been long restrained"—ELLICOTT. We may indeed be thankful that the study of essential Christian doctrine, and of personal Christian duty, presents no such difficulty as the study of *unfulfilled prophecy.*

13. **Unclean spirits like frogs.** "The **false prophet** here first named, but, as if well known, is evidently identical with the second Beast of ch. 13. 11. (Comp. the description given there with ch. 19. 20.) The unclean spirits proceed one from the mouth of each of these personifications of evil. By their issuing **from the mouth** is indicated that they are utterances, promulgated opinions and doctrines, publications"—W. W. "The three radical foes of Christ and His righteousness: **the dragon**, representing the hate of evil spirits; **the wild beast**, representing the hostility of the world-power; **the false prophet**, representing the antagonism of world culture and intellectualism, send forth each their emissary, appealing to the pride and passions of men"—ELLICOTT. "**The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet**, 'the mystery of iniquity,' form a blasphemous anti-Trinity, the counterfeit of 'the mystery of godliness,' God manifest in Christ, witnessed to by the Spirit"—P. **Like frogs**—"antitype of the plague of frogs in Egypt. The imitation of the plague of frogs was the final effort of the magicians; with this their power ceased"—W. W. (Ex. 8. 15, 19.)

14. **To gather them to the battle.** This is exactly the action and effect of the diffusion and prevalence of opinion.

15. **I come as a thief.** "S. John apparently hears, and writes down as he hears, the words of Christ spoken in the midst of his vision. The *image* is that of Matt. 24. 43, though in the *phrase* there may be a reminiscence of the different image of Luke 12. 37"—C. B.

16. **He gathered them** (R.V. "they gathered them"), viz. the unclean spirits. **Armageddon** (R.V. "Har-Magedon"). "The meaning, according as we read *Ar* or *Har* is 'the city' or 'the mountain of Megiddo'"—C. B. (See Judg. 5. 19; 2 Kings 23. 29, 30; Zech. 12. 11.) "The old battleground becomes the symbol of the decisive struggle. It is raised in meaning; it is a type, not a locality"—ELLICOTT.

17. **It is done.** "This voice is **from the temple**, where is the ark of the covenant, the place of mediation and intercession; and **from the throne**—the seat of Divine power and glory. It is the same voice which cried from the cross, 'It is finished,' an utterance recorded by S. John only"—W. W. (John 19. 30; ch. 21. 6.)

18. **Voices, thunderings, lightnings, earthquake.** "This is the same close as that of the seven seals and the seven trumpets, but with the difference that they do not merely form the conclusion, but introduce the consequence, of the last vial, namely, the utter destruction of Babylon and of the anti-Christian armies"—P.

21. **A great hail.** "The symbol is from the plague of hail in Egypt. (Ex. 9. 24.) **The weight of a talent**—a strong figure to denote the greatness and severity of the Divine judgments. (Josh. 10. 11.) The Jewish talent was a hundred and fourteen pounds"—W. W. **Men blasphemed God**—"continue obstinate; remain incorrigible under the visitation of God's wrath"—W. W.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERS. 1-6. THE GREAT HARLOT—HER POMP. —"At the close of ch. 16 we reach the end of the three great series of judgments which constitute the chief contents of the Revelation—the seals, the trumpets, the bowls. It cannot surprise us, however, that at this point other visions of judgment are to follow. Already we had apparently reached the end at ch. 6. 17, and again ch. 11. 18; yet on both occasions the same general subject was resumed, and the same truths presented, though in a different aspect and with heightened colouring"—E.

1. **I will show unto thee the judgment.** The fall of Babylon has been already announced (ch. 14. 8); but before the description of her fall there is given an account of her state and character, that there may be no mistake in the application. **The great whore.** This term is applied to the Jewish Church (Isa. 1. 21; Jer. 2. 10); and it is here applied to a branch of the Christian Church that had corrupted itself. **Many waters.** (See ver. 15.)

3. **Into the wilderness.** "In ch. 12. 6 we read, 'The woman fled into the wilderness,' where the woman signifies the Church in its purity. The reference to 'the wilderness' here intimates, after the manner of the Apocalypse, that this personification is in a certain specific relation to the other. Where we look for the woman of ch. 12. 6, we find this woman. In the place of the true Church is the false apostate Church, the nominal Church in a corrupt state"—W. W. **A scarlet-coloured Beast**—"undoubtedly the same as the Beast of ch. 13. 1-8, though then his colour was not mentioned. It is symbolic (comp. that of the dragon, ch. 12, 3), as being the colour of blood; perhaps also suggestive of the imperial purple"—C. B.

4. **Arrayed in purple and scarlet.** "Whenever and wherever (not in Rome alone), the Church, instead of being as at first, 'clothed with the sun' of heaven, is arrayed in earthly meretricious gauds, compromising the truth of God through fear, or flattery, of the world's power, she becomes the harlot seated on the Beast, and doomed in righteous retribution to be judged by the Beast"—P.

5. **Upon her forehead was a name written**—"probably not branded on the flesh, but tied on as a label, as Roman harlots actually did wear their names"—C. B. **Mystery, Babylon the Great.** The use of the word "mystery" in ch. 1. 20 may illustrate its meaning here; it indicates that "Babylon the Great" is to be understood in a mystical sense, **Mother of harlots** (R.V. "of the harlots and of the abominations"). "Not merely Rome, but Christendom as a whole, even as formerly Israel as a whole, has become a harlot. The invisible Church of true believers is hidden and dispersed in the visible Church. The boundary lines, which separate 'harlot' and 'woman,' are not denominational, nor drawn externally, but can only be spiritually discerned. If Rome were the *only* seat of Babylon, much of the spiritual profit of Revelation would be lost to us; but the harlot 'sitteth upon many waters' (ver. 1), and '*all* nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication' (ver. 2)"—P. "Fornication and adultery throughout the Old Testament represent religious degeneracy, not civil misrule"—E.

6. **Drunk with the blood of saints.** "The words might apply both to Pagan and to Christian Rome, as both in their turns have cruelly persecuted the saints and martyrs of Jesus; but the latter is more deserving of the character, as Christian Rome has far exceeded heathen Rome in the extent of her persecutions; while the words **I wondered** put the matter beyond doubt, as it would not be at all surprising for heathens to persecute Christians, whereas to find a professedly Christian power drunk with the blood of saints might well be matter of astonishment"—W. W.

8. **The beast was, and is not.** "On the whole, ancient tradition where it speaks, and modern criticism, agree in the interpretation of these words. *Nero*, who killed himself in June (A.D. 68), 'had been, and was not' at the date of this vision; but his reappearance was looked for by many, with various feelings of hope and fear. When his dethronement and execution were imminent, it was said that he had talked of going to the East, and establishing his throne at Jerusalem; while one form of the belief that he survived, was that he had fled to the Parthians, and would return under their protection. It is possible S. John means to tell us that the Antichrist who is to come will be Nero risen from the dead; more probably, Antichrist will be a new Nero as he will be a new Antiochus, typified by them, inasmuch as they were actuated by his spirit"—C. B. **And shall ascend.** "This determines the rise of the Beast to a period subsequent to the delivery of this prediction, though its existence is expressly affirmed to have been prior. This description remarkably applies to Rome as a power, civil

and ecclesiastical. It **was**—existed in its original secular and imperial form; **is not**—comes to an end in the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' (receives a deadly wound, ch. 13. 3); **and shall ascend out of the abyss.** In the rise and development of the papal domination its deadly wound is healed"—W. W. "An Antichrist is before us, who has been slaughtered unto death, and the stroke of whose death shall be healed. The Beast exhibits marks which show that he had both died and passed through death, the counterpart of the Lamb standing as if he had been slaughtered" —E.

10. **Seven mountains . . . seven kings.** "According to the view that the beast is not the Roman Empire, but an embodiment of the worldly imperial spirit, it is plausibly held that the 'kings' are kingdoms or empires, like the kings of Persia and Grecia in Dan. 8.—that they are the four kingdoms of Dan. 2. and 7., together with Egypt and Assyria that came before Babylon, and the kingdoms of modern Europe that come after Rome. On this view the ten horns are all on one head; it is this ten-horned head which receives the deadly wound of ch. 13. 3; that is, the beast is nearly slain, the empire as an evil and persecuting power overthrown, by the conversion, first of the later emperors, and then of the sovereigns of Europe, to Christianity; but he revives, for instance in Julian after Constantine, and again in the neo-paganism of the Renaissance, and in the persecutions of the Reformation"—C. B. "Seven mountains and seven kings; manifestations of the beast in successive eras of oppression; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, are the first five, Rome is the sixth, and *it is* in the apostle's days; the seventh will come when Rome has perished, and its mighty empire has been rent in pieces. The pieces will be the ten horns, they cover the whole earth"—E.

14. **These shall make war with the Lamb** —"in league with the Beast; this is a summary anticipation of ch. 19. 19. This shall not be till after they have first executed judgment on the harlot (vers. 15, 16)"—P. **They that are with Him** (R.V. "They also shall overcome that are with Him, called").

16. **The ten horns . . . upon the beast** (R.V. "*and* the beast"). **Shall hate the whore.** "The Church having apostatised to the world shall have judgment executed upon her first by the world-power, the Beast and its allies; and these afterwards shall have judgment executed upon them by Christ Himself" —P.

18. **That great city.** "The voices of the Hebrew prophets were lifted up against Babylon; she seemed to them the embodiment of splendid vice and resistless power. In her greatness and her hostility to Jerusalem she became a type of later world-powers, and it is explained in the vision that **Babylon** is no longer the literal Babylon, but the power which has taken her place of pride and empire. That power was Rome. Rome was in S. John's day just what Babylon had been in the days of the prophets, 'the hammer of the whole earth,' 'the golden cup that made all the earth drunken.' At the same time, the manner in which S. John applied to the Rome of his day the prophetic language which earlier prophets applied to ancient Babylon, ought to be sufficient to warn us against limited and local interpretations, even if the seven-headed wild beast did not show us that the world-power, like the moral principles of which Babylon and Rome are examples, is not confined to one age. If we remember this, we shall see that the Babylon of the Apocalypse, while undoubtedly pagan Rome, cannot be limited to it. Is it then papal Rome? The answer is, In so far as papal Rome has wielded tyrant power, turned persecutor, stood between the spirits of men and Christ, depraved men's consciences, withheld the truth, connived at viciousness, and been a political engine rather than a witness for the righteous King, she has inherited the features of Babylon"—ELLICOTT.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON.—1. **Earth was lightened with His glory.** (See Ezek. 43. 2.)

2, 3. "The fall of the mystical Babylon is described in the sublime and figurative style which Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel employed to foretell the fall of ancient Babylon and Tyre"—W. W. **Is fallen**—"her destruction is contemplated as certain and near at hand. That she had not actually fallen is clear from the fact that the people of God are commanded to come out of her"—W. W. **A habitation of devils.** (See Isa. 13. 19, noting that the word "satyrs" was rendered in the LXX. version, "demons.") (Isa. 21. 9; Jer. 51. 8; Isa. 13. 21; 21. 8; 34. 14; Jer. 50. 39; 51. 37; Isa. 14. 23; 34. 11.)

4–6. **Come out of her.** "In similar language the prophets called upon the people of God to flee from Babylon. (Isa. 48. 20; 52. 11, 12; Jer. 50. 7, 8; 51. 6, 45.) This is a call to reformation, and to severance from the corrupt and apostate Church. It implies also that up to the time of the destruction of the mystical Babylon there will be found in her some of the true people of God. **Reward her.** Thus God speaks to the executioners of His vengeance. **Even as she has rewarded**—others, in particular the saints of God. **And give her double**—this, according to the Hebrew idiom, implies only a full retaliation" —WESLEY. (Gen. 18. 20, 21; Jer. 51. 9; John 1. 2; ch. 16. 19; Ps. 137. 8; Jer. 50. 15, 29; 51. 24, 49; 2 Tim. 4. 14; ch. 13. 10.)

7, 8. **I sit as a queen, and am no widow.** (See Isa. 47. 7, 8.) "'I sit.' Her usual style. Hence those expressions, 'The chair,

or see of Rome; he *sat* so many years.' **As a queen**—over many kings, 'mistress of all churches, the supreme, the infallible, the only spouse of Christ; out of which there is no salvation.' **And am no widow**—but the spouse of Christ. And shall see no sorrow—God Himself will defend 'the Church'"—WESLEY.

She shall be utterly burned with fire. "Literal fire may burn the literal city of Rome, which is situated in the midst of volcanic agencies. But as the harlot city is mystical (the whole faithless Church) the burning may be mainly mystical, symbolising utter destruction and removal"—P. (Isa. 47. 9; Zeph. 2. 15.)

9, 10. **The kings of the earth.** "Some of the kings will adhere to her, though the rest unite in destroying her"—W. W. "So the 'princes of the sea' take up a lamentation for Tyrus. (Ezek. 26. 16-21.) Contrast the world's 'rejoicing' over the dead bodies of the two witnesses (ch. 11. 10), who had tormented it by their faithfulness, and its 'lamentations over the harlot, who had made the way to heaven smooth"—P. (Jer. 50. 46; Isa. 21. 9.)

11-14. **The merchants of the earth.** "The enumeration proceeds by gradation from one article to another, till it rises to the bodies and then to the souls of men. The **thyine wood** was the wood of an African evergreen, a species of cedar or lignum vitæ, from which choice vessels and statues were made. **Slaves.** Though the New Testament does not directly forbid slavery, which would, in the then state of the world, have incited a slave revolt, it virtually condemns it as here. **Souls of men.** There may be special reference to the sale of indulgences, and the merchandise of masses for the deliverance of souls from purgatory"—W. W. (Ezek. 27. 13.)

19. **Cast dust upon their heads**—"as mourners. Most of the expressions here used in describing the downfall of Babylon are taken from Ezekiel's description of the downfall of Tyre. (Ezek. 26. and 27.)"—WESLEY. (Josh. 7. 6; 1 Sam. 4. 2; Job 2. 12.)

21. **A stone like a great millstone.** "By a like emblem Jeremiah foreshowed the fall of the Chaldæan Babylon"—WESLEY. (Jer. 52. 63, 64.)

22, 23. **Harpers and musicians . . . sound of a millstone**—"not only the arts that adorn life, but even those employments without which it cannot subsist, will cease from thee for ever"—WESLEY.

24. **And in her.** "S. John passes from recording the angel's denunciation to the impression made on his own mind by the judgment he witnessed"—C. B. (Jer. 51. 49.)

CHAPTER XIX.

VERS. 1-6. TRIUMPH OVER BABYLON.—1. **Alleluia** (R.V. "Hallelujah"). *Praise ye Jehovah*, a form of praise used by the Levites, but ascribed here to all people. (Psalms 106.; 111.; 113.; 146.; 148.-150.)

2. **Which did corrupt the earth.** "Instead of opposing and lessening, she promoted the sinful life and decay of the world by her own earthliness, allowing the salt to lose its savour"—P.

6. **The voice of a great multitude.** "This verse is the hearty response to the stirring call. **Alleluia, Praise our God**, etc. **The Lord God omnipotent reigneth**—His reign is a fact already established. The overthrow of Babylon clears the way for His advent and recognition. The Beast hardly arises when he at once 'goeth into perdition,' so that Christ is prophetically considered as already reigning, so soon does His advent follow the judgment on the harlot"—P.

Vers. 7-9. THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.—7. **The marriage of the Lamb.** "The first suggestion of this image in the New Testament is in our Lord's parables (Matt. 22. 2; 25. 1-10); it is more fully worked out by S. Paul (Eph. 5. 22-32). But men's minds were prepared for it by the language of all the prophets about the spiritual marriage of the Lord and Israel, still more perhaps by that of Ps. 45., rising so far above the royal marriage that no doubt furnished its occasion"—C. B.

8. **Fine linen, clean and white . . . the righteousness of saints** (R.V. "the righteous acts of the saints"). "Every good work done by every single saint goes up to make the perfect glory of the Church as it shall be when at last complete"—C. B. "Those good works which are the evidences of their living faith"—BEZA. (Ps. 45. 13, 14; Ezek. 16. 10; Ps. 132. 9.)

9. **Blessed are they which are called.** "Individually believers are *guests;* collectively they constitute *the Bride.* We ought, in imitation of Holy Scripture, to restrict the language drawn from marriage-love to *the Bride*, the Church as a whole; and not use it as individuals in our personal relation to Christ, as Rome does in the case of her nuns"—P. (Matt. 22. 2, 3; Luke 14. 15, 16.)

THE MISTAKE OF THE SEER.—10. **I fell at his feet to worship him.** "It seems, mistaking him for the Angel of the Covenant. **But he saith, See thou do it not.** In the original it is only, 'See not,' with a beautiful abruptness. To pray to or worship the highest creature is flat idolatry. **I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus**—I am now employed as your fellow-servant, to testify of the Lord Jesus, by the same Spirit which inspired the prophets of old"—WESLEY.

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy—"is the result of the same spirit of prophecy in you, as in myself. We angels, and you apostles, alike bear testimony to Jesus by the operation of one and the same Spirit; wherefore we are fellow-servants, not I your

lord to be worshipped by you"—P. (Ch. 22. 8; Acts 10. 26; 14. 14, 15; ch. 22. 9; 1 John 5. 10.)

Vers. 11-21. THE TRIUMPH OF CHRIST.—11. **Behold a white horse, and He that sat upon him.** "This is the point to which the preceding facts tend, and in which they have their completion. The seals, trumpets, vials, and all their accompanying warnings here unite. **Faithful and true.** (See ch. 3. 14; also 1. 5; 3. 7.) **Faithful,** in the fulfilment of His word; **true,** as of the substance of truth, being the 'Truth' itself (John 14. 6)"—W. W. (Isa. 11. 4.)

12. **His eyes**—identifying Him with the Son of Man in the first vision. (Ch. 1. 14.) **Many crowns** (R.V. "diadems")—that is, *royal* crowns. "For He is King of all nations. **A name . . . which none knoweth**—as God He is incomprehensible to every creature"—WESLEY.

13. **Vesture dipped in blood** (R.V. "sprinkled with"). "The reference to Isa. 63. 1, 3 is unquestionable. And so the *primary* meaning must be, as there, to describe the Conqueror as stained with the blood of *His enemies.* But no doubt it is legitimate for the Christian to remember, in interpreting both passages, that the way Christ overcomes His enemies is by shedding, not their blood, but His own"—C. B. (John 1. 1.)

14-16. **The armies which were in heaven.** "According to Old Testament usage (see 1 Kings 22. 19) this would mean the 'holy angels,' at least primarily. But some think the glorified saints are at least included; it seems in harmony with the ideas of this book to represent them, not indeed as executing Christ's vengeance, which the angels do (ch. 14. 19; Matt. 13. 39-42), but as spectators of His triumph, which is all that these armies seem to be"—C. B. **On white horses.** This denotes their conformity to Him, and their participation in His victory. **On His vesture and on His thigh**—"written partly on the vesture, partly on the thigh itself, at the part where, in an equestrian figure, the robe drops from the thigh"—P. **King of kings.** "Four names are ascribed to Him in this vision—(1) **Faithful and True,** representing Him as the Messenger and Mediator of gospel grace; (2) The name known only to Himself, indicating His Deity; (3) **The Word of God,** indicating His manifestation of God to man in His incarnation; (4) **King of kings and Lord of lords,** proclaiming the character in which He now appears, and is to be universally recognised; also a name peculiar to Deity. (See ch. 17. 14)"—W. W. (Matt. 28. 3; Isa. 11. 4; 2 Thess. 2. 8; Ps. 2. 9; Isa. 62. 3; Dan. 2. 47; 1 Tim. 6. 15.)

17, 18. **To all the fowls.** (See Ezek. 39. 17.) **The supper of the great God** (R.V. "The great supper of God"). Contrast this supper with "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (ver. 9). "This was a great feast which the vengeance of God would soon provide; a strongly figurative expression, denoting the vastness of the coming slaughter"—WESLEY.

19-21. **The Beast and the kings.** "Their confederacy under his leadership has been already intimated. (Ch. 16. 14, 16; 17. 12-14.) The so-called battle of Armageddon, there foretold, is here described"—C. B. **The false prophet**—"the same power which is designated as the second Beast with two horns. (Ch. 13. 11.) The overthrow of the Beast and the false prophet is described as distinct from the fall of Babylon and the judgment of the great harlot"—WESLEY.

"The first beast is a political power, the second is a spiritual power, the power of ideas; but both are *beasts*—the worldly anti-Christian wisdom serving the worldly anti-Christian power"—P. **Cast into the lake of fire**—into which the devil is cast. (Ch. 20. 10.) **The rest were slain**—"they are not, at least at once, consigned to the same eternal torment as their leaders"—C. B. "Here is a most magnificent description of the overthrow of the Beast and his adherents. It has, in particular, one exquisite beauty, that, after exhibiting the two opposite armies, and all the apparatus for a battle (vers. 11-19), then follows immediately (ver. 20) the account of the victory, without one word of an engagement or fighting. Here is the most exact propriety; for what struggle can there be between omnipotence and the power of all the creation united against it? Every description must have fallen short of this admirable silence"—WESLEY. (Dan. 7. 11; ch. 14. 10; 21. 8; 17. 16.)

CHAPTER XX.

VERS. 1-3. THE BINDING OF SATAN.—1. **The bottomless pit.** "The home or penal prison of the demons (see Luke 8. 31), where the word translated 'the deep' is the same. Note that it is nowhere identified with the lake of fire, the *final* destination of the devil and his angels"—C. B.

3. **Shut it and sealed it over him** (R.V.). "There is here no resumption of any part of the previous revelation, but a strict continuation from its last prediction. The emphatic reiteration of the words **a thousand years** seems intended to mark the period as literal and exact. The angel seizes Satan, binds, casts him into the abyss, locks him up, and sets a seal upon him, to *the intent and with the effect* that he should not deceive the nations any longer. The order in which the delusions of Satan will pass away is indicated in the connection of this passage with the preceding chapter. The Beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire, and all other open adversaries overcome (ch. 19. 21), and then shall Satan, 'the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,' be imprisoned. The

abolition of false religions must precede the moral regeneration of society"—W. W. "Our space will only allow us to indicate the view adopted, though with the greatest hesitation, in this (ELLICOTT's) Commentary—(1) The millennium vision is like so many of the apostolic visions, an ideal picture; it exhibits a state of things which is possible to mankind at any time; (2) But the rejection of Christ's power and victory postpones the realisation of this picture; (3) The vision has its approximate fulfilment, as the Church of Christ carries on her warfare against the prince of this world. To an Irenæus, a Polycarp, a Justin Martyr, a Tertullian, the picture of the world during the Christian centuries would have the aspect of a millennium. But we can see that this is only an approximate realisation. If the principles we have laid down are correct, the Church is justified in looking for the full realisation of the vision in a future age. Of the exact moment when this binding and imprisonment took place it is not needful to inquire too curiously. That which in the vision is described as the work of a moment may in the fact and fulfilment be a very gradual work. The same applies to the duration of the imprisonment; it is not to be understood literally any more than the other numbers in the book; it symbolises a lengthened period"—ELLICOTT.

Vers. 4–6. THE FIRST RESURRECTION.—4. **Judgment was given unto them**—"the right of judging (see 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3), which according to Dan. 7. 22 is given to 'the saints of the Most High'"—WESLEY.

5. **They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.** "If the literal resurrection of the bodies were meant, why are the *souls* of the persons raised exclusively mentioned? There is no reason for assigning to the word any other meaning than that it has in ch. 6. 9. Hence we infer that those who were faithful unto death shall live again in Christians of the same spirit, animated by similar principles. How often, and how naturally, are martyrs and confessors spoken of as enjoying a present triumph in the prevalence of those principles which they maintained and preserved by their Christian heroism, that is, in the existence of a generation which professes and practises them. Such a triumph will be justly called a 'reign' when the prevalence of their principles shall be universal, and the generation which shall exemplify them shall be all mankind"—W. W. "The **thousand years** mentioned in the passage do not express a definite period of time; the idea conveyed is simply that of completeness or perfection. Nothing is said of the saints of God in this picture of millennial bliss which does not find a parallel in what the seer has elsewhere written of their present life"—E. On the other side of the question it is right to present the following:—'This is the only prophecy where there is at all good reason for supposing that the millennium of popular belief is indicated, as distinct on the one hand from the kingdom of God which already exists in the Christian Church, and on the other from that which will be set up at the last day. We have, therefore, to consider the question, Is this prophecy to be understood literally? Is it meant that, for a period of a thousand years (or more), before the general resurrection and the end of this world, this earth will be the scene of a blessed visible kingdom of God, wherein the power of the devil will have vanished, and that of Christ be supreme and unopposed; wherein Christ shall either reign visibly on earth, or at least shall make His presence felt far more unmistakably than at present; while the martyrs and other great saints of all past time shall rise, and whether on earth or in heaven share in the glory of His reign. If the question be theologically open, it appears that, as a matter of opinion, the literal sense is to be preferred. Can any one honestly say that Satan has been bound during the time (already far more than a thousand years) that the kingdom of Christ on earth has already existed? that he deceives the nations no more till the present dispensation approaches its end in the days of Antichrist? It is far easier to hold that he *will* be bound for a long time (probably more than a thousand literal years) after Antichrist has been overthrown, but before the actual end of the world. **This is the first resurrection.** The plain meaning of these words is, that after the overthrow of Antichrist, the martyrs and other most excellent saints will rise from the dead, and have their part in the millennial kingdom; the rest of the dead, even those finally saved, will not rise till later. If the true sense be *not* the literal one, it is safest to regard it as being as yet undiscovered"—C. B. "The doctrine of the millennium was generally believed in the three first and purest ages of the Church; and this belief was one principal cause of the fortitude of the early Christians; they even coveted martyrdom, in hopes of being partakers of the privileges and glories of the martyrs in the first resurrection. Afterwards, for various reasons, the doctrine fell into disrepute, and lay depressed for many ages, but it sprang up again at the Reformation, and will flourish together with the study of the Revelation. We should neither, like some, interpret it into an allegory; nor with others, indulge an extravagant fancy, nor explain too curiously the manner and circumstances of this future state. It is safest and best faithfully to adhere to the words of Scripture, and to rest contented with the general account, till time shall accomplish and reveal all the particulars"—Bishop NEWTON.

Vers. 7–10. SATAN'S LAST STRUGGLE.—7. **Satan shall be loosed**—"as he deceived our first parents in paradise, he shall have the artifice (and the opportunity) to deceive the nations in this millennium kingdom, to show

that no condition on earth is exempted or secured from sinning"—B.

8. **The nations which are.** "It almost seems as if the kingdom of Christ and of His saints had not been world-wide, but had been, like the Roman empire in S. John's day, or the Christendom of our own, a wide but limited region of light in the midst of a barbarous world. But it is possible that this prediction refers, not to an incursion from outlying heathens, but to an apostasy of outlying Christians. If so, this may be illustrated by the way that the remoter provinces of Christendom fell into heresy in the fifth and following centuries, and were, in great measure in consequence, absorbed in Islam afterwards. We may also think of the wild and unchristian sects rising in our own time in Russia and in the remoter parts of America, the countries of Christendom most distant from its centres of intellectual life"—C. B. **Magog**—"a race descended from a son of Japheth of that name. (Gen. 10. 2.) **Gog**—a dynastic name of the princes of that and kindred races. (Ezek. 38. 2; 39. 1–15.) These are used figuratively to describe a final assault of the enemies of truth on the kingdom of Christ"—W. W.

9. **Compassed the camp . . . and the city**—"the new Jerusalem, with the saints encamped around it, as the Israelites encamped around the tabernacle in the wilderness"—B. "These terms, borrowed from Israel's history, do not necessarily imply the gathering together of the Church into one locality"—W. W. (Heb. 12. 22.)

10. **And shall be** (R.V. "And they shall be")—all three of them. **Day and night**—"without intermission, such as now is caused by night succeeding day. **For ever and ever**—*lit.* 'unto the ages of the ages,' as strong an expression for absolute endlessness as biblical language affords"—C. B. (Ch. 14. 10, 11.)

Vers. 11–15. THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.—11. **A great white throne**—"great" to show the largeness and extent, "white" to show the justice and equity, of the judgment. **Him that sat upon it**—"the Son of God, to whom the Father hath committed all judgment; God in Christ, that is, the Father represented by the Son, is He before whose judgment-seat we must all stand. (See Acts 17. 31; Rom. 2. 16, compared with Matt. 16. 27; 25. 31)"—P. **The earth and the heaven fled away.** "The description is so plain that it does not need, so majestic and grand that it exceeds, commentary or paraphrase"—W. W. (2 Pet. 3. 7, 10, 11; ch. 21. 1; Dan. 2. 35.)

12. **And I saw the dead, great and small**—"of every age and condition. This includes, also, those who undergo a change equivalent to death. (1 Cor. 15. 51.) **And the books.** Human judges have their books written with pen and ink; how different is the nature of these books! **Were opened.** Oh how many hidden things will then come to light; and how many will have quite another appearance than they had before in the sight of men! With the book of God's omniscience, that of conscience will exactly tally. The book of natural law, as well as of revealed, will then also be displayed. It is not said, the books shall be read; the light of that day will make them visible to all. Then, particularly, shall every man know himself, and that with the last exactness. This will be the first true, full, impartial, universal history. **And another book**—wherein are enrolled all that are accepted through the Beloved; all who lived and died in the faith that worketh by love. **Which is the Book of Life, was opened.** What manner of expectation will then be, with regard to the issue of the whole!"—WESLEY.

According to their works. "We are justified *by* faith, but judged according to our works. For the general judgment is primarily designed for the final vindication of *God's righteousness* before the whole world. *Faith* is appreciable by God and the believer alone. But *works* are appreciable by all. These, then, are made the evidential test to decide men's eternal state"—P. (Dan. 7. 10; ch. 19. 5; Ps. 69. 28; Dan. 12. 1; Phil. 4. 3; ch. 3. 5; 13. 8; 21. 27; Jer. 17. 10; 32. 19; Matt. 16. 27; Rom. 2. 6; ch. 2. 23; 22. 12.)

13. **Death and hell.** "'Death' gave up the bodies of men, and 'Hades,' the receptacle of separate souls, gave them up, to be reunited to their bodies"—WESLEY.

"The essential identity of the dying and risen body is hereby shown, for the sea and the grave give up their dead. The body that sinned or served God shall, in righteous retribution, be the body also that shall suffer or be rewarded"—P. (Ch. 6. 8.)

14. **Cast into the lake of fire.** "Death and Hades are personified; they are cast into the lake of fire, to express the truth that Christ and His people shall never more die, or be in the state of disembodied spirits"—P. We are not told that they are tormented there, because they do not represent *persons*, as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet do. **This is the second death.** R.V. adds, **even the lake of fire.** There is a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust (Acts 24. 15); of the latter, a resurrection unto condemnation (John 5. 29), resulting in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

15. **And whosoever.** "Those who are not in the number of the saved by God's free grace are sure to have sins recorded against them, sufficient for a judgment 'out of the things written in the books,' to end in this terrible sentence"—C. B.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERS. 1–8. NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH.—1. **A new heaven and a new earth.** "There are two words translated 'new' in the English version. One relates to *time*, the other to

quality. The latter word is used throughout this chapter. The newness described is the newness of freshness; the old decaying, enfeebling, and corrupting elements are swept away"—ELLICOTT. **No more sea** (R.V. "The sea is no more"). "Not a new sea, but no sea. The sea may be a type of mutability, or of commotion and conflict. Or to S. John, looking out on the waste of waters from his lonely isle, it may have presented the idea of isolation, separation, restriction, and barrier to intercourse. All this is to be done away in the new state of things"—W. W. (Isa. 65. 17; 66. 22; 2 Pet. 3. 13; ch. 20. 11.)

2. **The holy city, new Jerusalem.** "The new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem, are closely connected. This city is wholly new, belonging not to this world, not to the millennium, but to eternity. This appears from the magnificence of the description, and the opposition of this city to the second death. (Rev. 20. 11, 12; 21. 1, 2, 5)"—WESLEY. **As a bride adorned for her husband**—"beautiful with all perfection of wisdom and holiness, meek for the full fruition of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory"—M. H. (Isa. 52. 1; Gal. 4. 26; Heb. 11. 10; 12. 22; 13. 14; ch. 3. 12; Isa. 54. 5; 61. 10; 2 Cor. 11. 2.)

3. **A voice out of heaven** (R.V. "out of the throne"). "This voice from heaven, and the communications which follow (vers. 5–8), are in preparation for the vision about to be seen (ver. 9). **The tabernacle.** Undoubtedly an allusion to the tabernacle in the wilderness, as the most intelligent example and type of the localisation of the Divine presence. **Will dwell with them.** The force of the original word is to give the idea of 'sharing abode with,' as God had His tabernacle among the tabernacles of His people. (See Ezek. 37. 26, 27, which is almost identical with this passage. No material abode is meant)"—W. W. (Lev. 26. 11, 12; Ezek. 43. 7; 2 Cor. 6. 16; ch. 7. 15.)

4. **And death shall be no more.** "This is a full proof that this whole description belongs not to time, but to eternity. **Neither shall sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, be any more; for the former things are gone away.** Under the former heaven, and upon the former earth, there was death and sorrow, crying and pain; all which occasioned many tears; but now pain and sorrow are fled away, and the saints have everlasting life and joy"—WESLEY. (Isa. 25. 8; ch. 7. 17; 1 Cor. 15. 26, 54; ch. 20. 14; Isa. 35. 10; 61. 3; 65. 19.)

5. **He that sat upon the throne.** The speaker is the Lord Jesus Christ, as is clear from the titles He proceeds to give Himself. **All things new** — not merely recent, but changed from the old. (Isa. 43. 19; 2 Cor. 5. 17.)

6. **It is done** (R.V. "They are come to pass"). "All is as sure as if it had been actually fulfilled. When the consummation shall come, God shall rejoice over the work of His hands, as at the completion of the first creation God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good"—P. **I will give to him that is athirst**—Christ's promise, as recorded by S. John in John 4. 14; 7. 37. It is addressed to us in our present state, and is now to be realised. Here we drink of the stream, but we shall there drink of the *fountain.* The satisfaction of our spiritual desires and necessities here is the pledge of our attainment to the bliss promised. **Freely**—that is, *gratuitously.* (Ch. 1. 8; 16. 17; 22. 13; Isa. 12. 3; 55. 1.)

7. **Shall inherit all things** (R.V. "these things"). **He shall be My son.** "'He' is emphatical; implying the full realisation of the promise made in type to Solomon, son of David, and antitypically to the Divine Son of David"—P. (Zech. 8. 8; Heb. 8. 10.)

8. **The fearful and unbelieving.** "Fear stands here for *moral* cowardice, leading men to forsake the faith. (See 1 Tim. 1. 18, 19.) The cognate vices are linked together; **fear** with **unbelief, murderers** with **fornicators, sorcerers** with **idolaters**, those who practised magical arts being usually worshippers of demons. **All liars.** The adjective is significant and emphatic; liars of every kind, offenders against Divine truth, ordinary veracity, honesty. Falsehood is a characteristic of idolaters (Eph. 4. 25)"—W. W. **The second death.** (So ch. 20. 14.) "Everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1. 9). (1 Cor. 6. 9, 10; Gal. 5. 19–21; Eph. 5. 5; 1 Tim. 1. 9; Heb. 12. 14; ch. 22. 15; 20. 14, 15.)

Vers. 9–27. THE VISION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.—9. **There came unto me.** "As in ch. 17. 1, 'unto me' should be omitted (see R.V.), so that the sentence as far as 'vials' is *verbatim* the same as there. The identical form of introduction emphasises the contrast between Babylon and Jerusalem, the harlot and the bride"—C. B. (Ch. 15. 1, 6, 7; 19. 7.)

10. **In the Spirit.** So the reader is reminded that the following verses describe a *vision.* **A mountain**—probably no definite signification is to be attached to this. The idea is perhaps due to the relative position of the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem. From that hill was a remarkable view over and into the city. (Mark 13. 3.) See also the similar vision in Ezek. 40. 2. In reference to the whole of this and of ch. 22, the following note should be carefully considered:—

"It is wise to recall once more that the descriptions are figurative, and are not to be understood literally. The following are the features which the description seems designed to enforce upon our thoughts. The great and holy community derives its glory from God. (Ch. 21. 11, 23; 22. 5.) Its blessings are not for a few, but open to all, for its gates lie open to all

quarters. (Ch. 21. 12, 13.) The earthly and heavenly will be at one; angels, apostles, and patriarchs are there. (Ch. 21. 12, 14.) Diverse characters will find entrance there; the gates bear the names of the twelve tribes; yet the door of admission is alike for all. (Ch. 21. 21.) It will be the abode of all that is fair and good, and no disproportions will mar its loveliness. (Ch. 21. 17, 18.) The ancient truths, spoken by various lips, will be found to be eternal truths, full of varied and consistent beauty. (Ch. 21. 14, 19, 20.) The forms and helps which were needful here will not be needful there. (Ch. 21. 22, 23.) All that the servants of God have hungered and thirsted for here will be supplied there. (Ch. 22. 1, 2.) There will be blessings various, continuous, eternal; new fields of labour and forms of service will be opened there. (Ch. 22. 3, 4)"—ELLICOTT.

11. **Having the glory of God**—"not merely the Shekinah cloud, but God Himself as her glory dwelling in the midst of her. The promise to the earthly Jerusalem (Zech. 2. 5) is typical"—P. **Her light**—*lit.* "luminary"—probably the same as "the glory of God"; for He is the Light of the city (ver. 23); and He is described as being like unto **a jasper**. (Ch. 4. 3.)

12. **Wall great and high**—describing the exclusion of the ungodly, and the absolute security of the Church. **Twelve angels**—guardians and porters, still ministering unto the heirs of salvation. **Names of the twelve tribes**—implying that none but the spiritual Israel will be admitted there. (Ezek. 48. 31–34).

14. **The wall on twelve foundations.** "Probably each of the twelve sections into which the wall is divided by the gates rests upon an enormous jewel, reaching from gate to gate. This symbolises the solidity as well as the beauty of the Divine structure, and was itself symbolised by the enormous size of the stones used in the foundation of the earthly temple"—C. B. **The names of the twelve apostles.** As architects often have their names inscribed on their great works, so the names of the apostles shall be held in everlasting remembrance. Also, "figuratively showing that the inhabitants of the city had built only on that faith which the apostles once delivered to the saints"—WESLEY. (Matt. 16. 18; Gal. 2. 9; Eph. 2. 20.)

15–17. **A golden reed.** (See ch. 11. 1.) "It may possibly be intimated that the standard applicable to the Church, and all pertaining to it, on earth, will be also the measure and test of its perfections in the state of glory. **Length and breadth and height are equal.** The city shall be in the shape of a cube, the most perfect form; the impossibility of this, according to earthly things, shows that the whole is enigmatical, and suggests that we ought not to form gross and material conceptions of the city, but to deduce instruction from the emblem. It may imply the stability, proportion, and uniformity of heavenly things, and the incomprehensible glory of them. **Twelve thousand furlongs.** The furlong, or *stadium*, was a measure of distance, about two hundred and two English yards"—W. W. It is doubtful whether the twelve thousand furlongs be the measurement of one side of the square, or of the whole circumference. Even on the latter supposition, the city would be about three hundred and forty-four miles square. The truth is, the numbers are evidently typical, taken from twelve, the number of the apostles, multiplied by a thousand, and so the wall twelve multiplied by twelve. The wall is far beneath the height of the city, whence it has been suggested that the measurement represents the thickness of it. It is really unnecessary to endeavour to harmonise the details of this magnificent and instructive vision. (Ezek. 40. 3; Zech. 2. 1; ch. 11. 1.)

18. **The city . . . pure gold, like pure glass** (R.V.). "Ideal gold, transparent as no gold here is"—ALFORD. All apparently incompatible excellences will be combined.

19, 20. **Garnished with . . . precious stones.** "From the next sentence we understand that they are adorned by being constructed of these stones, not that stones are fastened on merely for ornament. See a parallel in Isa. 54. 11, 12, where, however, there is less detail than here, and what there is is not quite the same, a warning against expecting *too minute* a symbolism in the details. **Jasper . . . sapphire,** the Greek and Hebrew words are the same as the English. Yet it is almost certain that the stone so called in S. John's day was not our sapphire, but the far less precious lapis lazuli. **Chalcedony,** apparently not the stone now so called, but one closely resembling the emerald. **Chrysolite . . . topaz.** According to the best authorities the ancient application of these names was the reverse of the modern. 'Chrysolite' means 'golden stone,' while the modern chrysolite is green. Perhaps the ancient chrysolite included the modern jacinth as well as the true 'Oriental topaz.' **Chrysoprasus**—a variety of the beryl, of a more yellowish-green; probably that now called chrysolite. **Jacinth,** probably *our* sapphire. The modern jacinth is a crystalline stone, usually red. **Amethyst, emerald, sardius, beryl,** are undoubtedly the stones now so called"—C. B.

22. **No temple therein.** "There is no need of a temple where all are sensible of the universally pervading, universally visible, presence of God. Our Lord Jesus was Himself the Temple of God when on earth. (John 2. 21.) In His glorified body, presenting ever the remembrance of His sacrificial death, 'the Lamb as it had been slain,' He will be the Temple of God throughout eternity. In Christ the redeemed will have personal access to God, and intercourse with Him"—W. W. "Means of grace shall cease when the end of grace is come"—P. (John 4. 23.)

23. **No need of the sun or of the moon.** "The consolatory language of Isa. 60. 19, 20; Zech. 14. 6, 7, shall now receive its proper fulfilment. The happiness and spiritual comforts of the religious kingdom will not be like the lights of the sun and moon in the natural world, with intervals of light and darkness, but the perfect knowledge of God, the light of Christ's word, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit will be perpetual"—W. W. (Isa. 24. 23; ch. 22. 5.)

24. **And the nations** (R.V. omits **of them that are saved**). **In the light**—"amidst (R.V. or 'by the light'). **The kings of the earth**—who once had regard only to their own glory, having been converted, now in the New Jerusalem, bring their glory into it, to lay it down at the feet of their God and Lord"—P. (Isa. 60. 3, 5, 11; 66. 12.) "But probably this is only a part of the imagery; Jerusalem is conceived, as in Isaiah, as an imperial city receiving the tribute of the world, simply because that was the form of world-wide sovereignty recognised and understood in both prophets' times"—C. B.

25. **Not be shut by day . . . no night.** "Gates are usually shut by night; but in it shall be no night. There shall be continual free ingress into it, so that all that is blessed and glorious may continually be brought in"—P. Of course "no night" is the necessary result of the promise in ver. 23.

26. **The glory and honour of the nations.** "All that was truly glorious and excellent in the earth and its converted 'nations' shall be gathered into it; and whilst all shall form *one* Bride, there shall be various orders among the redeemed, analogous to the division of 'nations' on earth constituting one human family"—P. (Isa. 60. 11, 20; Zech. 14. 7; ch. 22. 5.)

27. **Anything that defileth** (R.V. "unclean")—"that is, 'unholy.' **But those who are written in the Lamb's book of life**—true, holy, persevering believers. This blessedness is enjoyed by those only; and, as such, they are registered among them who are to inherit eternal life"—WESLEY. (Isa. 35. 8; 52. 1; 60. 21; Joel 3. 17; Phil. 4. 3; ch. 3. 5; 13. 8; 20. 12.)

CHAPTER XXII.

Vers. 1-7. THE VISION—*continued.*—1. **A pure river** (R.V. omits **pure**, gives "bright" instead of **clear**, and removes **in the midst of the street of it** from ver. 2 to the end of this). "The prototype of this vision is that in Ezek. 47. 1-12, in which we find a river proceeding from the temple of God, its waters carrying life, unfading trees on either bank, and one kind of tree which 'shall bring forth new fruit according to his months,' and 'the leaf thereof shall be for medicine'"—W. W. (Ezek. 47. 1; Zech. 14. 8.)

2. **The tree of life.** "Here is the paradise of God, mentioned ch. 2. 7. 'The tree.' Not one tree only, but many. **Every month**—that is, in inexpressible abundance. The variety likewise, as well as the abundance of the fruits of the Spirit, may be intimated thereby. **Leaves for the healing of the nations**—for the continuing their health, not the restoring it; for no sickness is there"—WESLEY.

"The harmonious unity of Scripture is here exhibited. The Fathers compared it to a ring, an unbroken circle, returning into itself. How striking it is that, as at the beginning we found Adam and his bride, having fallen by temptation, driven from the Tree of Life and from the pleasant waters of Eden, so at the close the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, leads His Bride the Church into a better paradise, amidst better waters; the Tree of Life also is there"—P. (Ezek. 47. 12; Gen 2. 9.)

3. **There shall be no more curse**—"but pure life and blessing; every effect of the displeasure of God for sin being now totally removed. **But the throne of God and the Lamb**—that is, the glorious presence and reign of God. **And His servants**—the highest honour in the universe—**shall worship Him**—the noblest employment"—WESLEY.

His servants. "Note the singular pronoun, implying the unity of the persons named"—C. B. Note also that here and in ver. 1 two persons are named, but only one throne. (Zech. 14. 11; Ezek. 48. 35.)

4. **And shall see His face**—"which was not granted to Moses. They shall have the nearest access to, and thence the highest resemblance of, Him. This is the highest expression in the language of Scripture to denote the most perfect happiness of the heavenly state. (1 John 3. 2.) **And His name shall be on their foreheads.** Each of them shall be openly acknowledged as God's own property, and His glorious nature most visibly shine forth in them"—WESLEY. (Matt. 5. 8; 1 Cor. 13. 12; 1 John 3. 2; ch. 3. 12; 14. 1.)

5. **They shall reign for ever**—"said of all the inhabitants of the city; the servants of God (ver. 3) shall have royal dignity and glory"—W. W. (Ch. 21. 23, 25; Ps. 36. 9; 84. 11; Dan. 7. 27; Rom. 5. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 12; ch. 3. 21.)

6. **Sayings are faithful and true**—"thrice repeated (ch. 19. 9; 21. 5); for we are slow to believe that God is as good as He is"—P. **God of the holy prophets** (R.V. "The God of the spirits of the prophets"), see 1 Cor. 14. 32. "The expression is intended to claim for 'the words of the book of this prophecy' equal authority with those of the Old Testament prophets"—W. W. (Ch. 1. 1.)

7. **I come quickly**—"spoken in the name of Christ, though hardly by Him (see ch. 3. 11; and vers. 12, 20)"—C. B. The seer repeats his former error (vers. 8, 9).

8. **I fell down to worship**—"as at ch. 19. 10. Some suppose that S. John is here repeating

his statement of what he did then, but it is far more natural to understand that he did the same again. The words **I come quickly** would even more naturally lead him to think that this angel was 'He that is to come,' than the words of that angel led him to think he was the God whose 'true sayings' he communicated"—C. B.

Vers. 10–21. THE FINAL WARNINGS.—10. **Seal not**—"equivalent to, 'Write and publish.' In opposition to the command given to Daniel. (Dan 12. 4, 9, and also in this book, ch. 10. 4.) **The time is at hand.** The fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy was distant, that of S. John's prophecy is near. The New Testament dispensation is the time of the end and fulfilment. The Revelation points, on the one hand, to Christ's coming as distant, for it shows the succession of the seven seals, trumpets, and vials; on the other hand, it proclaims, 'Behold, I come quickly.' For our proper attitude is one of continual and prayerful watching for His coming"—P. (Dan. 8. 26; 12. 4, 9; ch. 10. 4; 1. 3.)

11. **He that is unjust.** "As if He had said, 'The final judgment is at hand; after which the condition of all mankind will admit of no change for ever.' **Unrighteous**—unjustified. **Filthy**—unsanctified, unholy"—WESLEY. "**He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still; and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be made holy still** (R.V.). Does it mean that the time is so short, that it is barely sufficient to allow of men reforming themselves, so as to be ready for their Lord, and that therefore the lesson is, Let those who would be ready for Him remember that *now* is the day of salvation? Or is it not rather the declaration of the ever terrible truth, that men are building up their destiny by the actions and habits of their lives. 'Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.' So slowly, but surely, may the power of being masters of our fate pass out of our hands"—ELLICOTT. "The solemn lesson of this verse is, Be converted now in the short time left, and before I come (vers. 7, 12), or else you must remain unconverted for ever; sin in the eternal world will be left to its own natural consequences; holiness in germ will there develop itself into perfect holiness, which is happiness"—P. (Ezek. 3. 27; Dan. 12. 10; 2 Tim. 3, 13.)

12. **My reward is with Me.** "The rewards which I assign both to the righteous and the wicked are given at My coming. **According as his work**—his whole inward and outward behaviour—**shall be**"—WESLEY. **My reward**—"said of Jehovah (Isa. 40. 10); here the speaker is Jesus"—W. W. (Isa. 40. 10; 62. 11; Rom. 2. 6; 14. 12; ch. 20. 12.)

13. **The Alpha and the Omega** With these Divine titles, assumed by the Lord Jesus, comp. ch. 1. 8, 17, and 21. 6. (Isa. 41. 4; 44. 6; 48. 12.)

14. **Blessed are they that do His commandments** (R.V. "that wash their robes"). "The change in the Greek is only one of a few letters, and there seems no doubt which way S. John, in fact, wrote it"—C. B. **That they may have right**—"through His gracious covenant—**to the tree of life**—to all the blessings signified by it"—WESLEY. (Dan. 12. 12; 1 John 3. 24; ver. 2; ch. 2. 7; 21. 27.)

15. **For without are dogs** (R.V. "**the** dogs, **the** sorcerers," etc.). "The word **dogs** is used Phil. 3. 2, to describe impudent pretenders; 2 Pet. 2. 22, for unholy, licentious professors; Ps. 22. 16, for persecutors"—W. W. **Maketh a lie** (*margin*, "doeth a lie")—a serious caution against the acted lie as well as the spoken one. (1 Cor. 6. 9, 10; Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21; Col. 3. 6; ch. 9. 20, 21; 21. 8; Phil. 3. 2.)

16. **To testify unto you**—that is, "to His servants." (See ch. 1. 1 and 22. 6.) **In the churches** (R.V. "For the churches"). **I am the root and the offspring of David**—appropriate titles when assuring this Church of "the sure mercies of David" secured to Israel first, and through Israel to the Gentiles. "Root" of David as being Jehovah; "the offspring" of David as man. **The bright and morning star.** "I am the Star out of Jacob (Num. 24. 17); like the bright morning star, who puts an end to the night of ignorance, sin, and sorrow, and ushers in an eternal day of light, purity, and joy"—WESLEY. (Ch. 1. 1; 5. 5; Num. 24. 17; Zech. 6. 12; 2 Pet. 1. 19; ch. 2. 28.)

17. **And the Spirit** (R.V. *margin*, "Both the Spirit"). "With which I inspire My servants. **And the Bride**—the Church, whom I have espoused; or the Spirit of adoption in the Bride, says, with earnest desire and expectation—**Come**, and accomplish all the words of this prophecy. **And let him that heareth say, Come**—let everyone echo the invitation; and let My people, in all ages, consider it their duty so to do. **And let him that is athirst**—that sincerely and earnestly desires the blessings of the gospel, whether the blessings of grace or those of glory—**Come**, and partake of those blessings. Let him apply to the Lord Jesus, in repentance and faith, and he shall not apply in vain. **Let him take of the water of life**—he may partake of spiritual and eternal blessings—**freely**—yea, as freely as he makes use of the most common refreshments, as freely as he drinks of the running stream"—B. "There is a descending climax. **Let him that heareth** effectually and savingly Christ's voice pray individually, as the Bride, the Church, does collectively, **Come, Lord Jesus.** Let him who, though not yet having actually heard unto salvation, and so not yet able to join in the prayer, 'Lord Jesus, come,' still thirsts for it, **come** to Christ. Whoever is even **willing**, though his desires do not yet

amount to positive thirsting, **let him take the water of life freely**—that is, gratuitously"—P. (Ch. 21. 2, 9; Isa. 55. 1; John 7. 37; ch. 21. 6.)

18, 19. **For I testify** (R.V. omits **for**, and gives "tree of life," instead of **book of life**. (See Deut. 4. 2; 12. 32.) "The parallel of these passages proves that the curse denounced is on those who interpolate unauthorised *doctrines* in the prophecy, or who neglect essential ones, not on transcribers who might unadvisedly interpolate or omit something in the true text. The curse is clearly designed to guard the integrity of *this* book of the Revelation, not to close the New Testament canon. It is not even certain that this was the last written of the canonical books"—C. B. "As in the beginning of this book a blessing is promised to the devout and obedient student of it (ch. 1. 3), so now at its close a curse is denounced against those who add to or take from it"—P. (Deut. 4. 2; 12. 32; Prov. 30. 6; Ex. 32. 33; ch. 3. 5; Ps. 69. 28; ch. 13. 8; 21. 2.)

20. **He that testifieth these things**—"even all that is contained in this book—**saith**—for the encouragement of the Church in all her affliction—**yea** (so R.V.)—answering the call of the Spirit and the Bride—**I come quickly**—to destroy all her enemies, and to establish her in a state of perfect and everlasting happiness. The apostle expresses his earnest desire and hope of this, by answering **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**"—WESLEY. (R.V. omits **even so.**) "Christ's **I come**, and S. John's **Amen** ('Come') are almost coincident in time; so truly does the believer reflect the mind of his Lord"—P. (Ver. 12; John 21. 25; 2 Tim. 4. 8.)

21. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ** (R.V. "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints"). **Amen.**

THE END.

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